



**An Investigation of Vocabulary Teaching Strategies in Grade Eleven: The Case of  
Gerba Secondary School in West Guji Zone**

Mohammed Dekabo

Lecturer at Department of English Language and Literature, Bule Hora University, Ethiopia

Email:- [muhedekebo@gmail.com](mailto:muhedekebo@gmail.com)

**Abstract**

*The purpose of this study was to investigate vocabulary teaching strategies used in grade eleven. This study aimed to find out the techniques employed to present vocabulary activities provided for practice and whether or not the words taught previously were recycled in subsequent lessons during vocabulary instruction. To achieve this, the study employed descriptive research design that entails both quantitative and qualitative methods. The sample consisted of 2 grade eleven English Language teachers and 121 students drawn from 503 grade eleven students of Gerba secondary school. Purposive sampling technique was used to select the target school while simple random and availability sampling techniques were employed to select the sample students and teachers respectively. Content analysis, interview, classroom observation and questionnaire were used to gather the required data. Data collected from interviewing English Language teachers and classroom observations were analyzed qualitatively, whereas data from content analysis and questionnaire were analyzed quantitatively. The results of the study revealed that teachers used techniques like definition, translation that result in surface learning. Teachers didn't use techniques like semantic mapping and vocabulary notebook that are used to form relational associations and promote autonomous word learning were not taken into consideration. Activities that promote deeper student involvement like creative use were not given attention. Recycling of new words in subsequent lessons was very insufficient, which resulted in students unable to learn stock of vocabularies. Therefore, English Language teachers should discharge their prime responsibilities by giving robust vocabulary instruction i.e by bringing diverse techniques and activities that promote language use and process words in depth into sharp focus for vocabulary retention and by recycling new words sufficiently for better acquisition. Thus, based on the findings of the study, recommendations were forwarded to alleviate the aforementioned problems in the schools under study.*

Key words: Vocabulary, strategies, translation, mapping

**1. Introduction**

On this world, human beings can share their knowledge and experiences by using language. Language forms a connecting bond in human relationships. We convey our ideas and understand the ideas of others through words. In this respect, having a large number of vocabularies makes the process of communication smooth. On the other hand, lacks of words

hamper the communication process. One may say a lot of things about this world if he/she has a number of vocabularies to say (Schmitt, 2004).

However, this important aspect of language was not given proper attention in the history of language teaching approaches and methods (DeCarrico, 2001; Lewis, 2002; Thornbury, 2002; Gray & Klapper, 2009). Teaching methods such as direct method and audiolingualism had been used for a long time and these methods gave priority for the teaching of grammatical structures. The advent of communicative approach in 1970's paved the way for a major rethink of the role of vocabulary and the introduction of the lexical syllabus by Dave Willis in 1990 challenged the hegemony of grammar (Thornbury, 2002). The effect of these developments has brought the key role vocabulary plays in language acquisition to light.

It is apparent in Ethiopia that English is taught as a foreign language. In some parts of Ethiopia, like in Oromia Regional State, English language is taught as a subject in primary school whereas it is used as a medium of instruction in secondary schools and also taught as a subject. Students' academic success in other subjects in general and in English language in particular, therefore, depends on the level of vocabulary students possess to comprehend what is given in their textbook and beyond that. This is because large vocabulary stock makes students more successful at secondary and tertiary education levels. Johnson (1992) underscores that almost in every field, a successful person has a powerful and an extensive vocabulary. On the contrary, having weak vocabulary limits students' comprehension and production skills. To put it in a different way, limited vocabularies hamper students' understanding of what they hear and read as well as the clarity of what they speak and write. Vocabulary is greatly crucial in reading to learn, in succeeding in all school subjects and in attaining the world beyond school (Graves, 2006). To change this theoretical aspect into practice, English Language teachers are expected to implement various vocabulary teaching strategies and students should also learn stock of vocabularies in different ways.

Since there is no single best technique used in teaching vocabulary, it is important to incorporate various techniques to help students learn words independently. Teaching vocabularies doesn't necessarily mean students are able to retrieve and use them in appropriate situations. Students need to experiment with the vocabularies taught in the classroom till they make them their productive vocabularies. Vocabulary exercises and activities play an indispensable role in this regard. It is also important to recycle vocabularies for improving the retention of words (Laufer, 2005; Nation, 2005

& Waring, 2002). To achieve all these, English language teachers and instructional materials have prominent roles to play by exposing learners to a good amount of vocabulary.

Many FL learners face vocabulary shortage which is one of the problem in mastering a foreign language. Lack of vocabulary knowledge appears to be a problem across all language skills (Hedge, 2002). This fact leads many researchers to carry out various researches that could enhance the growth of vocabulary size of FL learners.

Hence, various studies also showed that many students are incapable of expressing their thoughts because of vocabulary deficiencies. Gashaw (2008) studied the effectiveness of teaching-learning vocabulary in grade eight in three schools in Addis Ababa. His study showed that teachers did not regard vocabulary as a prominent component of language compared to other language components. Translation and definition were the most commonly used techniques. Miressa (2014) conducted a research to assess the practice of vocabulary teaching strategies in EFL classes in grade nine and ten at Kellem Secondary School. His findings revealed that teachers frequently used contextual clues to teach vocabulary and there was a limited practice in the classroom. As a result, students were not able to use previously learned vocabularies for actual communication. Gebreegziabher (2016) also conducted a research on grade nine textbook to evaluate the design of vocabulary tasks and their implementation. He found that vocabulary lessons seems appendage to reading and listening lessons because most of the vocabulary lessons are driven from reading or listening texts.

Another research by Solomon (2019) tried to assess the vocabulary teaching and learning strategies used in the context of communicative language teaching method in grade 11 at Sodo Preparatory School. The finding reveals that there is a mismatch between students' and teachers' vocabulary learning and teaching strategy preferences.

So, what is the gap of this research? The studies mentioned in above merely investigated in at utmost, different techniques of vocabulary learning. This study is different from the previous studies in the following aspects. First and foremost, this study attempted to investigate vocabulary teaching strategies from two perspectives. The first is that students' vocabulary stock believed to be affected by vocabulary teaching strategies that teachers use in the class to teach vocabulary instead of merely assessing techniques of teaching vocabulary. The second is that instructional material may include limited vocabulary teaching strategies since textbooks are the dominant form of instructional materials

for many schools. As a result, content analysis was carried out to investigate vocabulary teaching strategies entailed in grade eleven textbook. In addition to what has been said, no one has attempted to carry out a study on investigating vocabulary teaching strategies used by EFL teachers at this school.

Therefore, this study is aimed to investigate vocabulary teaching strategies in grade eleven EFL class at Gerba Secondary School. Specifically, it aims to explore vocabulary teaching techniques employed by English language teachers to accrue students' vocabulary stock, to identify vocabulary activities provided in the class to reinforce vocabulary retention, to explore vocabulary activities included in the textbook and to determine whether new vocabularies are repeated or recycled in subsequent lessons sufficiently.

## **2. Research Design and Methodology**

**Research Design and Methods:** the researcher employed descriptive research design. Descriptive research studies are those studies which are concerned with describing the characteristics of a situation (Kothari, 2004, p. 37). So, this research is tried to describe the current status of vocabulary teaching strategies. The researcher used mixed (qualitative and quantitative) research methods to gather relevant information and to triangulate the data. Creswell (2009, p. 203) points out that mixed method utilizes the strengths of both qualitative and quantitative research. The qualitative method was utilized to collect data through classroom observation and EFL teachers' interview . The quantitative method, on the other hand, used to collect data through content analysis and questionnaire prepared for students.

### **2.1 Population, Sampling Technique and Sample Size**

As there are two grade levels in the school, the researcher focused on grade eleven because the researcher thought that grade 12 students were busy preparing themselves for university entrance examination and might not be in a position to give proper responses to the questionnaire. Thus, grade eleven students and teachers were selected for the purpose of this study.

There were two EFL teachers who taught English at grade eleven. Both of them were male and have already secured their master's degree. On the other hand, the total number of grade eleven students at Gerba Secondary School was 503. From this, 348 were male and 155 were female. The number of sections for this particular grade level was seven. There were 72 students in each class on average.

Two sampling techniques were employed to select the participants of the research: availability sampling and simple random sampling. Availability sampling was used for the teachers because they were two in number. There were totally four English language teachers in the school. The other two were solely assigned to teach grade twelve. Simple random sampling (lottery method) was used to select student participants. Draws which were equal to the number of students in each section were prepared to be picked up by each student. Eventually, seventeen students from each six sections and nineteen students from the last section were selected as samples.

Regarding the sample size, Gay and Diehl (1992) pinpoint that for descriptive research the sample ought to be 10% of the population. According to Kothari (2004,) 30% of the accessible population should be selected for the sample in descriptive research. Thus, Since there are different scholars' view about sample size and the study population was also homogeneous in terms of exposure to English language, 24% of grade eleven students were selected i.e 121 students

### **2.3 Data Collection Tools and Procedures**

The researcher designed data collection tools based on the specific objectives of the study. To gather valid and reliable data, the researcher used content analysis, classroom observation, questionnaire and interview.

**Content Analysis:** written documents used in the teaching-learning are supposed to be sources of information. From these, textbook is a container of vocabulary input as well as an important resource for language instruction. Therefore, grade 11 English textbook was analyzed based on a tentative checklist the researcher prepared partly based on Byrd (2001), Mukundan et al. (2011) and Nation (2013). In order to see the degree of recycling of new words in the textbook, the researcher selected 60 words from unit one to unit six in which the researcher believes they fall under tier two words. In this regard, all derivatives of each word were counted beginning from the first unit to final unit and in the listening texts provided at the back of the student textbook (from page 315- 326). Finally, 13 words from the most recycled words were selected to identify the kind of recycling i.e whether it is massed or spaced recycling.

**Classroom Observations:** classroom observation is an important instrument used to prevent subjective bias because a researcher sees the actual practices. There can sometimes be discrepancies between what teachers believe they do and what they actually do in the classroom (Wragg, 1999). As a result, the researcher can look directly at what is taking place in the actual classroom rather than

relying on second hand accounts. Thus, the researcher conducted focused observation. In focused observation, the focus of attention is deliberately limited to a pre-specified phenomenon. Such observations are generally conducted using observation checklist. Therefore, the researcher prepared a checklist with dichotomous scale (Yes/No) alternatives. All classroom observations held were supported with identical checklists. The initial part of the checklist deals with the techniques EFL teachers employed when they teach vocabulary and it encompasses the ideas of various prominent language scholars. The second part encompasses the activities and exercises EFL teachers used to reinforce and integrate the vocabularies taught beforehand and it was prepared based on the ideas of language scholars like Apthorp (2006), Nation (2005), Thornbury (2002) and Lewis (2008). The last part deals with whether new word taught previously were recycled in teachers' daily instruction or not based on the ideas of Laufer (2005), Nation (2013) and Schmitt (2004, 2010).

**Questionnaire:** is a useful and widely used instrument for collecting data by providing structured and numerical data which is comparatively straightforward to analyze (Gray, 2004, p.187). The questionnaire for this research included close-ended. The first part is concerned with vocabulary teaching techniques that teachers employ and it composes eleven items. The second part is related with vocabulary activities teachers provide for students and it contains nine items. The third part is associated with how often they re encounter words they have learned previously. Questionnaire was prepared only for student participants of the research work. The researcher kept the questionnaire as simple as possible to make them comprehensible to the students.

**Interview:** as stated by Mackey and Gass (2005, p. 173) the most obvious strength of interview is it helps the researcher to elicit additional information in case initial answers are unclear, incomplete and off-topic. Hence, Semi structured interview was held with all grade eleven English language teachers regarding the techniques they employed in the class, the activities they gave for students during vocabulary lesson and attempts they made to recycle vocabulary. The researcher took notes during the interview being engaged in active listening.

The interview was recorded and transcribed for the purpose of analysis.

## **2.4 Method of Data Analysis**

After data was collected from different sources using data gathering instruments, the data was organized and analyzed both quantitatively and qualitatively. The data obtained from content analysis and questionnaires were analyzed quantitatively using simple descriptive statistics i.e frequency and

percentage. As it has been stated, content analysis was carried out to identify techniques employed to present new words, activities given for practice and degree of recycling of new words. So as to achieve these, vocabulary contents (either separate or integrated) and 60 words were selected from the first six units and analyzed based on the evaluation checklist.

The students' responses to the items in the questionnaire were tallied and tabulated on the basis of the five measurement frequency rating scales. Then, the items were analyzed using frequencies and percentages. On the other hand, data gained through classroom observations and teachers' interview were analyzed qualitatively (word description). After the data were analyzed and interpreted sufficiently, results and discussions were made. Conclusions and recommendations were provided on the bases of the findings of this specific study.

## **2.5 Ethical Considerations**

The researcher attempted to consider certain ethical issues. Participants were informed that their participation in the research is voluntary and that they were free to withdraw from it at any point and for any reason. Next to this, participants were fully informed regarding the objectives of the study, and used only for the purposes of this particular study. Participants were not harmed or abused both physically and psychologically; the researcher attempted to create and maintain a climate of comfort.

## **3. Results and Discussion**

In this part of the paper, an attempt was made to describe the results of the study with reference to the specific objectives of the study. The discussion includes the techniques English language teachers of Gerba Secondary School of grade 11 employed to teach vocabularies, activities they gave for practice and recycling of new words in subsequent lessons based on four research tools: content analysis, classroom observations, questionnaire and interview held with EFL teachers.

### **3.1 Presentation and Analyses of Data Obtained from Contents of the Textbook**

#### **3.1.1 Techniques**

The following table is the recapitulation of the textbook analysis of the range and frequency of techniques of teaching vocabulary covered in the first six units.



**Table 1: Frequency of techniques used in the textbook to present new words**

Techniques	Frequency( n=32)	Percentage (%)
Context	18	56.2
Game	4	12.5
Word part	3	9.4
Dictionary	2	6.3
Definition	2	6.3
Visual aids/ pictures	1	3.1
Vocabulary notebook	1	3.1
Semantic mapping	1	3.1

From the above table 1, among the various techniques used in the textbook, context is the dominant technique used to present new vocabularies in the first six units. Among the various techniques, presentation of new words using context accounts 56.2% and this shows that it is the most widely used technique to present various new words. This shows that most of the contents of vocabulary make use of contextual presentation. It is the only technique used in all the six units. Contextual presentation helps students to infer the meaning of new words.

**work. What is the vision of the AU:**

*The Vision of the African Union is that of an Africa Integrated, **Prosperous** and Peaceful, an Africa Driven by its own Citizens, a Dynamic Force in the Global arena. An Africa **reconciled** with itself and with its **Diaspora**; an Africa using its own resources to play the major role that it can **legitimately** claim in a world in which there will be no place for the skeletons of the economic, political and ideological systems which characterised the previous century: these are the goals which the African Union is seeking to accomplish within the space of a generation.*

Figure .1 An example of context-based presentation technique

(Taken from English for Ethiopia: Student Textbook, Grade 11. p. 12)

“... an Africa **reconciled** with itself and with its **Diaspora**; an Africa using its own resources to play the major role that it can **legitimately** claim...” This is a cumbersome burden for students to deduce the meanings of the above new words.



Out of the total techniques used in the textbook, only 12.5% of the techniques constitute games. Word part technique, which constitutes 9.4%, is also used to present new word. Teaching word parts, looking clues inside the word, helps students to figure out the meanings of new vocabularies independently.

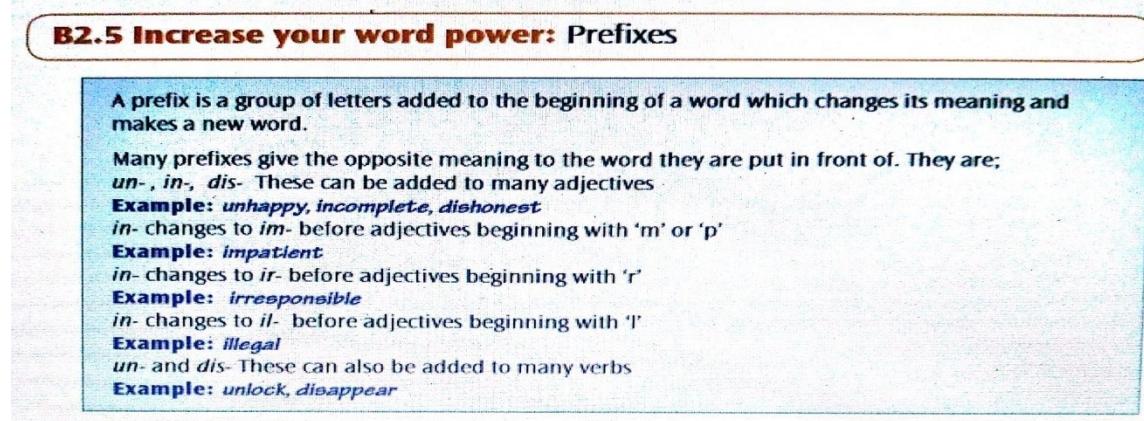


Figure 2 An example of word-part technique

(From English for Ethiopia: Student Textbook, Grade 11. p. 49)

The technique of using dictionary is used twice to present new words and it makes up 6.3% of the techniques used to present words. Similarly defining words during the very first presentation of new words constitutes 6.3% although 18.8% of vocabulary activities account matching new words with their respective definitions. The other techniques viz. pictures, vocabulary notebook and semantic mapping are used once each in the vocabulary instruction which shows that they are given negligible attention.

### 3.1.2 Activities

Table .2 Frequency of vocabulary activities used in the textbook for practice

Activities	Frequency (n=32)	Percentage (%)
Completion	12	37.5
Identifying	8	25
Matching	8	25
Guessing meanings	2	6.3
Writing/creative use	1	3.1
Sorting/categorizing	1	3.1

As it is depicted in the above table 2, out of the six groups of activities, 37.5% are linked to completion activities. These activities prevail in all (6) units and they include sentence completion using words given in a word bank, completing word family table, completing word crosses, completing table by changing the word class of the words given, and completing words using word starters/letter cues etc.

### 3.1.3 Word Recycling

In order to determine the extent of vocabulary recycling in the textbook, content analysis was held by selecting 60 words as samples. Data from content analysis regarding recycling and the type of recycling are presented in the following table.

**Table 3 Number of occurrences of sample words across the 12 units**

<b>No of occurrences</b>	<b>No of words</b>	<b>Percentage</b>
1	27	45
2	8	13.3
3	4	6.7
4	4	6.7
5	1	1.6
More than 5	12	20

From table 3 one can extrapolate that most of the words are not recycled sufficiently in the textbook. The table shows that 45% and 13.3% of the sample words are repeated twice and thrice respectively after their first appearance in the textbook.

In relation to vocabulary recycling, it is found that words should be recycled in extended time span in different contexts to bolster their acquisition instead of ‘putting a quart into a pint pot’.

## 3.2 Presentation and Analysis of Data Obtained from Classroom Observations

### 3.2.1 Analysis of Data Obtained through Observation

As far as eight classroom observations were concerned, it was seen that teachers used the textbook as the main source of vocabulary instruction. This was because they used the textbook to teach various vocabularies except one vocabulary lesson which was about words of opposite meanings (antonyms).

From the classroom observation, the researcher authenticated that teachers used word-part technique to present new words. It is apparent that this technique is the most productive word formation process

that involves using prefixes, suffixes and roots to figure out meanings of new words. The researcher noticed that teachers gave exercises that solely related to either matching or supplying suffixes to bases. No attempt was made to contextualize words' derivatives by the time teachers gave activities for practice.

In the textbook, reading passages are used as sources of new words where words are presented in contexts. However, it seemed that teachers focused more on helping students to comprehend a text instead of long-term vocabulary acquisition. That is why they were seen translating and defining new words to aid comprehension. Teachers did not present vocabularies in the way that foster deep understanding of new words. Unless students involve themselves in discovering the meanings of new words, they will be vulnerably exposed to forgetting. During the instruction, students were not asked to guess meanings of new words from the given context despite the instruction on the textbook. Vocabulary exercises given in the above textbook were not given to students because their meanings were given in advance by teachers to remove barriers to comprehension of a passage.

It is also a circular definition in which the new word and its definition are equally challenging like "*superstitious is believing in superstitions*". Mothe (2013) suggests that definitions should not be circular. Teachers should dig out ways of defining new words to integrate them with the existing lexicon of students easily.

Regarding lexical relation, both teachers were seen to give synonyms of words when meanings of words were required. That was a good attempt by teachers to help students use words flexibly. Using antonym has also similar advantage although it was not used adequately by teachers whenever they attempted to provide meanings of new words.

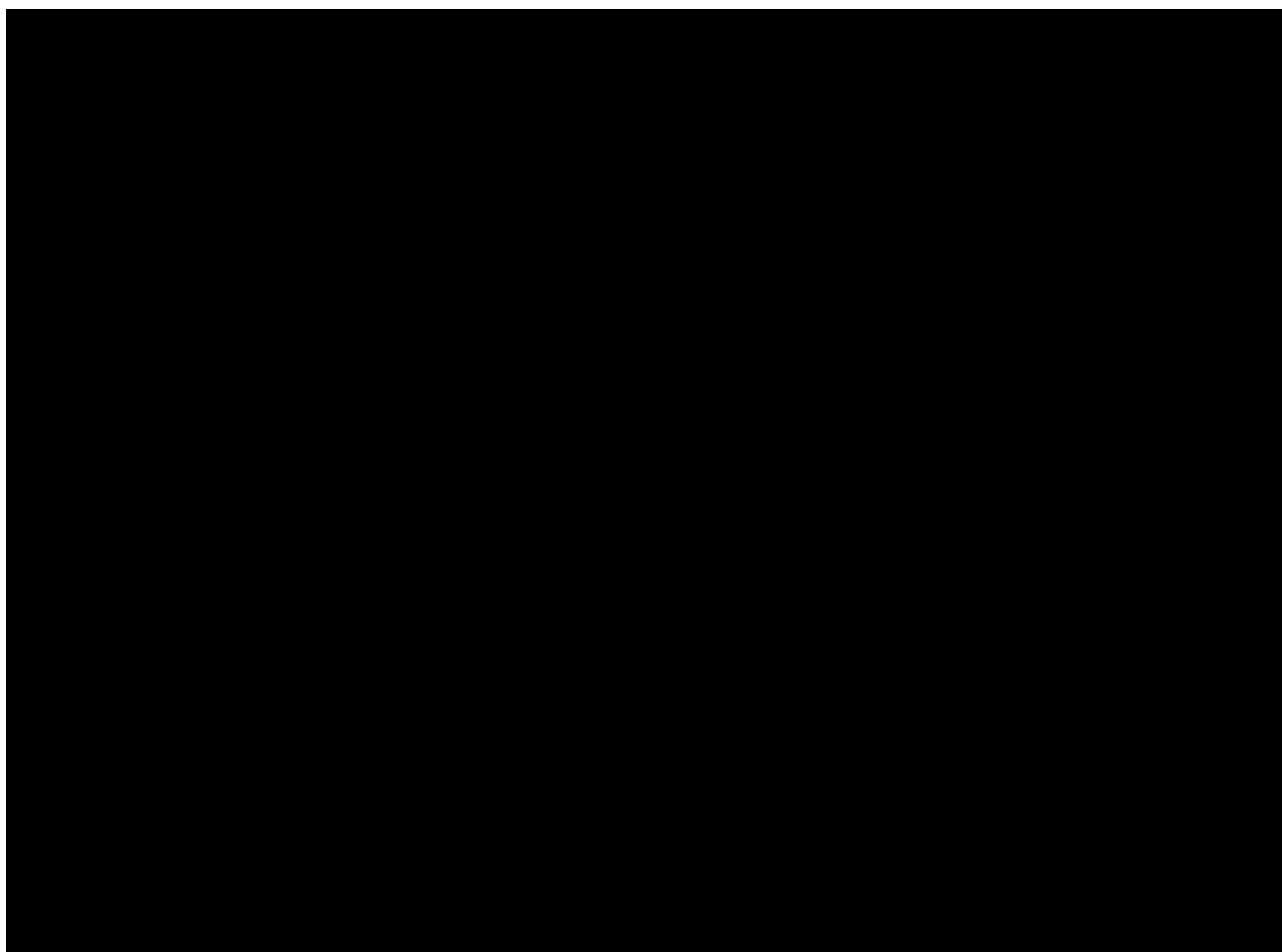
Apart from techniques and activities, the researcher also tried to assess vocabulary recycling. Reviewing vocabularies which were dealt previously is important for better retention of vocabularies. As far as vocabulary recycling is concerned, the researcher confirmed that no effort was made to revisit vocabularies that were once dealt in the classroom.

### 3.3 Presentation and Analysis of Data Obtained from Students' Questionnaire

#### 3.3.1 Techniques

Acquainting students with various techniques help them to devise personalized strategies for learning new words. Using different techniques of teaching vocabulary by teachers also help students not to get bored.

**Table .5 Responses of students concerning techniques employed by EFL teachers**



		Rarely(2)	8	6.7	16		
		Never(1)	0	0	0		
4	teaches words that have similar meanings /synonyms	Always(5)	0	0	0	343	2.88
		Usually(4)	20	17	80		

		Sometimes(3)	65	54.5	195		
		Rarely(2)	34	28.5	68		
		Never(1)	0	0	0		
5	teaches words that have opposite meanings /antonyms	Always(5)	0	0	0	204	1.71
		Usually(4)	0	0	0		
		Sometimes(3)	15	12.6	45		
		Rarely(2)	55	46.2	110		
		Never(1)	49	41.2	49		
6	uses games like crossword puzzles to teach new vocabularies	Always(5)	0	0	0	128	
		Usually(4)	0	0	0		
		Sometimes(3)	0	0	0		
		Rarely(2)	9	7.6	18		
		Never(1)	110	92.4	110		
7	teaches word parts like prefixes to figure out the meaning of the new word, e.g <i>dis-</i> which mean ' <i>not</i> ' <i>disagree</i> (not agree), <i>disallow</i> (not allow)	Always(5)	0	0	0	335	2.81
		Usually(4)	17	14.3	68		
		Sometimes(3)	71	59.7	213		
		Rarely(2)	23	19.3	46		
		Never(1)	8	6.7	8		
8	teaches words that usually go together (collocations) such as <i>make money</i> , <i>do business</i> , <i>light rain</i> , <i>light food</i> , etc.	Always(5)	0	0	0	224	1.88
		Usually(4)	0	0	0		
		Sometimes(3)	6	5	18		
		Rarely(2)	93	78	186		

		Never(1)	20	17	20		
		Always(5)	0	0	0		
		Usually(4)	0	0	0		
		Sometimes(3)	7	6	21		
		Rarely(2)	87	73	174		
		Never(1)	25	21	25		
10	asks you to record words on your vocabulary notebook from books, newspaper etc. and you present them in class	Always(5)	0	0	0	223	1.82
		Usually(4)	0	0	0		
		Sometimes(3)	12	10.1	36		
		Rarely(2)	80	67.2	160		
		Never(1)	27	22.7	27		
11	uses diagrams to present relationships among words	Always(5)	0	0	0	148	1.24
		Usually(4)	0	0	0		
		Sometimes(3)	0	0	0		
		Rarely(2)	29	24.4	58		
		Never(1)	90	75.6	90		

$$Mean\% = \frac{\sum fx}{\sum f} \times 100 \quad \text{where } f = \text{frequency, } x = 5-1 (\text{specific values given}),$$

$$\sum f = \text{total sample size of students} = 119 \quad \text{and} \quad \sum fx = 119 \times 5 = 595$$

From table 5, 61.4% of the students showed that teachers usually gave definitions of new words during vocabulary presentation. In other words, the percentage of these students was more than three times and four times higher than the percentage of students who indicated their teachers gave definitions of new words sometimes and rarely respectively. This shows that giving definitions of words was a preferred technique that English language teachers used to present new words.



The second item in the table required students to rate the frequency of employing translation technique by their English language teachers. Translation helps the teacher to create a local atmosphere in the classroom. However, if students rely on teachers to translate words, they will not develop strategies to figure out word meanings independently. As it is displayed in the above table, 76 out of 119 students responded that their English language teachers usually used translation when they presented vocabulary.

Regarding context, about two-thirds of the students (64.7%) responded that English language teachers usually used context cues to figure out the meaning of new words. This implies that contextual presentation of new words was among the techniques that were used prevalently.

Teaching prefixes and teaching words of similar meaning were not as popular as the above three techniques. 59.6% and 19.3% of the students indicated that teachers sometimes and rarely taught word-parts respectively in order to figure out the meanings of new words. Wordpart technique can contribute a lot for students' vocabulary growth and help to unlock word meaning.

From table5, more than three-quarters (78%) of students specified that English language teachers rarely taught words in relation to collocation.17% of them showed that never in the vocabulary instruction had teachers used collocations. Collocations were, therefore, almost neglected in the vocabulary learning and teaching.

### **3.3.2 Activities**

Vocabulary activities have great contributions for the consolidation of new words dealt previously. Students need to work on the target words to commit them into their memory and make them their active vocabulary.

Table 6 Responses of students regarding vocabulary activities given for them

		Never(1)	0	0	0		
5	gives tasks of grouping words into certain categories, e.g- <i>bracelet, necklace, anklet, etc</i> are categories of <i>'jewelry'</i>	Always(5)	0	0	0	254	2.13
		Usually(4)	2	1.7	8		
		Sometimes	24	20.2	72		
		Rarely(2)	81	68	162		
		Never(1)	12	10.1	12		
6	gives identifying activities like finding words from a passage with the meanings given	Always(5)	0	0	0	209	1.75
		Usually(4)	0	0	0		
		Sometimes(	15	12.6	45		
		Rarely(2)	60	50.4	120		
		Never(1)	44	36.9	44		
7	gives activities to use new words in your own sentences/ paragraphs	Always(5)	0	0	0	207	1.73
		Usually(4)	0	0	0		
		Sometimes	10	8.4	30		
		Rarely(2)	68	57.1	136		
		Never(1)	41	34.5	41		

8	gives activities that involve collocations (words that usually go together)	Always(5)	0	0	0	178	1.49
		Usually(4)	0	0	0		
		Sometimes(	7	6	21		
		Rarely(2)	45	38	90		
		Never(1)	67	56	67		
9	gives activities that incorporate word game	Always(5)	0	0	0	142	1.19
		Usually(4)	0	0	0		
		Sometimes	0	0	0		
		Rarely(2)	23	19.3	46		
		Never(1)	96	80.7	96		

As Table 6 depicts, 61.3% and 21% of students responded that EFL teachers sometimes and rarely provided gap filling activities for students respectively. This implied that these activities were not provided sufficiently. Concerning item number 2, 33.7% and 57.1% of students indicated that they were sometimes and rarely given activities which involved picking the odd one out. This implied these activities were not given the attention they had to deserve. The mean percentage which was less than 50% i.e 47.8% indicated that these activities didn't deserve the attention of teachers.

Concerning number 3, 52.1% and 27.7% of students responded that they were given activities which involved guessing meanings of new words from context sometimes and rarely respectively. With regard to item number 4, majority of students disclosed that teachers provided matching activities. Two-thirds (67.2%) and (14.3%) of the students indicated that teachers usually and always provided matching activities in order to reinforce vocabulary learning respectively. These activities were the most frequently provided activities for vocabulary practice. Regarding grouping words into categories or sorting activities, 20.2% and 68% of students disclosed that these activities were given sometimes and rarely respectively for vocabulary practice.

Although negligible number of students (10) or 8.4% indicated that teachers sometimes gave vocabulary activities that required students to write new sentences or paragraphs using the new words, 57.1% and 34.5% of students indicated that these activities were given rarely and never respectively. Nonetheless, it is important to give opportunities for students to use new words in their sentence construction to deepen their word knowledge.

On the other hand, activities that incorporate word games and collocations tasks were not given consideration. 80.7% and 56% of students replied that word game activities and collocation tasks respectively were never given for them. The mean percentage (23.8%) unveiled activities that incorporate word games were the least preferred activities by EFL teachers followed by collocation activities with mean percentage 29.9%. These figures implied that English language teachers didn't give attention for these activities.

### 3.3.3 Word Recycling

The table below shows the responses of students concerning recycling of vocabularies that are learned previously.

**Table .7 Responses of students concerning recycling of vocabularies**

Recycling of vocabularies	Scales	Responses (n= 119)				
		f	%	fx	$\sum fx$	Mean %
How often does your English language teacher repeat words that you have already learned previously?	Always(5)	0	0	0	173	1.45
	Usually(4)	0	0	0		
	Sometimes	3	2.5	9		
	Rarely(2)	48	40.3	96		
	Never(1)	68	57.1	68		

As table 7 depicts, the majority of students indicated that word were not recycled sufficiently. This is because of the fact that 40.3% and 57.1% of students responded that their teachers rarely and never revisited words respectively. It is important to note that vocabulary instruction should provide students with opportunities to encounter words repeatedly in more than one context.

- ❖ In light of the techniques used to present new words, the results of content analysis show that among the various techniques, presenting new words using context constitutes 56.2%. From results of students' questionnaire, the mean percentage (74.6%) indicates that EFL teachers make use of contextual presentations of new lexical items. Correspondingly, results obtained from classroom observations and interviews verified teachers make ample use of this technique. Acquainting students with context clues helps them to infer meaning of unfamiliar words in their reading and listening comprehensions. Translation is also used extensively in the vocabulary

teaching and learning process. 64% of the students indicated that their teachers usually translated new words into their mother tongue. Results of classroom observations also confirmed that teachers widely employed this technique. The other technique which is widely used in vocabulary presentation is giving definition of new words. 61.4% of students reported teachers usually give definition of new words. Similar kind of result was also secured from both classroom observations and interviews although the content analysis indicates this technique only holds 6.3% .

- ❖ On the other hand, out of the total techniques used in the textbook, games constitute 12.5%. Teachers said they used word play during the interview held with them. Nonetheless, 92.4% of the students indicated that their teacher never used games by the time they presented new lexical items. Result of classroom observations also indicated games were forgotten in the instruction. Dictionary use constitutes 6.5% of the techniques in the textbook.
- ❖ Word focused activities play a crucial role in building the learner's lexical knowledge (Laufer, 2003). With regard to vocabulary activities, result of content analysis shows that 37.5% of the tasks are related to completion tasks, which are the most widely used activities in the textbook.

#### **4. Conclusion**

Based on the findings of the research, the following conclusions were made in relation to vocabulary teaching strategies EFL teachers pursued i.e. the techniques teachers employed during vocabulary instruction, the activities they provided to reinforce vocabulary learning and the extent of vocabulary recycling in subsequent lessons.

1. Teachers usually used limited and shallow vocabulary teaching techniques like definition, context and translation which result in surface learning. Using various techniques, however, help students to devise personalized vocabulary learning strategies. Semantic mapping, dictionary use and vocabulary notebook are not given proper attention both in the textbook and by the teachers. Hence, students are bereft of strengthening the connections between the new words and existing words and being autonomous word learners
2. The results revealed that teachers used vocabulary activities like matching and filling gaps. However, collocation activities, brainstorming and using new words in writing activities that are used to form relational associations and process the new words in depth were used scantily exposing students to forget the new words easily. Students were not asked to use the new words in writing activities. Students would internalize words if the words were integrated in

creative activities like writing. From this one could deduce that students may not be able to internalize the new words of the instruction

3. The textbook prevalently presents new words through context where new words are embedded in reading passages compared to other techniques. In a sharp contrast, semantic mapping and vocabulary notebook are scantily employed. On the other hand, collocations and antonyms are completely neglected in the textbook. Gap filling (completion), identifying and matching activities are commonly used for vocabulary practice, whereas creative use and sorting activities are scarcely used. Activities that entail collocation, antonyms, and ranking and sequencing are completely forgotten.

Recycling was insufficient in the English language instruction. As a result, students were susceptible to forget them easily since it is difficult to learn a word from inadequate meeting.

### **Recommendation**

Based on the results of the study, the following recommendations were proposed.

1. The teacher should make the classroom environment richer in techniques to present the meaning of new vocabulary items and teach them so that learners can learn vocabulary more efficiently. Teachers should try hard to vary their vocabulary teaching techniques.
2. Tasks that make students engaged or involved to work on vocabulary or tasks that promote language use should be incorporated into vocabulary instruction. In order to develop students' vocabulary, teachers should give opportunities for learners to use the words in their own speaking and writing creatively.
3. It's high time for textbook writers to consider incorporating various techniques, to design activities that include collocations, antonyms, selecting/ picking the odd one out, ranking and sequencing, and creative use in the vocabulary instruction and to make sure that words are recycled sufficiently.
4. If students learn new words and then don't see or use them again, they will soon forget them. Teachers need to include activities that give students the chance to review and use new words. Teachers should create opportunities in or out of the class for the learners to revise new vocabulary shortly after initial meeting of it and recall it at increasing intervals if textbooks do not recycle words.



5. The curriculum developers and material designers should also incorporate various techniques of vocabulary learning in instructional materials like text books, syllabus, etc.

### **Acknowledgement**

First and for most, I like to take this opportunity to thank my beloved wife, Indiya Kedir, and my little son Firomsa Mohammed, for being such a dedicated person in providing all their support and love during the course of my study despite a number of prevailing challenges. Without them it would have been such a tougher task to achieve the goals I set for myself.

I would also extend my thanks to Gerba secondary school's principals and teachers who offered their support in one way or the other and those participants in the questionnaires, classroom observations and interviews who contributed a lot for the success of this study. Last, but not the least my gratitude also goes to my friend Mr. Mekonnen Demissie and all staff members of BHU English Language and Literature Department for their moral support to publish this article.

### **REFERENCES**

- Aebersold, J & Field, M. (1997). *Issues and Strategies for Second Language Classrooms*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.
- Alshenqeti, H. (2014). Interviewing as a Data Collection Method: A Critical Review. *Journal of English Linguistics Research*, vol, 3(1), pp.39-45. Retrieved from <https://dx.doi.org/10.5430/elr.v3n1p39>
- Apthorp, H. (2006). Effects of a Supplemental Vocabulary Program in Third Grade Reading/ Language Arts. *Journal of Educational Research*, vol, 100(2), pp. 67-79
- Beck, I, McKeown, M & Kucan, L. (2002). *Bringing Words to Life: Robust Vocabulary Instruction*. New York: Guilford Press
- Byrd, P. (2001). Textbooks: Evaluation for Selection and Analysis for Implementation. In M. Celce-Murcia (Ed.), *Teaching English as a Second or Foreign Language* (3<sup>rd</sup> ed.). pp. 415- 427. USA: Heinle and Heinle
- Creswell, J. (2009). *Research Design: Qualitative, Quantitative and Mixed Methods Approaches* (3<sup>rd</sup>ed.). California: Sage Publications
- DeCarrico, J. (2001). Vocabulary Learning and Teaching. In M. Celce-Murcia (ed.). *Teaching English as a Second or Foreign Language* (3<sup>rd</sup>ed.). pp. 285- 299. USA: Heinle and Heinle
- Gashaw Nigussie (2008). *A Study on the Effectiveness of Teaching-Learning Vocabulary in Three Second Cycle Elementary Schools in Addis Ababa: Grade Eight in Focus* (Unpublished MA Thesis). Addis Ababa University, Addis Ababa
- Gay, L and Diehl, P (1992). *Research Methods for Business and Management*. New York:

Macmillan

Gebreegziabher G/hiwet (2016). *An Evaluation of the Design of vocabulary Tasks and their Implementation with Reference to Grade Nine English Textbook* (Unpublished MA Thesis).

Addis Ababa University, Addis Ababa

Graves, M. (2006). *The Vocabulary Book: Learning & Instruction*. New York: Teachers College Press

Gray, C & Klapper, J. (2009). Key Aspects of Teaching and Learning in Languages. In H. Fry, S. Katteridge & S. Marshall (Eds.), *A Handbook for Teaching and Learning in Higher Education: Enhancing Academic Practice* (3<sup>rd</sup>ed.). pp. 323- 344. New York: Routledge

Gray, D. (2004). *Doing Research in the Real World*. London: Sage Publications

Hamouda, A. (2013). A Study of Dictionary Use by Saudi EFL Students at Qassim University. *Study in English Language Teaching Journal*, vol, 1(1), pp. 227-257. Retrieved from <https://www.scholink.org/ojs/index.php/selt>

Hedge, T. (2002). *Teaching and Learning in the Language Classroom*. Shanghai: Shanghai Foreign Language Press

Johnson, B. (1992). *Improving College Learning Skills*. Massachusetts: D.C Heath and Company

Kothari, R. (2004). *Research Methodology: Methods and Techniques* (2<sup>nd</sup>ed.). New Delhi: New Age International Publishers

Laufer, B. (2003). Vocabulary Acquisition in a Second Language: Do Learners Really Acquire Most Vocabulary by Reading? Some Empirical Evidence. *The Canadian Modern Language Journal*, vol, 59(4), pp. 567-587

Laufer, B. (2005). Ten Best Ideas for Teaching Vocabulary. *The Language Teacher Journal* [Special Issue], vol, 29(07), pp.3-6  
Retrieved from [www.jalt-publications.org/tlt/articles/2005/07/index](http://www.jalt-publications.org/tlt/articles/2005/07/index)

Lewis, M. (2002). *The Lexical Approach: The State of ELT and a Way Forward*. USA: Heinle

Lewis, M. (2008). *Implementing the Lexical Approach: Putting Theory into Practice*. Heinle: Cengage Learning

Mackey, A & Gass, S. (2005). *Second Language Research: Methodology and Design*. London: Lawrence Erlbaum Associates Publishers

Mangal, S. K & Mangal, S. (2013). *Research Methodology in Behavioral Sciences*. New Delhi: PHI Learning Private Limited

Miressa Amenu (2014). *An Assessment of the Practice of Vocabulary Teaching strategies in EFL Classes: Kellem Secondary School Grade Nine and Ten English Teachers in Focus* (Unpublished MA Thesis). Jimma University, Jimma.

- Mukundan, J, Nimehchisalem, V & Hajjimohammadi, R. (2011). Developing an English Language Textbook Evaluation Checklist: A Focus Group Study. *International journal of Humanities and Social Science*, vol, 1(12), pp. 100-106. Retrieved from, [http://www.ijhssnet.com/journals/vol\\_1\\_No\\_12\\_September\\_2011/14.pdf](http://www.ijhssnet.com/journals/vol_1_No_12_September_2011/14.pdf)
- Nation, P. (2005). Teaching Vocabulary. *Asian EFL Journal*, vol, 7(3), pp. 47-54
- Nation, P. (2013). *Learning Vocabulary in another Language* (2<sup>nd</sup>ed.). Cambridge: Cambridge University Press
- Schmitt, N. (2004). *Vocabulary in Language Teaching* (4<sup>th</sup> ed.). Cambridge: Cambridge University Press
- Schmitt, N. (2010). *Researching vocabulary*. Basingstoke, England: Palgrave Macmillan.
- Schmitt, N & Schmitt, D. (1995). Vocabulary Notebooks: Theoretical Understanding and Practical Suggestions. *ELT Journal*, vol, 49(2), pp. 133-142. Retrieved from <http://dx.doi.org/10.1093/elt/49.2.133>
- Scott, J. (2005). Creating Opportunities to Acquire New Word Meanings from Texts. In E. Hiebert and M. Kamil (Eds.), *Teaching and Learning Vocabulary: Bringing Research to Practice*, pp. 69- 91. New Jersey: Lawrence Erlbaum Associates
- Singh, Y. (2006). *Fundamentals of Research Methodology and Statistics*. New Delhi: New Age International
- Solomon Mekonnen (2019). Vocabulary Teaching and Learning Strategies in the Context of Communicative Language Teaching Method: Sodo Preparatory School Grade 11 Students in Focus. *International Journal of Engineering Science and Computing*, vol, 9(7), pp. 23301-23307. Retrieved from <http://ijesc.org/upload/c1e46710425d05b728bef1bfbbfa35f3>
- Thornbury, S. (2002). *How to Teach Vocabulary*. England: Pearson Education
- Waring, R & Takaki, M. (2003). At What Rate Do Learners Learn and Retain New Vocabulary from Reading a Graded Reader? *Reading in a Foreign Language*, vol, 15(2), pp. 130–163. Retrieved from <http://journals.cambridge.org>
- Wragg, E. (1999). *An Introduction to Classroom Observation* (2<sup>nd</sup>ed.). London: Routledge