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Developing productive vocabulary in English

Strategies and activities some English teachers employ to ensure the development of productive vocabulary in lower secondary schools

Utvikling av ordforråd på Engelsk

Strategier og aktiviteter noen engelsklærere bruker for å sikre utviklingen av et produktivt ordforråd i ungdomsskolen

Empirical study

30 stp oppgave

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Summary

This research study sought to get a deep understanding of how second language vocabulary is acquired, and why explicit vocabulary instruction is important for overall attainment of word knowledge depth in a second language (L2). To achieve these aims, three teachers at the lower secondary level have been interviewed. The two main aims for the interviews were to both get an idea of teachers' opinions on vocabulary teaching and to gather a number of strategies that are presently employed in Norwegian classrooms. The data gathered from the interviews have been substantial. The analysis was inductive, meaning that the theoretical framework has been greatly influenced by the interviews. Some of the key points brought to light by the research literature included in this study are: (1) vocabulary development is a cumulative process which develops as a result of many implicit and explicit encounters and retrievals. (2) There is an inherently greater need for explicit vocabulary focus in L2 given the comparatively limited amount of input pupils are regularly exposed to. (3) The encounters with a useful word need to be well planned and structured to ensure fluency development. (4) Vocabulary development is optimized if the course is interspersed with a variety of linguistically-driven vocabulary learning strategies which target the main aspects of a word. (5) Ensuring that the main aspects of a word are covered is more effective than repeated targeting of a few word aspects. In addition, the findings reveal that teaching vocabulary is important for *Bildung* as it teaches appropriacy of language use and how to utilize vocabulary learning skills for future use. Last, but not least, this study provides a comprehensive list of some of the vocabulary strategies that are currently employed in Norwegian classrooms.

Dette forskningsstudiet har hovedsakelig fokusert på to ting. (1) Å søke en dypere forståelse av hvordan vokabular tilegnes på et andrespråk (L2). (2) Hvorfor eksplisitt vokabular opplæring er viktig for elever for deres tilegnelse, utvikling av forståelse, og dybdekunnskaper om ord på et L2. For å nå disse målene, ble tre ungdomsskolelærere intervjuet. To hovedmål for intervjuene var å få et inntrykk av lærernes meninger om vokabular-opplæring og å samle forskjellige strategier som ble anvendt i noen norske klasserom. Informasjonsmengden i datainnsamlingen var omfattende. Analytisk har metoden vært induktiv, noe som betyr at det teoretiske rammeverket i stor grad også har blitt influert av intervjuene. Noen av hovedpunktene som er belyst i forskningslitteraturen og som er inkludert i dette studiet er: (1) utvikling av vokabular er en kumulative prosess som utvikles på bakgrunn av mange implisitte og eksplisitte møter og hente fram ord. (2) Det er et stort behov

for fokus på eksplisitt vokabular-opplæring på L2, gitt den relative lille språkstimulansen elevene kommer i kontakt med. (3) Møtene med viktige ord som elevene skal lære bør være godt planlagte og strukturerte for å sikre ordkyndighet. (4) Vokabular utvikling optimaliseres hvis det forekommer språkfokuserte vokabular opplæringsstrategier som sikter seg inn mot hovedaspektene i et ord. (5) Å sikre at hovedaspektene i et ord blir fokusert på, er mer effektivt enn å repetere noen få aspekter ved et ord. I tillegg, funnene viser at vokabular opplæring er viktig for *Bildung* fordi det lærer elevene god språkbruk samt hvordan utvikle læringsstrategier for å utvikle eget vokabular senere i livet. Sist, men ikke minst, dette studiet viser en sammenfattende oversikt over opplæringsstrategier som er i bruk i noen norske klasserom.

Preface

I have chosen to explore this theme due to a number of underlying challenges related to teaching English vocabulary in Norway. Firstly, while the development of deep vocabulary knowledge is one of the aims of the current Norwegian National curriculum (LK20), I have made an observation that English teaching at the lower secondary level appears to be highly content-based, with little focus on vocabulary development. In addition, the time allotted for English teaching appears to be limited thus causing significant constraints in what can be covered in the classroom. This made me wonder if vocabulary development is perceived as important by both practitioners and the Department of Education in Norway.

Another reason is that LK20 leaves it up to teachers/schools to find and employ the best strategies in their teaching, making knowledge of effective strategies crucial. Lastly, although there is a substantial number of studies on how teachers teach vocabulary in classrooms in a number of countries (Nation, 2001a, p. 74), it appears not to be a common topic of research in Norway.

Hence, as a future English teacher at lower secondary school, I believe it is important to explore vocabulary teaching in Norway because of three factors. Firstly, there was the need to learn more of the theory underlying deep vocabulary development and its role in second language acquisition (SLA). Secondly, there was the need to find out whether vocabulary focus is identified by teachers as important for meeting the language needs of the target student population, or not. Thirdly, and most importantly, I was interested in gathering some practical strategies and activities in order to find out both *how*, and to *what extent* vocabulary instruction is/can be implemented given the time constraints. Therefore research in this study aims to answer the following research questions:

RQ 1 - What opinions do Norwegian teachers have about explicit vocabulary instruction in lower-secondary school and why?

RQ 2- What activities and strategies do Norwegian lower secondary English teachers use to ensure that their pupils attain a productive vocabulary and why? (The term *strategy* is referred

to in this study as an umbrella term for techniques/strategies for enhancing vocabulary development in addition to vocabulary learning strategies.)

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Chapter 1 Introduction

1.1 Introduction

Given the crucial nature of vocabulary in second language learning (L2), this chapter begins with a brief overview of the processes involved in learning vocabulary. It takes a top-down view on what *deep learning* entails and its status as a central theme in the reform of the Norwegian national curriculum. Then it connects the notion of deep learning with vocabulary development. Subsequently, the importance of deep knowledge of words and how productive word knowledge can be understood as a form of deep learning is addressed thus highlighting the importance of explicit vocabulary instruction.

1.2 Background of the study

It is important to clarify some key terms before delving into this study. The term *vocabulary* has two main definitions: a language's lexicon, and an individual's mental lexicon (Flognfeldt & Lund, 2021, p. 40; VanPatten & Smith, 2022, p. 5). A more detailed definition of the latter is "the mechanism human brains use to categorize and make sense of concepts" that can range from simple to complex (Wolsey et al., 2015, p. 449). This definition refers to both words and phrases individuals use in daily communication (Yoong et al., 2019, p. 305). For matters of clarity, the term *vocabulary* is used interchangeably for both definitions throughout this thesis.

Language literacy is a composite phenomenon which develops in correspondence with the levels of knowledge in the four basic language skills of reading, writing, listening, and speaking. Language skills are in turn developed through learning language items, such as pronunciation, vocabulary, and grammatical construction (Charkova & Charkova, 2018, p. 235). However, as pointed out by Arnon et al. (2017, p. 265) vocabulary is the "core representational" language domain as incremental knowledge and understanding of lexemes is a prerequisite for any development in the other language items to take place.

1.2.1 Exploring vocabulary and its role in second language education

Although words are predominantly learned independently, they are not learned in isolation (Yoong et al., 2019, p. 3). Words “fit into many interlocking systems and levels”(Nation, 2001a, p. 23). This means that vocabulary knowledge requires complex knowledge of the many aspects within words, their meanings and how they are associated with other words to convey meaning. Hence, as pointed out by Schmitt (2008, p. 333), learners must obtain a considerable ‘depth’ of knowledge of the many aspects of words to be able to appropriately produce them in a variety of real-life contexts.

1.2.2 Deep learning

Deep learning is an umbrella term often used to convey the magnitude of productive knowledge one has acquired in a given theme. In other words, deep learning includes both one’s understanding and knowledge of a new concept, and the ability to apply and use it when the need arises (Imsen, 2020, p. 354). Since ensuring that pupils reach competence in all the subjects is the main purpose for school, deep learning is often used and applied in the field of education. Deep learning in the classroom can be defined as: the practice of providing the pupils with the opportunity to gradually develop their understanding and knowledge of concepts and connections within and between subjects (Neokleous et al., 2020, p. 285; NOU 2014:7, 2014, p. 35). The primary aim for implementing deep learning at school is to enable pupils to “reflect on their own learning and be able to utilize what they have learned in different known and unknown situations, both individually and together with others” (Neokleous et al., 2020a,p. 285).

1.2.3 Deep learning in the Norwegian National Curriculum

Recent developments in the Norwegian National Curriculum (LK20) put greater emphasis on the importance of *deep learning*. Given its intra- and inter-subject relevance to learning, deep learning is currently stipulated as an important principle in LK20. This particular aspect of the *curriculum development* has been outlined as a response to reports and evaluations of the former Norwegian National Curriculum (LK06). Experts in the field argue that classroom instruction has consisted mainly of questions related to facts, resulting in an unfortunate deficit of *deep knowledge* within and between the subjects (Neokleous et al., 2020b). Consequently the current curriculum explicitly urges schools to provide ample opportunities for deep learning to ensure that pupils “develop understanding of key elements and

relationships in a subject, and so they can learn to apply subject knowledge and skills in familiar and unfamiliar contexts” (Ministry of Education and Research, 2017a, p. 12).

This recommendation also applies for vocabulary development, given that deep knowledge of words is a prerequisite for development in the core elements in English which are *communication, language learning, and working with texts in English* (Ministry of Education and Research, 2017c). Moreover, like in other forms of learning, English language learners (ELLs) need to be provided with many opportunities to ‘recycle’ words they have learned thus enhancing their ability to productively use their vocabulary knowledge in many contexts (Nation, 2001a, p. 82).

1.2.4 *Deep learning versus Surface learning*

A concept which is used in contrast with deep learning is *surface learning*. The NOU 2014:7-report (2014) refers to this type of learning as the unmindful memorization or acquisition of factual knowledge without critical thinking or reflection on how the concept applies to previous knowledge or/and its relevance in other contexts (pp. 35–36). This is a “weaker” form of learning, which in many instances, may not be both readily transferable for comprehension in other contexts or accessible for recall. Therefore, *surface learning* can be viewed as a partial form of learning.

Conversely, with deep learning pupils are encouraged and given opportunities to actively utilize learning strategies and reflect over what they have learned – they are active participants in the learning process and can use their knowledge productively (p. 36). As such, surface learning and deep learning can arguably be understood as the two opposite ends of a *continuum of the process of learning*.

1.2.5 How the notion of deep learning applies in vocabulary development.

We can apply the analogies of *surface learning* and *deep learning* to vocabulary development in a language. This is because vocabulary knowledge can (also) be divided into two main degrees on a knowledge continuum: *receptive* and *productive* vocabulary knowledge (Flognfeldt & Lund, 2021, p. 37; Vincy, 2020, p. 2042). Receptive vocabulary knowledge requires relatively superficial knowledge, whereas productive vocabulary knowledge requires

considerably deep levels of word knowledge. The receptive/productive distinction is presented in detail in the next chapter (subsection 2.4.1). This clear distinction in vocabulary knowledge is one of the main reasons underlying the interest in finding effective strategies and activities which ensure not only receptive skills but also productive skills in English.

1.2.6 Teachers' responsibility to choose suitable vocabulary development strategies

As discussed above, the current Norwegian curriculum accentuates deep learning more than before and this notion applies to learning vocabulary. Additionally, LK20 regards acquiring language learning strategies and vocabulary as important elements in English language learning (Ministry of Education and Research, 2017c, p. 2). These aims imply that teachers must integrate activities and strategies which target vocabulary given their role in mediating the pupils' academic learning.

As specified in LK20, a broad repertoire of learning activities and resources is needed to enhance learning and motivation (Ministry of Education and Research, 2017b). This repertoire must include strategies and activities which allow for differentiation since "giving room for in-depth learning requires that the school takes into consideration that the pupils are different and learn at different speeds and with different progression"(2017b). However, LK20 does not specify which specific strategies and activities should be used for both teaching vocabulary and differentiation. Therefore, the bulk of the task of selecting strategies and activities for developing vocabulary are left to the discretion of the teachers. This implies that teachers are trusted with the responsibility to provide pupils with a well-rounded education. Hence the motivation to explore vocabulary learning strategies teachers currently employ.

1.3 Summary

As specified in the LK20, greater emphasis is put on deep learning. Deep learning applies for vocabulary learning since one must acquire substantial knowledge of a word to be able to use it productively. Vocabulary knowledge can be developed through the employment of vocabulary activities. However, *how* this is done is left to the teachers' discretion. Therefore,

it is up to the teachers to endeavor to develop a rich repertoire of language learning strategies and activities.

Chapter 2 Theoretical framework

2.1 Introduction

This chapter begins with an introduction of the key role vocabulary plays in language learning, followed by an overview of what it means to know a word. Then, implicit and explicit learning as well as vocabulary learning strategies are discussed. Subsequently, a framework for teaching vocabulary in a language learning course is presented. Lastly, the affective factors' role for learning is elaborated on.

2.2 Language learning goals viewed from a vocabulary development perspective.

Lexemes are essentially the building blocks of a language, and hence also fundamental for communication (Arnon et al., 2017, p. 265). The inevitability of vocabulary for communication in second language acquisition (SLA) is highlighted in the following statement by Schmitt and McCarthy:

No matter how well the student learns grammar, no matter how successfully the sounds of L2 are mastered, without words to express a wide range of meanings, communication in an L2 just cannot happen in any meaningful way (1997, p. viii).

Ultimately, vocabulary development is acknowledged by SLA researchers as the bulk of “any language acquisition process, native, or non-native” (Schmitt & McCarthy, 1997, p. 140) since substantial vocabulary development is necessary for progression at every stage of SLA (Schmitt & McCarthy, 1997, p. 140). The essentiality of vocabulary for language learning is one of the reasons underlying the increase in research and reevaluation of L2 vocabulary development in the past decades (Gu, 2017, p. 45; Vincy, 2020, p. 1).

An overview of how vocabulary knowledge plays a fundamental role in second language learning can be made by taking a closer look at the main goals for language learning, as proposed by Nation, who is a central contributor in the field of vocabulary learning and teaching. According to Nation (2001a), the goals for language learning can be divided into four *general goals*. The first one involves *learning language items* (i.e. pronunciation,

vocabulary, grammatical constructions), the second one comprises *subject matter knowledge* and *culture knowledge*. The third one, categorized as *skills* includes the following components of lexical proficiency: accuracy, fluency (the end goal in relation to the basic skills of listening, reading, speaking and writing), learning strategies, and process skills. The fourth general goal is concerned with *discourse* covering rules for appropriacy and text schemata (p. 1).

Although *vocabulary* is categorized as a sub-goal of language learning by Nation (2001a), development in these *general goals* is inherently vocabulary dependent (p. 1). Thus in his book on vocabulary, he addresses language learning from a vocabulary learning perspective (pp. 1–2). This stance is supported by a growing number of studies on language learning which confirm that focused vocabulary teaching resulted in higher levels of proficiency in second language development (Ellis, 2005; Nation, 2001a; Vincy, 2020). Additionally, as discussed in the introduction, learning vocabulary is crucially important for development in the core elements in the English subject in Norway. (*Ministry of Education and Research, 2017c*). Hence, it can be deduced that teaching vocabulary is a good starting point to target the goals for English language learning in Norway.

2.3 What vocabulary development entails

As pointed out by various scholars in recent decades, the lexical learning task involves a process that is significantly more elaborate than one would suppose (Clenton & Booth, 2020, pp. 3–4). This is because a language is a complex, modular, “system of mental representations” consisting of numerous words with each word being derived to capture an idea or concept. (Schmitt, 2014, p. 913; VanPatten & Smith, 2022, p. 5). In addition, given the multiple subsystems within a language, each word has “numerous links of various kinds to the other words in the lexical network” (Schmitt, 2008, p. 913; VanPatten & Smith, 2022, p. 5).

2.4 Categorizations of vocabulary knowledge

Many vocabulary researchers “share an acknowledgement that knowing a word is not an all-or-nothing phenomenon” but rather a cumulative process. (Fitzpatrick & Clenton, 2017, p. 845; Nation, 2001a, p. 4). Hence, to define and assess the extent of learners’ word knowledge, researchers have made and used a number of descriptive categorizations (Charkova &

Charkova, 2018, p. 235). These categorizations are not “mutually inclusive”, as they have been derived “depending on the angle from which the construct is viewed”(p. 236). Two of the most relevant widely used and relevant categorizations (for this study) are discussed in the following subsections.

2.4.1 The receptive/productive scale of knowledge

One categorization is related to what learners are able to do with an item by making a distinction of vocabulary knowledge into *receptive vocabulary knowledge* and *productive vocabulary knowledge* (Schmitt, 2014, p. 919). *Receptive* vocabulary refers to the words an individual can *comprehend* well when listening and reading (Nation, 2001b, p. 24). Receptive knowledge of a word often amounts to a *partial understanding* of a word; while one will be able to have a general idea of a word’s meaning (by inferring from context) when listening or reading, these words will otherwise be inaccessible for productive use (Laufer, 1997, p. 142). Therefore, although one’s receptive vocabulary is important for comprehension, this degree of knowledge of a word is a preliminary part of the acquirement process. Overall, receptive word knowledge does not provide sufficient grounds for good communication.

One’s *productive* vocabulary, on the other hand, refers to the words the user can both comprehend and appropriately utilize for communication in a variety of situations, with relatively little external support. Hence, comparatively speaking, productive vocabulary requires a much higher degree of familiarity than receptive vocabulary (Vincy, 2020, p. 2042). In addition, as cited by Schmitt, productive vocabulary requires far better word connections and organization. In fact, lexical organization might very well be seen “at the root of receptive–productive mastery: Items with the right kind of connection would become productive, while those lacking such connections would remain at a receptive level” (Schmitt, 2014, p. 919). In addition, the effort required for word recall will vary in line with one’s depth of knowledge and familiarity “some words can be retrieved only with effort; some are momentarily inaccessible (the tip-of-the tongue phenomenon); others can be expressed at will instantaneously”(Laufer, 1997, p. 142).

In other words, vocabulary knowledge should be understood as a “continuum between ability to make sense of a word and ability to activate the word automatically for productive

purposes”(Færch et al., 1984, p. 100). Hence, as suggested by Nation, receptive and productive knowledge are considered as the main degrees of measurement within two types of *word knowledge depth* scales: an *oral use receptive/productive* scale and a written use receptive/productive ranging from *unknown* to *known*. Naturally, receptive vocabulary knowledge would be landing somewhere on the ‘*partially known*’ range while productive vocabulary knowledge landing a great deal closer to the ‘known’ end of the *receptive/productive* learning continuum of vocabulary learning depth (Nation, 2001a, p. 30).

2.4.2 Size of Vocabulary

The distinction between *size of vocabulary* and *vocabulary knowledge depth* is another largely employed subdivision of vocabulary knowledge (Schmitt, 2014, p. 913).

Vocabulary size is a concept which scholars often use when referring to one’s entire vocabulary in a given language (Schmitt, 2014, p. 914) Given the sizeableness of a language’s lexicon, a substantial *vocabulary size* is naturally, a prerequisite for efficient receptive skills. According to the experts in corpus-based vocabulary research, learners must know approximately 95-98% of the words in spoken or written discourse in English for unaided comprehension to take place (Nation, 2006, p. 61; Schmitt, 2008, pp. 330–331).

This means that meeting the known-word coverage of 98% requires an average of 8000–9000 word families for reading text, and from 5000–7000 word families for listening comprehension (Nation, 2006, p. 59) and up to 5000–7000 word families for oral discourse (Schmitt, 2008, p. 329). These statistics clearly illustrate how a substantial vocabulary must be in place in order to function well in English. Although vocabulary size refers to all words a learner can recognize—ranging from vague to deep knowledge—many words in this category fall into the category of receptive (partial) knowledge. Thus, vocabulary size and receptive knowledge are closely connected constructs (Charkova & Charkova, 2018, p. 236).

2.4.3 Vocabulary knowledge depth

As previously touched on multiple times, learners must have substantial knowledge about each word (besides needing to have knowledge of a wide range of words) in order to be able to use them productively (Schmitt, 2008, p. 333). This concept is often referred to as

vocabulary knowledge depth or vocabulary precision (Cavalli et al., 2016) and is just as important as vocabulary size for mastery in a language (Schmitt, 2008, p. 333).

As discussed in section 2.3., acquiring deep vocabulary knowledge is a complex process since a language is modular, with multiple subsystems. Consequently, many of these subsystems must be targeted for deep vocabulary development to occur (VanPatten & Smith, 2022, p. 5). To facilitate the *development of* and *assessment of* learners' knowledge of the subsystems at the word level, scholars have proposed a number of conceptualizations of the subsystems in a language. This has been done by taking a bottom-up approach where the subsystems are targeted as elements within a word.

One good conceptualization for “what is involved in the learning of a new word” is given by Laufer (See Laufer, 1997, p. 141). However, the most widely recognized conceptualization was presented by Paul Nation in 2001 (Schmitt, 2014, p. 916). In his taxonomy of aspects of a word, Nation (2001a) divides word knowledge into three main aspects: form, meaning and use (p. 26). A detailed overview over what these knowledge aspects include is given in Table 1. This table exemplifies what the form, meaning and use of a word are by providing and operationalizing each subcategory in the form of questions targeting the receptive (R) and productive (P) levels of proficiency.

Table 1

Form	spoken	R	What does the word sound like?
		P	How is the word pronounced?
	written	R	What does the word look like?
		P	How is the word written and spelled?
	word parts	R	What parts are recognisable in this word?
		P	What word parts are needed to express the meaning?
Meaning	form and meaning	R	What meaning does this word form signal?
		P	What word form can be used to express this meaning?
	concept and referents	R	What is included in the concept?
		P	What items can the concept refer to?
	associations	R	What other words does this make us think of?
		P	What other words could we use instead of this one?
Use	grammatical functions	R	In what patterns does the word occur?
		P	In what patterns must we use this word?
	collocations	R	What words or types of words occur with this one?
		P	What words or types of words must we use with this one?
	constraints on use (register, frequency ...)	R	Where, when, and how often would we expect to meet this word?
		P	Where, when, and how often can we use this word?

Note: In column 3, R = receptive knowledge, P = productive knowledge.

What is involved in knowing a word (Nation, 2001b, p. 27)

Table 1 has been widely used and cited chiefly because it conceptualizes the range of the language components that need to be known in an effective way (Schmitt, 2014, p. 916). Secondly, it clearly demonstrates the key role of receptive and productive skills as the two distinct, main degrees in covering all the ‘word knowledge’ aspects (Nation, 2001a, p. 26). Thirdly, it highlights how receptive and productive levels of mastery develop in accordance with a learner’s focus—whether it is understanding a message or getting one’s meaning across.

Furthermore, it clearly illustrates that, as pointed out above in order to deeply know a word one must have a general knowledge of multiple linguistic features, including pronunciation, spelling and morphological structure; grammatical function; paradigmatic and syntagmatic associations; phonological and syntactic structure. In addition, in some cases it involves learning the additional polysemous meaning senses of a word to avoid using words in inappropriate ways (Laufer, 1997, p. 141). For instance, if we take the word ‘simple’, while the referential meanings (e.g., plain, straightforward, basic) are largely neutral, the pragmatic use of ‘simple’ when referring to a person is ‘mentally impaired’. Therefore,

because of this affective meaning of the word ‘simple’ when used to describe people, using ‘simple’ when referring to someone that is for instance, unpretentious, could result in most cases that the statement would be mistakenly perceived as a derogatory comment. In sum, the higher the mastery of the different aspects, the richer the depth of the knowledge i.e. the ability to appropriately use a word productively (Schmitt, 2014, p. 916).

Although good levels of word knowledge depth are required to develop vocabulary size, vocabulary knowledge depth “presupposes both receptive and productive knowledge at all levels of knowing a word” (Charkova & Charkova, 2018, p. 236) Hence, although empirical findings typically reveal strong correlation between vocabulary size and depth (e.g., Vincy, 2020) these constructs do not grow at the same rate (Schmitt, 2014, p. 915). This is because deep knowledge growth depends on a much greater number of spaced repetitions to counteract the typical decline of readily accessible words over time (Schmitt, 2008, p. 348). In other words, the principle of “use it or lose it” applies for enriching vocabulary depth.

Therefore, according to Schmitt, learners will typically have some knowledge of a large number of words, while fully mastering a comparatively small number of words (Schmitt, 2014, p. 915).

2.5 The crucial role of word repetitions

As highlighted by the word knowledge table, the vocabulary learning process is complex and as such must be acknowledged as a cumulative process (Nation, 2001a, p. 4; Schmitt, 2008, p. 334). Therefore, the overriding principle for ensuring vocabulary development is to promote *engagement* as vocabulary research findings reveal that virtually anything that leads to more exposure, attention, manipulation, or time spent on lexical items adds to their learning. In fact, even the process of being tested on lexical items appears to facilitate better retention” (Schmitt, 2008, p. 339).

Given the importance of providing many engagements for the vocabulary learning process, scholars have researched often research on the number of repetitions required successfully “push the incremental learning of a word forward” in a durable way (Schmitt, 2008, p. 347). However, reaching a consensus on the exact number of repetitions required is challenging, as findings have indicated that anywhere between five to 20 exposures are required (p. 81).

Some of the main reasons underlying this variability are because firstly, each exposure can differ in quality, secondly, an individual learner's need for time and repetitions will always differ to some extent. Furthermore, it is hardly possible to sum up every encounter learners receive, as lexical items are acquired from two distinct types of repetition: *incidentally* from implicit exposure to a language, or *intentionally* from drawing explicit attention to words and their aspects (VanPatten & Smith, 2022, p. 3)..

2.5.1 Implicit learning and teaching

As Rebuschat states, *implicit learning* is “a fundamental feature of human cognition” largely responsible for the (inadvertant) development of many crucial skills including developing fluency in a language (2015, p. xiii). Incidental acquisition of language—specifically vocabulary—is obtained from large amounts of input (reading and listening) where knowledge of a word is slightly enhanced from every interaction eventually culminating in the mastery of the word. In a first language environment, young native learners are daily exposed to large amounts of input hence acquiring numerous words incidentally each year (Nation, 2001a).

However, this is not the case for L2 learners because in contrast to L1 contexts, the input is very limited in most second/first language contexts. Hence, incidental vocabulary learning in a L2 context is often considerably less effective for achieving satisfactory levels of vocabulary development (Cobb as cited in Webb & Nation, 2012) On the other hand, the amount of English input pupils receive in Norway can vary greatly, because many pupils currently receive (varying amounts of) extramural input from social media and other forms of entertainment in English. According to findings from research in Scandinavia, extramural vocabulary acquirement has been a considerable contributor to enhancing a number of pupils' L2 vocabulary development and engagement with English (Sundqvist, 2009).

While implicit encounters with words is often the most effective way to acquire “contextual types of word knowledge” (Schmitt, 2008, p. 353), implicit teaching of vocabulary can only provide a couple of encounters with words (Nation, 2001a, p. 82). Given the multifaceted nature of words, one or two occasional exposures to a word is far from sufficient to achieve deep levels of vocabulary uptake (Charkova & Charkova, 2018, p. 248). Consequently, words acquired by incidental learning in a L2 context are unlikely to be learned to a productive level

(Schmitt, 2008, p. 354). This is because, as pointed out by Smith, especially in the initial stages of learning a word, a more explicit approach is required for acquiring knowledge of the word's form, meaning and establishing the word's form-meaning link (as well as other aspects) to ensure word comprehension and thus enhancing incidental learning from subsequent meetings with a word (pp. 334–354).

2.5.2 Explicit learning and teaching

VanPatten (2022, p. 3) suggests that *explicit learning* can be understood as the opposite of *implicit learning* as it “involves some kind of intent to purposefully learn something, whereas, with implicit learning, there is no such intent” (2022, p. 3). Explicit vocabulary teaching is about using strategies and activities to deliberately draw attention to or explain one or more aspects of a word, as well as consolidating newly acquired knowledge of a word (Nation, 2001a, pp. 94–95; Yoong et al., 2019, p. 309).

Explicit vocabulary teaching is helpful for language learning in a variety of situations. On the one hand, explicit activities/strategies are often added into implicit learning situations in which the need to enhance pupils' comprehension arises, such as using translation in *the receptive direction* (English word → L1 translation) when engaging in the message-focused activities of listening and reading. Other instances arise when having to complete activities in reading and writing, where finding the English equivalent for a foreign word is required and hence the strategy of *translation* is used in the productive direction (L1 word → English word) (Nation, 2001a, pp. 29, 48).

On the other hand, there is the explicit vocabulary teaching of useful or important words with the end goal being to learn for productive use. This type of intentional teaching is what Nation refers to as *rich instruction* (Nation, 2001a, pp. 94–95). Rich instruction is ultimately an indispensable and effective approach for acquiring deep knowledge of new words, as studies have revealed that it “almost always leads to greater and faster gains, with a better chance of retention and of reaching productive levels of mastery” (Schmitt, 2008, p. 341).

The topic words that are to be targeted in a period (or such) are typically selected by teachers, as pupils need guidance on which words they need to emphasize on (Schmitt, 2008, p. 333).

Given the time constraints and complexity of language teaching, the number of words that can be targeted in depth is limited thus making it crucial for learners that the topic words are worth their time and effort (Flognfeldt & Lund, 2021, p. 38) However, choosing the most important topic words can prove to be challenging as for instance, coursebook glossaries typically do not provide a clear distinction between words that need to be targeted mainly to enhance the learner's comprehension, and words that are useful for enhancing pupils' immediate communicative needs (Ecke, 2018, p. 5). This means in practice that it is not advisable for teachers to simply teach the words suggested in a glossary or coursebook.

Alternatively, teachers should take the time to “decide whether the word is worth spending time on or not” by distinguishing whether the word is a high frequency/useful for developing the pupils' current vocabulary development or not (Nation, 2005, p. 48). However, some teachers may not be experienced enough to precisely make the distinction. Therefore, as Schmitt points out, it is advisable for practitioners to “consult frequency lists in conjunction with their intuitions” (Schmitt, 2008, p. 333).

Following the selection of target words, decisions need to be made on which word aspects need to be targeted (Ecke, 2018, p. 5). It is important at this point to plan for multiple opportunities to target word aspects, as too much intensive teaching of several word aspects at once will, in many instances, only have a confusing, counterproductive effect (Nation, 2001a, p. 82). Hence a smart approach to teaching vocabulary depth is to carefully consider the *learning burden* (i.e., most important aspects that need to be taught) of a word (Nation, 2001a, p. 23). Since, the lexical items containing a “similar form to first language words will have a lighter learning burden than words containing unfamiliar sounds and unfamiliar combinations of sounds” (Nation, 2001a, p. 44). As Nation states, teachers should be able to make an estimation of the most important aspects of a word that require attention and direct their teaching accordingly (Nation, 2001a, p. 24).

It is important at this point that the teacher has an overall plan for effectively targeting the most crucial aspects of a word in both implicit and explicit learning situations since “most vocabulary tasks focus their attention almost solely on introducing the meaning of new words” (Schmitt, 2008, p. 343). Then following the completion of such tasks many teachers and learners assume a word to be ‘learned’ (p. 333). While the form–meaning link is “the first

and most essential lexical aspect which must be acquired, and may be adequate to allow recognition”(p. 333), this will often only lead to a partial word knowledge. The reason for that is because, solely studying a word’s form, meaning and making the form-meaning linkage, without for instance, without any contextual elaboration will naturally only result in limited knowledge gains. If pupils are not given opportunities to “follow up on this initial state of knowledge”, while such ‘learned’ words may be recognized in subsequent receptive situations, they most likely will not be readily available for recall (2014, p. 914).

In cases such as this one, pupils are typically increasing their vocabulary size, while only gaining a rather superficial amount of vocabulary knowledge depth (2008, p. 333; 2014, pp. 914–915). This explains why, as pointed out by Schmitt (2008, p. 329), a great number of learners fail to adequately meet the lexical learning challenge. Hence, vocabulary learning theory emphasizes the need for learners to engage in deep processing of words (i.e., targeting the important aspects of a word, providing many recycling opportunities) to ensure that pupils depth of knowledge goes beyond a superficial word-to-meaning connection (Charkova & Charkova, 2018, p. 245).

Research on strategies for explicit vocabulary learning

As previously pointed out, regular explicit attention to the different dimensions of a word can be given by using *vocabulary learning strategies* that effectively target each word dimension. However this requires both knowledge and insight into research, as presently a great variety of vocabulary learning strategies have been identified (Charkova & Charkova, 2018, p. 237). There are for instance, strategies which are most pertinent for the initial phases of learning (i.e., translation), others provide superficial word processing (e.g., mechanical memorization), while others require deep word processing (e.g., morphological analysis) (Fan, 2003, p. 235). Consequently, careful selection of the most appropriate strategy in each vocabulary learning situation is important.

Alongside their interest in *what it means to know a word*, a number of researchers have conducted empirical research to examine the vocabulary learning strategies learners’ use in view of their language learning outcomes (Charkova & Charkova, 2018; Fan, 2003; Gu & Johnson, 1996). The findings from this particular body of research have provided empirical evidence that “there is a difference in the strategies employed by learners with high levels of

vocabulary knowledge and learners with limited vocabulary knowledge”(Charkova & Charkova, 2018, p. 238). These research findings bring to light the importance of identifying and employing an inventory of vocabulary learning strategies/activities that are most conducive to deep vocabulary learning (p. 236).

An example of this is a quantitative conducted by Charkova and Charcova (2018, p. 239). In this study, 110 Bulgarian college students—enrolled in classes for learning English as a foreign language—took a depth of vocabulary test, and a self-report survey on the vocabulary learning strategies they used elicited by Likert scales (on a scale ranging from 1-not used to 5-regularly used). A t-test was taken from the vocabulary test scores in order to categorize the sample into two groups: *limited knowledge group* and *superior knowledge group*. Once this was done, the relationship between the most frequently used vocabulary learning strategies and vocabulary knowledge was ascertained by use of discriminant function analysis. This was done in order to find out which strategies are most associated with advanced and limited vocabulary knowledge (pp. 241, 244).

The results from the discriminant function analysis indicate a significant correlation between eight “bottom-up” linguistic strategies and the superior knowledge group (p. 242). The first two strategies—synonyms and antonyms—are about making paradigmatic associations between words. The next three—prefixes, roots, and suffixes—are about learning word parts because of their transferable properties. The sixth one—collocations—is about focusing on words’ syntagmatic relationships. The seventh—pronunciation check—involves reading/listening to the how a word is pronounced. And finally, the eighth—use in sentences— is about recycling words through contextualization.

Another strategy that the superior group used significantly more than the limited knowledge group was the use of monolingual dictionaries. Re-classification analysis of the results suggests that the strategies a learner consistently utilizes is a major predictor of a learner’s language learning outcomes. In other words, the results imply that the learners who use bottom-up linguistically-driven strategies and monolingual dictionaries are more likely to successfully attain deep vocabulary knowledge than those who primarily use other strategies such as, guessing from context and mechanical memorization strategies (Charkova & Charkova, 2018, pp. 245, 247).

As highlighted by the researchers, these findings have important implications for teaching and learning vocabulary strategies. It brings to light the importance of systematically utilizing linguistically-driven strategies which focus on the aforementioned linguistic aspects of a word in vocabulary instruction and learning. One useful strategy which facilitates this aim is the use of a monolingual English dictionaries as they «provide more comprehensive linguistic information about words' meanings, lexical categories, derivatives, and syntactic behavior (examples of use) than bilingual dictionaries”(p. 244).

Students should be aware of why explicitly learning and examining the linguistic features of words are important steps to deep vocabulary development and thus be encouraged to make linguistically-driven strategies their default vocabulary learning strategies. This goal is important not only for pupils' present vocabulary development, but also to teach pupils how to successfully develop their vocabulary independently which, as pointed out by the authors, is the “ultimate goal of teacher-regulated activities” in L2 learning (p. 248).

Although such findings are helpful, it is important to note that when provided results such as these, teachers should not simply rule out all other strategies as less valuable in all situations. First, because studies such as this one rely heavily on what the participants do or do not do to draw their conclusions. However, such assumptions do not take into consideration that research shows that “learners of different proficiencies” often benefit from the use of different strategies (Schmitt, 2008, p. 351). For instance, *guessing from context* is a strategy that most learners perceive as useful. However, this is not always the case as studies show that, while being an effective strategy for advanced learners who know a high percent of words in discourse, the reliability of this strategy declines greatly in line with lower levels of language proficiency with some only correctly guessing 30% to 40% of words (Schmitt, 2008, p. 350).

The other point that must be considered is that certain strategies that are often used by both groups (low proficiency and high proficiency groups) do not necessarily fall into the category of less effective. This is because, as previously described, the *learning burden* of each word will always differ hence making certain strategies more pertinent in particular word learning phases than others. An example of such a strategy which is widely used and recommended by

scholars is *using a LI translation equivalent* because of its properties as one of the most simple yet sensible ways to quickly establish the initial meaning–form connection (Nation, 2001a, p. 29; Schmitt, 2008, p. 353). In sum, a vocabulary learning strategies are designed to target at least one aspect of a word, as such they should be generally be perceived as a small “useful step in the cumulative process of learning that word” (Nation, 2001a, p. 82).

2.5.3 The importance of many encounters for maximizing vocabulary development

From the discussion above, it is clear that explicit and implicit approaches are “not only complementary but positively require each other”(Schmitt, 2008, p. 353). In addition, it highlights the need for providing pupils with a balance of explicit and implicit types of encounters with words to ensure deep learning. Hence, as Webb and Nation advice, teachers must make “clear goals for vocabulary learning during a course and make their students aware of these goals”(Webb & Nation, 2012, p. 1). Once the goals are clear, teachers should use a method or approach that both takes into account the incremental nature of vocabulary development allows for a wide variety of exposures followed by some form of assessment to ensure that all pupils have been afforded the means to gain “comprehensive knowledge of the target words” (Webb & Nation, 2012, p. 1).

Nation has created a useful framework which not only targets these areas but also shows how the development of the basic skills can be targeted in conjunction with the development of vocabulary. Utilizing frameworks such as this one (presented in the section below) when planning for teaching vocabulary is important because, as stated in LK20, “[t]he competence goals in the subjects must be considered together (Ministry of Education and Research, 2017a, p. 12).

2.6 The Four Strands—A framework for English vocabulary instruction

In *The Four Strands* (2007), Nation proposes a theoretically grounded and evidence-based framework for planning and implementing a language course from a vocabulary-focused

perspective. According to Nation, a well-planned language course should consist of activities which provide exposure to “high frequency vocabulary” in the following four major strands: meaning-focused input, meaning-focused output, language-focused learning, and fluency development (Nation, 2005, p. 53). These four major components have been referred to as strands because “they can be seen as long continuous sets of learning conditions that run through the whole language course”(2007, p. 2). The basis for this approach to language teaching in four strands is the time-on-task principle. This robust principle applies for all learning, as “the more time you spend doing something, the better you are likely to be at doing it”(p. 2).

Balancing the instruction time spent on each strand is crucial for the steady development of the four basic language skills in English (p. 8). In addition, as advised by Ellis (2005, pp. 211–212) it is important that language teaching focuses predominantly on meaning, with some time also devoted for focusing on form. One reason for this is that while deliberate language-focused activities are efficient for a very small scope of the language, meaning-focused activities covers a much larger range of language learning and can provide many more repetitions and enjoyment (Nation, 2007, p. 9).

In addition, some of the more contextualized aspects of word knowledge (i.e., intuitions of frequency) are best learned implicitly from numerous exposures (Schmitt, 2008, p. 353). Therefore, three of the strands are meaning-focused while only one focuses on form. Nation highlights the importance of keeping this three-to-one balance when teaching by exhorting teachers to devote roughly one-fourth of the total instruction time on each strand, where high frequency vocabulary is encountered in all four stands (Nation, 2007, p. 8).

2.6.1 Meaning-focused input

Meaning-focused input is the strand specifically designated for receptive use of a language, hence comprising of all reading and listening activities. As its name implies, in this strand the learner’s main focus is on understanding the meaning being conveyed by the running words they come in contact with in order to either gain information or for personal enjoyment (p. 3). Based on extensive research, (e.g., Krashen’s input hypothesis and studies on extensive reading) comprehensible input is acknowledged by scholars as a crucial part of second

language development. As such, learners should be given many opportunities to receive comprehensible input through reading and listening activities. (p. 4) In addition, some pupils receive extramural input in varying degrees. Hence, Nation advises teachers to strive to take both the intramural and extramural activities their pupils are engaging into consideration (p. 8).

However, there are a couple of challenges to vocabulary development in this strand. Firstly, the amount of input teachers can expose pupils to is considerably limited, thus leading to fewer word repetitions. Consequently, the vocabulary learning gains in this strand are typically small compared to the ones gained through deliberate vocabulary teaching (p. 4). Therefore, Nation suggests maximizing the quantities of input by, for instance integrating extensive reading programs to optimize vocabulary uptake in this strand (p. 4).

The other major challenge is that learners should be familiar with at least 95 per cent of the words they are meeting for learning (of both the content and vocabulary through contextualization) to occur (p. 3). Hence, in order to improve incidental learning in the classroom, teachers must both ensure that the vocabulary in the input provided is at the pupils' vocabulary knowledge level and be aware of the need to provide explicit attention to unfamiliar words as they arise (Nation, 2007, p. 10; Schmitt, 2008, p. 352).

2.6.2 Meaning-focused output strand

Grounded on Swain's output hypothesis, the second strand of meaning-focused output is focused primarily on the meaning that learners need to convey when speaking or writing (Nation, 2007, p. 4). In this strand learners are provided with opportunities to both retrieve and generatively use newly learned words in discourse (p. 5). Additionally, some of the time spent on speaking activities will also involve comprehension and learning through input, as "one person's output can be another person's input"(p. 4). As with the previous strand, learners should be given ample opportunities to speak and write with words that are largely familiar to them (p. 4).

As discussed in section 2.4.1, productive learning is process which requires substantially deeper processing than the process of recognition thus making it a key contributor to language

development (Nation, 2007, p. 5). A couple of reasons for this are that firstly, when engaging in output activities, previously met vocabulary are recycled and hence made highly more likely to be accessible for future recall (Nation, 2001a, p. 2). Secondly, the need to use the language makes pupils “focus on words in ways they did not have to while listening and reading”(Nation, 2001a, p. 2). This different type of attention to words motivates them to “listen like a speaker and read like a writer”(p. 2). This raises learners’ awareness of words they need more practice on thus in turn motivating learners to develop communication strategies for acquiring external help to be able to successfully get their message across (Nation, 2007, p. 5).

2.6.3 Language-focused strand

The language-focused strand is the strand that is designated specifically for the intentional learning of language features such as “pronunciation, spelling, vocabulary, grammar and discourse” as well as vocabulary learning strategies (Nation, 2001a, p. 6). Activities in this strand include the typical grammar and vocabulary activities as well as intensive reading, getting feedback from writing and learning strategies (p. 6). Explicit language focus is included as a strand based on growing evidence of its efficacy in speeding up the process of developing deep word knowledge (e.g., Boers et al., 2006; Nation, 2001a, pp. 296-316; Williams, 2005, pp. 271-291). Given that L2 language learners have generally much less time and exposures, explicit vocabulary focus is an indispensable factor for developing substantial vocabulary knowledge in a limited amount of time.

However, naturally, there are time constraints for explicit vocabulary focus within this strand. As such, the number of words that can be explicitly targeted in a period is limited (Nation, 2001a, p. 1). One reason for this is that if excessive time is spent on deliberate study, there will be little time left to learn a wide range of lexical items from exposure in the other strands (Schmitt, 2014, p. 914). In addition, explicit vocabulary teaching is only one of the many language features that need to be addressed in this strand. And, as Nation insists, no more than one fourth of the whole time spent in a course should be allotted for language-focused learning (Nation, 2007, p. 6).

Moreover, as previously mentioned, only a small proportion of the aspects of a word can be at a time from explicit teaching as intensive teaching can cause cognitive overload (Nation, 2005, pp. 47, 53). Hence, in addition to rich instruction, teachers must devise a plan for providing the additional necessary exposures to the topic/important words in the meaning-focused strands (Nation, 2005, p. 54; Nation, 2007, p. 11). Maximizing the total number of word recycling opportunities provided in all the strands is best systemized by employing vocabulary teaching procedures. In such procedures new words are typically explicitly presented first, then subsequently given many exposures in a wide range of activities. There are many vocabulary teaching procedures such as the ones mentioned by Nation (2001a, pp. 107–108) which can become handy tools for incorporating a wide variety of vocabulary enhancing activities in all four strands.

2.6.4 Fluency development strand

As the name implies, the fluency strand is for promoting fluency in listening, speaking, reading, and writing. In other words, this is the strand for consolidating vocabulary knowledge. As with the first two strands presented, fluency is meaning-focused, since the activities in this strand aim to provide pupils opportunities to both convey and receive messages. In this strand learners are encouraged to practice familiar words with some emphasis on increasing speed of production. As emphasized by Nation, if the activity involves using many unfamiliar words or does not nudge pupils to speed up, it is not a fluency activity. The two main types of L2 fluency activities are activities that involve “repetitive reception or production of the same material”—such as those provided in games—and those that do not—such as in writing assignments (Nation, 2007, p. 8).

As pointed out by Thornbury (2002, p. 102), the more frequently a newly acquired word is retrieved from one’s memory, the more likely one will be able to recall it. An innovative way to consolidate vocabulary knowledge is the use of games. Games add the elements of fun and variety to learning in the classroom. Given their competitive nature, games can inspire personal engagement with vocabulary. Emotional engagement activates the affective dimension of learning, establishing deeper connections to the learner’s mental lexicon (Flognfeldt & Lund, 2021, p. 39).

There are a number of *vocabulary games* which have been designed (or adapted) to prompt pupils' recall of recently learned words, encouraging speedy word retrieval. Scholars field such as Thornbury, advocate integrating vocabulary games as a fun and memorable way to provide opportunities for pupils to produce newly acquired words (Thornbury, 2002, p. 102). However, he also admonishes about the limitations utilizing games for vocabulary learning. For instance, most vocabulary games only deal with single de-contextualized words (e.g., Hangman) consequently providing a partial interaction with the target lexis. Therefore, games should be used sensibly with moderation as a supplement to more contextualized and cognitively demanding vocabulary activities (p. 102). In other words, the judicious use of the time spent on activities and games is essential for pupils to gain deep knowledge of English vocabulary.

2.7 Affective factors

There is another crucially important factor that teachers must consider in addition to providing opportunities for many word repetitions. Research findings on SLA have revealed that affective factors (emotional factors) have significant influence on the cognitive processes in the brain greatly impacting learning and memory retention. On his review on SLA theory, Krashen presents *the input hypothesis* and *the affective filter hypothesis* (Krashen, 1982). According to the latter theory, L2 learners acquire language in accordance with the strength of their *affective filter*—the higher the strength of the filter, the lower the amount of input absorbed into the brain (Krashen, 1982, pp. 30–31). In other words, the affective filter can be understood as a psychological barrier to optimal intake of comprehensible input. (Ni, 2012, p. 1508).

A quantitative study was conducted on advanced English majors by Hui Ni (2012). One of the aims of this study was to measure the effects the three major affective factors (motivation, self-confidence, and anxiety) had on students' language learning outcomes. The data was elicited through a Likert scales survey of students' beliefs and attitudes towards learning English. (Ni, 2012). The findings revealed strong correlations between the three major affective variables and the students' language proficiency levels. In accordance with the *affective filter hypothesis*, emotions played a major role on students' attitudes towards SLA, which in turn caused significant impact on the proportion of subject matter content they were able to take in. (Ni, 2012, p. 1512). Unsurprisingly, high achieving L2 learners typically

perceived their motivation and self-efficacy levels to be high, and their anxiety levels to be low. The opposite was also true for low achieving students who reported negative emotions towards their motivation and capacity to learn while experiencing moderate to high levels of anxiety (p. 1511).

These empirical findings confirm the notion that affective factors play a key role in L2 learning thus providing implications for L2 teaching (p. 1509). They also provide evidence that many learners with lower levels of proficiency have negative attitudes and experience higher levels of anxiety (Ni, 2012, p. 1511). This brings to light how negative emotions can lead to low learning outcomes—and vice versa—thus creating a negative spiral. Another factor which can exacerbate negative states are poor connections with other classmates and the teacher. Hence, it is of utmost importance that teachers are regularly taking measures to promote a friendly and supportive learning environment, by rectifying emerging issues, and providing appropriate feedback which encourages and motivates.

2.8 Summary

Vocabulary is essentially the elementary elements of a language, hence, findings from research have shown that development in vocabulary is a crucial part of development in a language. However, vocabulary development is a complex process as a language is an intricate system with many subsystems consisting of many thousands of words, each with a number of links with each other. In other words, vocabulary development is essentially about learning the elements of the subsystems, numerous words, and how they associate and interact with each other. Each word is associated with the main elements of the subsystems. Therefore, the subsystems of a language are learned at a word level as aspects within a word.

Acquiring deep word knowledge requires substantial knowledge of each aspect. Therefore, words are not learned from a couple of exposures, but rather acquired gradually from many different exposures in a number of contexts. Word knowledge can hence be placed on a vocabulary knowledge continuum ranging from unknown to known. Scholars and practitioners use two similar conceptualizations (receptive/productive, size/depth) when referring to word knowledge depth. Research findings reveal that ultimately, the cardinal rule

for teaching vocabulary depth is to provide an abundance of opportunities for exposures, and word recyclings to ensure the development of vocabulary knowledge depth.

Word repetitions are either provided implicitly from input or explicitly from vocabulary learning strategies and activities. Explicit vocabulary teaching is important for both comprehending new words as well for ensuring vocabulary development in a limited amount of time. In addition, it is important for teaching, vocabulary learning skills, and appropriacy in language use. However, explicit vocabulary teaching should be employed sparingly as there must be a balance in the types of activities and strategies enacted in a language course in order for steady progression in all the basic skills to occur.

Nation proposes a language learning framework for providing a balanced language course based on language learning theory. This framework categorizes the activities and strategies in a language course into four strands which are designed to develop: receptive skills; productive skills; language features; and word knowledge consolidation. One important factor to optimize vocabulary development in each strand is to ensure that pupils are familiar with most of the words they encounter or are required to use.

The language-focused strand is dedicated to explicit teaching of linguistic features including vocabulary. While the other three are focused on meaning and developing in the four skills and fluency development. All strands are important for both language and vocabulary development. Therefore, Nation underscores allotting no more than approximately one-fourth of language learning time into each strand.

Language teaching time which can be allotted for vocabulary focus is limited. Therefore, it is essential to employ a wide variety of strategies and activities in each of the four strands of a language learning course in order for deep word development to occur. In addition, teachers need to endeavor to motivate and provide their pupils with effective guidance. The reason for this being that vocabulary studies have evidenced that appropriate counseling has a positive impact on pupils' overall outlook on themselves and learning, which in turn encourages greater willingness to participate and a heightened motivation to learn.

Chapter 3 Methodology

3.1 Introduction

The qualitative method utilized in this study was *intensive interviewing* as it was the best method to gather the pertinent data for this study (Schutt, 2012, p. 189). Hence, this chapter begins with a justification for the selection of this method. The remainder of this chapter is ultimately dedicated to providing a detailed presentation of how the processes of collecting, documenting, and analyzing data developed. To summarize, the following procedures are covered: *how* the application for study approval, the recruitment of the informants, the recording, the transcribing, and analysis of the transcripts were executed. Finally, the reliability and validity of this study are discussed.

3.2 Justification for the choice of method

Intensive interviewing is a method that is designed to research specific unstudied “educational reality as participants experience it”(Schutt, 2012, p. 191). With an emphasis on human subjectivity, this phenomenological method typically allows for personal, semi-structured, and open-ended questioning thus providing detailed information and insights into the studied process (Christoffersen & Johannessen, 2012, p. 99; p. 189). This method allows participants to elaborate on their experiences and perspectives on any topic in a much deeper level than other methods such as survey research (Christoffersen & Johannessen, 2012, p. 99; Schutt, 2012). The main aims of this study are to find out teachers’ opinions on why explicit vocabulary instruction is important, and more importantly, what vocabulary teaching activities/strategies some teachers in Norway use to teach vocabulary. Hence, this method was selected as the best for gathering very specific information and tips on how vocabulary is deliberately taught in lower secondary schools in Norway.

3.3 Recruiting process

The population of informants for this study meet the following *inclusion criteria*: (1) the participants had to be experienced English teachers, (2) they had to be English teachers at the lower secondary level. The researcher (AM) decided that a *criterion sampling* (Christoffersen & Johannessen, 2012, p. 51) was the best sampling type for this thesis. The initial approach was to get in contact with English teachers from the following sampling frame: a list of

teachers at the lower secondary level who have been practice teachers for OsloMet in the past three years. Approximately fifteen teachers from the sampling frame were invited (via email) to participate in this study. However, none of them wished to participate. Apparently, they were quite busy in the first months of this year, as they either ignored the emails or declined the request due to “simply not having the time”.

Circumstances called for a different approach. This involved inquiring acquaintances if they knew of any teachers that met the inclusion criteria that would be willing to participate. This approach was successful, as three (of the four initial) informants fitting the inclusion criteria were referred to the researcher by an English teacher with connections. The last informant is a teacher the researcher was acquainted with prior to this study and was contacted directly by the researcher.

3.4 The informants

The three participants interviewed for this thesis all have at least 10 years of experience as teachers of English in Norway at the lower secondary level, which was the main criterion for the selection process. All teachers teach in different cities in Norway. Two of the teachers have been teaching for approximately ten years. The third has been teaching for over twenty years. Although a given number of years of teaching was not a selecting criterion, many years of experience is perceived as a positive factor for this thesis, as I aimed to mostly draw from the participants practical experiences.

Although the goal was to get four informants, in the end only three wished to participate. As Brinkmann and Kvale state (2015, pp. 148–149), there is no “golden standard” (researcher’s translation) for how many informants one should include in a study. Given the purpose of this study, which was to gather some information on what is being done in classrooms nowadays, rather than gathering data to make generalizations, three participants is perceived as not the ideal number but sufficient. This hypothesis has proven to be true as the three teachers provide both insights into similarities as well as innovative ways of working with vocabulary which are by no means exhaustive but provide a glimpse into how English teaching at that level is done in Norway.

3.5 Data collection

As Kvale and Brinkmann (2015, p. 189) inform, all interviewees will participate and react in different ways as a response to the same questions. Therefore, in some cases it can be unethical for the researcher to take a fixed interviewer role where exactly the same questions are strictly asked to every participant, as this would inhibit the natural flow of the conversation, resulting in a low quality interview. Ultimately, it is the researcher's responsibility to motivate and accommodate the interviewees best possible, paving the way for knowledge-rich interviews (pp. 194–195).

The interview guide is semi-structured, as this type of guide is specifically devised to hear from the informants on specific topics while providing open-ended questions which “may not be asked in exactly the same way or in exactly the same order to each and every respondent” (DeCarlo, 2018, p. 365). Hence, a semi-structured interview guide (see Appendix 1) was used for this study. The questions in the interview guide were inspired by Nations “four strand” framework (see section 2.6) and therefore categorized accordingly.

The data were collected via semi-structured online interviews on Zoom. Online interviews was the most appropriate and effective method to gather the qualitative data since all three informants live in different cities. In addition, when the informants were contacted, the Corona issue could still have been a hindering factor for meeting face to face. Essentially, it was easier and safer for all parties to meet online.

3.5.1 Recording of the qualitative data

The next step was to decide how the information was to be collected and maintained. The most reliable and common way to document the data provided from the interviewees is via audio recordings (DeCarlo, 2018, p. 371). This way the researcher could focus on the answers given and the dynamic of the conversations and good interaction (Kvale & Brinkmann, 2015, p. 205). This is an important step in research as the quality of the interviews is decisive for the quality of subsequent processes such as transcribing and analyzing (p. 193). However, audio recordings provide the researcher with personal data which by law must be kept confidential. Thus, ethical approval from the Norwegian Center for Research Data (NSD) was required prior to the interviews (Christoffersen & Johannessen, 2012, pp. 43–44).

Applying for approval was done by filling in an application to the NSD which explained the requirements and goals of this study, how data were going to be documented, as well as sending in a copy of the information letter designed for informing the participants of what their participation in this study entails (see Appendix 2). Sending in an attachment of a draft of the interview guide was also required. Otherwise, the researcher must provide many details about how they plan to obtain, document, and eventually delete the audio recordings. This procedure is set in place to ensure that the proposed study is conducted in a manner that complies with the regulations and laws for protecting personal privacy, data management and data protection.

While approval from NSD was pending, the informants were sent copies of *the information letter*, a copy of the interview guide, as well as a request for them to send in their signed consent. The interview guide was sent in advance to give the teachers some time to reflect on what activities or strategies they used for development in the different skills in English and why. Once the informants sent in their signed letters of consent and the application for ethical approval was granted, the interviews were able to commence.

The interviews lasted approximately 30 to 45 minutes. A pilot interview was conducted prior to the interviews to gauge roughly how long the interview would take. This time frame worked well with two of the informants but proved insufficient for one. The informants were asked *most* of the questions in the interview guide. However, a few of the last questions had to be skipped with one of the informants, as time was running out. Other exceptions arose with certain subquestions which either got asked together with other questions or did not flow with the conversation or had already been answered. Additional unplanned questions were asked to each informant in instances when statements they made needed further clarification or when interesting information emerged. For instance, if a unfamiliar activity was mentioned, the participants were asked to expound on how they employed that activity. Such slight variations in questions asked to each informant in a study is to be expected in semi-structured interviews (DeCarlo, 2018, p. 365).

Due to data protection issues, it is not allowed to make the audio recordings on one's private phone or on Zoom. Therefore, the interviews were recorded with the *nettskjema diktafon* app and then uploaded to the research server at www.nettskjema.no. These resources were specifically designed for this type of study and are meant as a safeguard to protect the informant's personal privacy in accordance with the Norwegian data protection laws.

3.6 The Transcription process

Once the interviews are conducted, they must be transcribed into written form. Transcription is an important stage in a study where many technical and analytical decisions are taken (Kvale & Brinkmann, 2015, p. 207). Careful analysis is important in this stage, given the nature of transcripts which are outcomes of many interpretive acts where “data are (re)constructed” (Poland, 2003, p. 268).

3.6.1 Transcription style

In Kvale and Brinkmann's thinking (2015, p. 207) the fundamental rule for the transcription process is to report how the transcription was done, what was included and excluded in the transcript, and what transcription style was used. Given that there are multiple types of transcriptions, the researcher must choose the transcription style that is devised for catching features of interest essential to their research (Kvale & Brinkmann, 2015, pp. 206, 212). This means that the method of transcription should be chosen according to the purposes of the interviews (p. 206).

Clean verbatim is the transcription style that was used for this thesis. This style was selected for two main reasons. Firstly, since the main purpose for the transcriptions was to extract the meaning of what the teachers conveyed—rather than to gather detailed data for linguistic or psychological analysis. In other words the transcriptions were to be analyzed first and foremost for *what* was said, rather than *how* it was said (Poland, 2003, p. 268). Secondly, while the process of analysis begins in the transcription phase, it is important to take the actual analysis phase into consideration when choosing transcription style (Kvale & Brinkmann, 2015, p. 206). Since clean verbatim is devised to capture the interviewees messages and opinions in a succinct way which allows for easier readability, *clean verbatim* is the transcription style which will facilitate the process of analysis in this study.

Although there is a standard for clean verbatim, there are some varieties of what is adjusted or omitted in clean verbatim. Where to draw the line in omissions can be challenging. Hence, the transcriber (AM) strived to follow a middle course on how much was deleted from the original recording. The transcription was carried out as follows: all non-speech sounds, stutters unfinished words, crutch words, and feedback words have not been transcribed. Additionally, false starts, truncated intonation units, and off-topic conversations—which were irrelevant or detracted from the message being conveyed—have been omitted.

However, speaker idiosyncrasies such as the repetitive use of “of course”, and prepositions such as “so” and some filler words were transcribed as dictated to preserve individual speech patterns. The same goes for incorrect grammar (errors are marked with a [sic]) and incorrect sentence structure, which are left as dictated. This was done to ensure that the transcriptions are (clean) verbatim accounts of what was said, thus securing the reliability of the transcriptions. It would otherwise be inappropriate to, for instance, add words or modify nongrammatical endings, as this would potentially lower the accuracy of the re-presentation of the original dictations.

3.6.2 Reliability

Essentially, a transcript is one of many possible “translations” of a given interview. In other words, transcripts are affected by the quality of the transcriber’s translation of the audio data into textual data (Poland, 2003, p. 268). Therefore, the reliability of a transcript is ensured by the transcriber’s determination and awareness on how to accurately represent the original dictation in a manner that is best suited for the purposes for the study (Kvale & Brinkmann, 2015, pp. 211–212).

There are two main factors which affect the accuracy or reliability of a transcript. The first one is the quality of the audio recording since transcribing from a speech that is garbled as a result of a poor quality audio recording greatly increases the chances of mistaking words or phrases for similar words that are plausible, or even in some cases do not make sense (Poland, 2003, p. 270). For instance, while use of the contracted form of words is most common in the spoken word, this is often not permitted in formal writing. In fact, the transcription error that

had to be fixed multiple times while transcribing the interviews for this study was failing to transcribe contractions as spoken. For instance, when the interviewee said “I’ve” I automatically transcribed “I have”. In hindsight, this type of error emerged due to the researcher’s acquired “habit” of writing down the groups of words instead of using contractions in their written form since they are (otherwise) impermissible in academic writing.

The other is that given the fact that a recording comes with no punctuation—only hints when there is a pause or full stop in the flow of speech—the punctuation of a transcript is left to the transcriber’s discretion. This can pose a challenge to the quality of a transcript, as erroneous punctuation can modify the meaning of what was said (Poland, 2003, p. 270). Therefore, as Poland points out, it is important to minimize this type of error by being attentive not only what was said, but also to the intonation, pitch, and pace in which words are said and then make judgement calls from there (Poland, 2003, p. 270). In addition, spontaneous speech is often more informal than the written word, this contrast can also pose a challenge.

There are multiple potential sources of error (in addition to the ones mentioned above) in the transcription phase which can lead to misinterpretation. Hence, careful attention has been given throughout the whole process to minimize the presence of such errors. This process was carried out in the following manner: the first step was to listen to the entire interview. Once this was done, each answer to a question was first transcribed, then immediately played again and read simultaneously to revise discrepancies and punctuation errors. Once an entire interview was transcribed, the file was played again for further review in accordance with Kvale and Brinkmann’s recommendation (Kvale & Brinkmann, 2015, p. 211). All interviews were played and revised before analysis of the findings began. While errors were scarce in this round, fortunately some words previously perceived as inaudible were identified.

Concluding, the final transcripts are considered to be reliable, as the researcher is convinced that if other transcribers were to transcribe the interviews in *clean verbatim* style their transcripts would be virtually identical transcripts that convey the exact same message. This is because the transcripts were first made from high quality recording and the transcriptions have undergone meticulous correction and played again (on three different occasions) in order to locate errors and to try to identify words or phrases that had been perceived to be inaudible.

3.6.3 Validity

Another important factor which has implications for the quality of the research is the validity of the transcripts. As Kvale and Brinkmann (2015, p. 212) state, it is not possible to describe what a valid transcription is, as transcribing is not a one size fits all procedure. However, what can be done to gauge the validity of a transcript is to examine how applicable the transcript is for a given study (p. 212). As previously discussed, careful thought went into selecting the transcription style best suited for this study. Now that the process of analysis has been completed, clean verbatim has proved to be a sensible and practical transcription style to analyze.

3.6.4 Ethics

As previously stated, ethical approval was granted by the NSD for this study. Additionally, this study follows the guidelines provided by the Norwegian National Committee for Research Ethics in the Social Sciences and Humanities (NES). The guidelines can be categorized into three main areas a researcher must adhere to: (1) The informants right to voluntary informed consent, (2) The researcher's duty to respect the informants private life and privacy and (3) The researchers duty to avoid damage (Christoffersen & Johannessen, 2012, p. 41). Details of how these three main areas were adhered to are outlined below.

The informants' right to voluntary informed consent is required by law in Norway (Christoffersen & Johannessen, 2012, p. 45). Thus, the researcher was required to provide participants an information letter (See Appendix 2) and a (blank) consent form to systemize the process of acquiring the participants' written consent. This letter explains the purpose of the study and what the participation in the study involves, the informants' rights such as their right to withdraw from the study at any time, and information on whom and how they could get in contact if they should wish to. Other important points that have been included are information on who is primarily in charge of handling the data and what signing the consent form entails (p. 45). Concluding, all three participants have read the information letter and, subsequently, signed and sent in a digital copy of their signed consent form (See anonymized versions in Appendix 3).

As Christoffersen and Johannessen (2012, pp. 42–43) caution, the author is strictly responsible to protect the participants' anonymity and is exhorted to adhere to the anonymization of the informants identity both when referring to the participants and when referring to comments they have made. Therefore, the participants are simply referred to as T1, T2 and T3. Moreover, the participants' statements that have been cited in this study do not contain 'sensitive information' that can potentially jeopardize the participants' anonymity.

The last point is the researcher's duty to avoid damage. Although the themes discussed in the interviews do not touch on sensitive topics, it is the researcher's duty to avoid that the informants should suffer any psychological harm (Christoffersen & Johannessen, 2012, p. 42). As Kvale and Brinkmann caution (2015, p. 213), negative feelings could arise when informants read verbatim quotes that they have said, as there is a "disjuncture between what coheres in natural talk and what demonstrates communicative competence in written prose"(Poland, 2003, p. 272). These ethical implications are another good reason to transcribe clean verbatim style where unnecessary stutters, false starts and repetitions are omitted, providing a neater and more articulate transcript to analyze and quote from.

3.7 Coding, interpretation of meaning and analysis

The purpose of data analysis is to categorize and organize the data that has been gathered in order to pinpoint the most relevant points for answering the research question/s (Postholm et al., 2018, p. 139). The process of analysis in this study was inductive, meaning that the data was coded to aid the identification of patterns in the data which can be useful contributions to the study (Kvale & Brinkmann, 2015, p. 224).

Deep interpretation of the data begins with the process of coding and extends throughout the process of discussion to increase the quality of the study. Given the scope of interviews made for this thesis, the coding process was simple and proceeded as follows: All the interviews were transcribed into a copy of the interview guide, with a different color assigned to each participant. The interviewees answers were placed directly under the questions they were asked by the interviewer. Then an extra column was made in the word file in order to codify the text.

Once all the transcripts had been coded, I made a mind map to get an overview of the main topics which were presented in the interviews. Following the coding process, a hermeneutical analysis was conducted. This involved analyzing and reflecting on the transcripts in many instances in order to both gain a deeper understanding of the meanings conveyed and to increase the validity of the findings (Kvale & Brinkmann, 2015, p. 236; Mackey & Gass, 2011, p. 223). This interpretation of meaning took place both to identify the findings, and under the process of discussion whenever I was planning to refer to something that had been stated to double-check that I had fully understood what had been the case. This turned out to be a good idea as sometimes the text actually did not, for instance explicitly say what I meant it said. Furthermore, towards the end I realized that I had developed a deeper understanding of what teachers meant as a result of the repeated instances where I was required to make a specific interpretation of the meaning the participants had conveyed.

3.8 Reliability

The reliability of a study is about how consistent the findings presented are with what really was stated. In other words, if another researcher were to ask the participants the same questions, and the results were very similar, the reliability of a study is high (Postholm et al., 2018, p. 223). As pointed out by Postholm (2018), gauging the reliability of a study this way is faulty as the data that is provided is dependent on the researcher and the participant, so a change in one of these variables will result in a change in the overall results. Postholm suggests that a more reliable approach is to both reflect over how the researcher may have had an affect on the results. This requires the researcher to both reflect and endeavor to honestly present the steps they took in a study (p. 224). Given that I have provided a truthful and detailed account of how the different phases the conducting of this method played out, I believe this study to be reliable.

Another factor that can affect the reliability of qualitative research is that sometimes participants may for a number of reasons say what you want to hear and thus provide statements that are not necessarily true (Postholm et al., 2018, p. 170). In my study, I had many detailed follow up questions. So, if they stated something, I would subsequently ask them why. In my opinion they always had good explanations, so I think that the reliability of their statements is high.

3.9 Validity

There are two types of validity in a study: internal validity and external validity. Internal validity is concerned about whether the conclusions the research has made from the findings aptly answer the research questions. External validity (i.e., transferability) is concerned with to which extent the findings in a study can be generalized (Postholm et al., 2018, p. 223). The external validity of this study is low since these findings cannot be generalized as the strategies/activities which teachers employ will always differ. This result was expected as I did not seek to make any generalizations, just gather some knowledge and resources on how to ensure vocabulary development.

The internal validity of this study is high given that the findings have been central to successfully answering the two research questions in this study. However, this can be partly attributed to the fact that one of the research questions which was originally a question related to extramural learning got changed to be the present RQ1. There are a couple of reasons for this. The first one is that I received multiple insights into the importance of teaching vocabulary from the first main question in the interview. These insights came as a pleasant surprise as I was expecting to be told what I already knew which was not the case. In fact, these answers inspired me to incorporate the components of appropriacy, affective factors and vocabulary learning strategies into my theoretical framework. The last reason was that I got very little feedback on what would have been my other RQ, so it was an obvious that some adjustments needed to be made.

3.10 Summary

Intensive interviewing is the best method for the purposes of this study as it is an excellent way to collect specific information on the processes which occur in educational settings. It is a phenomenological method which provides opportunities for the participants to elaborate in-depth on virtually any topic. The processes of gathering, transcribing, and analyzing data are all processes where interpretations are continuously being made. Therefore, these processes require special attention in order to ensure the reliability of a study. Therefore, it is advisable for the researcher to take a hermeneutic approach to the analysis of the data in order to

increase the quality of these interpretations. Special attention to and elaboration of these processes have culminated into reliable and valid findings for this study.

Chapter 4 Findings and Discussion

4.1 Introduction

This chapter presents both the findings and the discussion of the data gathered in this study in relation to the two research questions. Firstly, the findings related to answering RQ1 is presented, discussed, then summarized. Secondly, the main findings related to RQ2 are displayed in tables, followed by the additional findings (in RQ2). Finally, an interpretation of the findings and discussion on how the findings can be applied in language teaching is discussed.

4.2 Research question 1—What opinions do Norwegian teachers have about explicit vocabulary instruction in lower-secondary school and why?

4.2.1 Findings

This research question was addressed in question 1 in the interview (See Appendix 1). The responses revealed that all three participants considered explicit vocabulary instruction to be important and thus often focus on teaching vocabulary. Each participant had at least one main reason underlying this practice.

T1 pointed out that explicit vocabulary instruction is important, as it teaches learning strategies not only for immediate use but also for independent vocabulary development later in life. While T2 considered it vital because it entails teaching the pupils appropriacy in language use. T3 explained that it is important because it ensures vocabulary development, which is a motivational factor for further learning.

Both T1 and T2 expressed that explicit vocabulary instruction is crucial to ensuring that pupils attain a wide and precise vocabulary to be able to “express themselves freely” in a wide range of topics, in other words develop high levels of *fluency*. T1 states that this important because, “if you don’t teach vocabulary specifically, I think you are going to lose many of the very specific terms that you use in different areas”

4.2.2 Discussion

All three teachers conveyed that they perceive explicit vocabulary instruction as important and teach it to varying degrees according to the aims of a given lesson. In addition, four different important reasons for regularly integrating vocabulary learning emerged. Interestingly enough these four reasons are also stated in the English curriculum as important for language learning.

Teaching vocabulary learning strategies

The first reason voiced by T1 is because explicit teaching of vocabulary teaches pupils language learning strategies which is a key factor to acquiring for instance, a broader English vocabulary in higher education. Below is an excerpt of how this was formulated:

... by teaching vocabulary, you are also teaching language learning strategies. And I think that's the most important thing we do because ... some of these students will go on and use English sparingly, but some will go on and use English a lot—to study different subjects in English. And if we don't teach them vocabulary specifically in the classroom, we don't teach them the strategies to learn new vocabulary so when they encounter that later in their studies, I think they're gonna struggle ...

This notion of the importance of teaching vocabulary learning strategies for developing student autonomy in language learning is shared by Charkova and Charkova (2018) who state that the end goal of activities in the classroom should be to encourage L2 learners to become “independent users” of effective vocabulary development strategies (p. 248). Therefore, it is advisable for teachers to systemize the daily employment of a repertoire of strategies that focus on the aspects of a word. In my opinion this means that teachers should find and incorporate at least one vocabulary learning strategy for each of the main aspects in a word (See Nation's table on section 2.4.3 for an overview).

On a similar vein, the literature also reveals that pupils are explicitly made aware of the importance of employing a variety of strategies in order to effectively acquire deep word knowledge. One interesting finding however, is that none of the participants explicitly mentioned regularly informing pupils why a specific strategy is useful for better learning

outcomes. However, since I have not specifically ask them about this, I will not speculate on whether they explicitly teach pupils the words aspects a given strategy targets or not.

On another note, learning vocabulary strategies is a part of language-focused learning activities, as vocabulary learning strategies are essential for vocabulary learning and language use. (See section 2.5.2.) (Charkova & Charkova, 2018). Hence, I will infer that the systematic teaching and use of vocabulary strategies should underpin work with the English subject in Norway as it contributes to accomplishing both the pupil's all-round development (*Bildung*), and development of competence in all subjects (Ministry of Education and Research, 2017a, p. 10)

Teaching appropriacy

The second reason is that vocabulary instruction includes teaching pupils how to appropriately communicate in informal and formal contexts. Appropriacy of language falls into Nation's fourth general goal for learning which is concerned with language *discourse* (2001a, p. 1). Furthermore, it is included in both Nation's and Laufer's overviews of the most important aspects of a word (See section 2.4.3) (Laufer, 1997, p. 141; Nation, 2001b) Similarly, learning appropriacy is mentioned as part of the core element of *communication* in the English curriculum (Ministry of Education and Research, 2017c, p. 2).

Obviously, language scholars and the Ministry of Education in Norway consider teaching appropriacy as crucial. This is because language use must be suited to each social setting and interaction. In order to be able to do this we must acquire knowledge of both the referential, affective and pragmatic meanings of a word (Laufer, 1997, p. 141). Pupils must be made aware of these meanings, as well as how using specific types of language influence how you are perceived and what kind of identity you develop. Hence, teaching appropriacy is an important part of teaching competence in English as it ensures that pupils both acquire an all-round education, and an awareness of the type of identity their cumulative language use is developing.

Developing accuracy and fluency

The third and fourth reasons, developing *precision* and *fluency*, are interdependent as developing the one will enhance the other (Nation, 2007, p. 8). Fluency and precision are important components of lexical proficiency and therefore categorized as two of the specific goals in the general goal of learning *skills* in Nation's language goals taxonomy (See section 2.2) (Nation, 2001a, p. 1; Schmitt, 2014, p. 920) In addition, as discussed in the second chapter, Nation allotted a whole strand for activities to developing fluency. As pointed out by Schmitt, developing *fluency* can be conceptualized as developing vocabulary *depth* since the term implies that learners have acquired the ability to both use the language receptively and productively (Schmitt, 2014, p. 920). In addition, just like with *depth* "fluency requires repeated practice opportunities"(Ecke, 2018, p. 5).

In a similar vein, from what I gathered from theory, *precision* is also closely linked with *productive* knowledge as precision in communication requires both a large vocabulary size, and deep word knowledge. Therefore, the teachers' articulations of the premises (i.e., acquire a substantial and precise vocabulary) for being able to successfully express themselves in a variety of topics in English can be interpreted as the following premises: pupils' need to acquire a rich vocabulary size and in-depth word knowledge to express themselves well in a wide variety of important topics.

According to Schmitt (2014, pp. 332–335), size of vocabulary and vocabulary knowledge depth are the biggest, and most important hurdles to mastering English. A couple of reasons for this is that they are both fundamental for successful communication with non-native speakers and highly contribute to the development of confident users of English. Ultimately, focusing special attention on developing *precision* and *fluency* should be an important part of a teacher's end goal for teaching English in Norway. This is because the notion of providing pupils with the necessary tools for their communication needs in a globalized world is one of the central values underlying English education in Norway, (Ministry of Education and Research, 2017c).

Affective factors

The last reason given for deliberately teaching vocabulary is that vocabulary instruction increases vocabulary development which is important for the pupil's *motivation* to further learn English. T3 gives a good explanation of this in the follow excerpt.

Yeah, I think it's crucial that they actually experience development. Because if not, they won't improve, and motivation will decrease because it will be difficult to keep up with the levels and the bar is higher like the next year it will be even more difficult and so on. So, if they don't develop, they will just fall off the wagon, so to speak.

The message is important for teachers to always keep in mind given the reality that there will always be pupils who need substantial amounts of scaffolding to enable the development of adequate levels of vocabulary knowledge. As mentioned in section 2.7., this is an important point to consider, since insufficient vocabulary focus can cause a downward spiral for pupils with the long-term result being largely demotivated pupils who struggle to keep up and consequently lag farther and farther behind. As previously discussed, *motivation* is a central affective factor, which according to research is important for language learning in general (Krashen, 1982; Ni, 2012). This notion is specifically supported by Hui Ni's study which found strong correlation between levels of motivation and learning outcomes (Ni, 2012, p. 1511).

The teachers' invaluable contribution to this study

Overall, the teachers' opinions on the importance of teaching vocabulary have provided me with insights into important aspects of vocabulary development I was unaware of. The most salient contribution from T1 was the mention of the importance of vocabulary learning strategies since I was initially only aiming to find vocabulary *teaching* strategies. The most salient contribution from T2 was the importance of teaching *appropriacy* as I had not really thought about as an important part of teaching language. The most salient contribution from T3 was the important role affective factors play for pupils' language learning outcomes. Once I was done writing the transcripts, I had to read up on the literature on these aspects, as I had not yet entirely understood how important the two first factors are for Bildung. In addition, I became aware that I needed to learn more about how motivation affects deep vocabulary development and retention.

Summarizing

The teachers perceive vocabulary instruction to be an important part of language instruction. Their reasons for this brought up very important points, which greatly contribute to the two main missions for education as stated in the Norwegian curriculum (Ministry of Education and Research, 2017a, p. 10). For instance, the *language learning strategies* and *appropriacy* both contribute to the mission of pupils' all-round development and identity development, as they are both factors that are important not only for immediate use, but also more importantly, in preparation for life as an agentive citizen.

The other three points *accuracy*, *fluency* and *motivation* are important factors for developing the other main mission which is to develop competence and confidence in English language use. Firstly, because developing high levels of *accuracy* and *fluency* is virtually synonymous with developing high levels of competence in the English subject. And secondly because (as pointed out in the literature) promoting motivation and a good attitude towards learning English are essential factors to achieving one's potential and developing confidence in one's communicative skills in English.

4.3 Research question 2—What activities and strategies do Norwegian lower secondary teachers use to ensure that their pupils attain a productive vocabulary and why?

4.3.1 Findings

As pointed out by Nation, there are many learning goals underlying activities used in the classroom including: language goals (vocabulary, grammar), content, skills (fluency, accuracy), and text (2001a, p. 61). As previously described, the primary focus in this study is on finding out what strategies teachers use to target vocabulary. As demonstrated in the literature above, all the vocabulary activities/strategies in a language course can be divided into four strands (Nation, 2007). Therefore, the interview guide questions were inspired by Nation's four-strand framework which means that teachers were specifically asked about how they each targeted vocabulary in each strand. (See Appendix 1).

This resulted in a comprehensive list of strategies/activities as it includes: both implicit and explicit teaching strategies/activities, and vocabulary learning strategies. As such, in order to provide a better view, The activities/strategies been arranged into five tables—one for each strand as well as one for differentiation strategies. For informational purposes, certain activities/strategies required very detailed information, hence a convention was made to make the explanations more explicit for the reader. (See the first strategy listed below)

Table 1 - Activities and strategies related to meaning-focused input	
Activity/strategy	Why the teacher uses this strategy/activity in particular
Learning through music strategy ⁽¹⁾	To learn vocabulary in context To encourage motivation To help pupils pay attention
1. In this strategy related to music (presented by T3), pupils first listen or read the lyrics in pairs/groups, and then translate the texts and look up the words they do not understand	
Watching films and short clips	To acquire vocabulary implicitly To recycle known words
Working with TV2skole	To acquire vocabulary implicitly To recycle known words Updated learning materials
Reading texts in the classroom	To acquire vocabulary implicitly To acquire vocabulary knowledge which is transferable to other texts
Listening and reading (e.g. short stories and poetry, and different types of factual texts’)	To encounter vocabulary in a variety of contexts
Using internet-based read aloud resources	To provide assisted input - differentiation
Reading books	To provide pupils with extensive reading (particularly as homework assignments) to increase their input thus providing more teaching time for output activities

Watching/reading something or at home	To provide extramural input To complement/free up teaching time
Guessing from context	To encourage pupils to understand a word from context To teach a strategy
Learning a text strategy ⁽²⁾	To learn vocabulary in context To provide systemized recycling of words they are working with
2. Learning a text as explained by T3 “Use at least one of the lessons for a new text. And then they have that text for homework and some questions for it in the second lesson”	

Table 2 - Activities and strategies related to meaning-focused output	
Activity/strategy	Why the teacher uses this strategy/activity in particular
Answering questions related to topic words in Class Notebook as a homework assignment	To learn to use new words in context To systemize the provision of formative assessment on word use To use time wisely
Retelling spoken or written input	Recycling and generative use
Working in groups	To promote peer learning through listening and speaking
Recording audio files with keywords	To ensure oral use of focus words in context – fluency practice To give teachers the opportunity to conduct formative assessment
Enacting the think-pair-share strategy	To ensure increased time for pupils to develop their speaking skills
Enacting an (overall) output strategy – the pupils do most of the talking and writing	To ensure that pupils get to practice the language and engage in deeper word processing

Table 3 - Activities and strategies related to focus on form	
Activity/strategy	Why the teacher uses this strategy/activity in particular
Reading a small text with the topic words	To provide exposure to new vocabulary in context To ensure that pupils understand what the topic words convey in the text.
Using Skolenmin (online learning resource from Cappelen Damm)	To optimize the attainment of word definitions
Using Class Notebook as a tool for pupils to practice writing topic words in context	To complement/free up teaching time To learn to use new words in context To systemize personal feedback on word use – formative assessment
Having the learner produce a word in a new sentence or phrase	To learn to use new words in context Useful for encouraging generative use To assess pupils understanding of words For pupils to learn from their peers
Learning idioms	To strengthen language proficiency
Using first language translation	To learn/comprehend a word's meaning To teach a strategy
Using the graphic organizer activity ⁽³⁾	To focus on some of the most important aspects of words such as: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Word meaning from L2-L1 translation - Making words memorable from personalized visuals (drawing of the word) - Learn to use new words in context - Strengthening word knowledge by identifying words pertaining to a thematic cluster
3. The graphic organizer activity as explained by T1: "You wrote the word in a circle in the middle and then you had four different strands. One where you translated the word into your language it could be your home language or Norwegian you could choose, you could make a small, visual drawing for the word. and you can use it in a sentence, and you can give an example. So, let's say the word was "novel" for example they could write Harry Potter, for example as an example of the word."	
Describing characters in a novel	To use vocabulary and identify synonyms

	To learn the affective meanings of certain words to promote appropriacy of language when describing people
Breaking words into parts when “relevant or necessary”	To learn word parts for increased retainment and knowledge transfer for all words composed of a given affix. Teaching a strategy
Looking up words in a dictionary	To teach a self-help strategy
Attention-drawing strategy: The teacher explains a word by providing - a word’s definition - a synonym/antonym - the L1 equivalent - words in context	To teach target words To draw attention to different aspects of words that are considered worth understanding or worth acquiring
Enacting a pupil-lead attention-drawing strategy which involves prompting the pupils to orally describe the meaning of a word	To provide pupils with speaking/word negotiation opportunities For pupils to learn from their peers To learn to use new words in context Useful for encouraging generative use To assess pupils’ understanding of words
Using the odd one out activity	To make/strengthen word connections To recycle vocabulary in an entertaining way
Using Crosswords	To recycle vocabulary in an entertaining way

Table 4 - Activities and strategies related to fluency

Activity/strategy	Why the teacher uses this strategy/activity in particular
Enacting vocabulary tests	To motivate vocabulary learning To help pupils “to understand the whole scheme”

Using Padlet (online interactive tool) as a resource for “producing texts or other things”	To facilitate whole class participation on written activities To use as a resource in other activities To enact pair work
Answering questions in plenum	T2 explains: pupils “need to practice understanding instructions and questions” ... “because they don’t know how to understand instructions or questions”
Enacting oral presentations	To provide opportunities to express themselves in English Learn to communicate freely with the use of key words Summative assessment of proficiency development
Enabling Google presentations where pupils “record an audio file and put in some keywords”	To learn to communicate freely with the use of key words Assessment of oral proficiency development
Playing alias vocabulary game	To encourage motivation To recycle vocabulary in an entertaining way
Playing the speed dating vocabulary game ⁽⁵⁾	To encourage motivation To recycle vocabulary in an entertaining way To engage everyone given its low-risk properties
4. Speed dating vocabulary game as explained by T1: Put students into pairs facing each other. On the desk between them you have ten focus words face down on different notes, and then all the students facing the board pick a focus word to describe to their partner which the partner tries to guess. They are allotted 45 seconds and then everyone with their backs to the board move one place down. Then the process of defining and guessing repeats.	
Playing Hotseat ⁽⁶⁾	To encourage motivation To recycle vocabulary in an entertaining way To engage everyone given its low-risk properties
5. Hotseat vocabulary game (T3): Essentially a group version of the <i>speed dating game</i> in which the classroom is divided in two groups and two pupils from each group have to guess the word on the blackboard.	
Playing Googlemind ⁽⁷⁾	To recycle vocabulary in an entertaining way
6. Googlemind game as described by T3: “You give them a post-it note that you stick to their forehead and it has the name of a famous person. And they need to ask questions to find out who they are»	

Table – 5 Activities and strategies for differentiation

Activity/strategy	Why the teacher uses this strategy/activity in particular
Skolestudio (for dyslectics)	Facilitating input
Reading smaller paragraphs with all the focus words	To motivate reading To motivate comprehending words from their context – learn a strategy To acquire vocabulary knowledge which is transferable to other texts
Teacher discusses an aspect of a word in plenum with pupils	To provide opportunities for pupils with lower proficiency levels learn from observing their peers
Making well-functioning peer groups	To use pupils as a resource - pupils that struggle can learn from more proficient learners
Enacting think-pair-share strategy	To facilitate oral participation in class To increase pupils’ opportunities to develop their speaking/listening skills To promote peer learning
Integrating low-risk, loud and playful games and exercises	To encourage participation as given the high noise level, “no one is really listening to you” (stated by T1) To acquire better listening skills To encourage fluency development
Providing writing structures and frames such as “how to start, topic sentence, how to connect paragraphs together”, etc (T2)	To ensure that all pupils are able to produce an organized text by utilizing standard features (used in writing) such as paragraphs and sentences
Providing example sentences where pupils can fill in the words themselves, “the main character of the novel is _____.”	To facilitate proper vocabulary use in a variety of genres to ensure that all students can write the type of texts they are assigned with

use if they are connecting ideas.”	
------------------------------------	--

(T2)

Additional findings that are important for vocabulary development:

In addition to the numerous strategies and activities targeting implicit and explicit vocabulary learning, the following topics of interest for this study have emerged from the findings:

Teachers' vocabulary teaching preferences

Examination of the transcripts reveals that the participants generally have different preferences to the types of strategies they incorporate into their teaching. T3 is a musician, and therefore places emphasis on incorporating music-related activities, which pupils often enjoy. T3 is concerned with *Bildung* and hence endeavors to teach linguistic appropriacy whenever possible. T1 likes to incorporate vocabulary games often, the reason for this is clearly articulated in the following statements.

...“whenever you very explicitly drill language, I think many of them is gonna fall off, but if you make it playful for the students—when they forget that they’re using English, like they do when they game, right? When they’re doing gaming, they use language as a means rather than the goal, or as a tool. And I think that’s the goal for exercises like this.” (T1)

Vocabulary teaching procedures

T1 and T2 systematically use methods which can be categorized as vocabulary teaching procedures. (See section 2.6.3) T1 mentioned that English teaching is very content-based. So, T1 focuses on content but at the same time is “eager to teach them the vocabulary specific to that content” to prepare pupils for the end goal—produce text. Hence, T1 incorporates the *focus word method* while teaching content. This is done by dedicating one lesson to learning topic-specific vocabulary at the beginning of a period, and then providing additional exposures throughout the lessons, like for instance, reading additional texts and playing vocabulary games within that topic.

T2 systematically enacts a vocabulary learning procedure by first introducing and explaining the new words in phrases on screen in class. Then, further work with the target words are assigned as homework by sharing a link containing the target words to open on the vocabulary-learning website Quizlet. Once they have worked with the words (at home), the *Quizlet Live function* is utilized in class where pupils can compete on their vocabulary knowledge in teams. T2 mentions using Quizlet as is useful both for freeing up teaching time as well as adding a component of gamification to vocabulary development.

Approach to selecting and teaching target words

All three teachers focus on targeting words that are essential for precision in the specific topic that they are covering, as they need to be able to write or have oral discussions related to the topic they have learned. T2 specifically mentioned that it is important not to “just take vocabulary from the textbook or something”, as “it’s important to distinguish between which words they need to understand in the text, and which words they should use in their active language.”

As mentioned above, T1 uses the *focus word method* and presents 8-10 topic words at the beginning of a period, and then provides a variety of repetitions and recyclings throughout the whole period. T2 targets 15 words a week, introduces the words in class and then uses Quizlet to provide additional repetition. T3 teaches an idiom a week and occasionally teaches focus words before holding vocabulary tests.

Additionally, the participants otherwise target words spontaneously when they perceive pupils need to understand to “get the whole picture” in an activity, (e.g. interpreting the meaning of a text). T1 and T2 pointed out that they have a deliberate approach to this, as they try to identify the most important words beforehand (in a theme or text) that pupils need to learn for their productive vocabulary as opposed to just working with a preselected vocabulary list from, for instance, a textbook.

Approaches to prepare pupils for summative assessment

All three mentioned holding some form of written or oral *summative assessment* at the end of a theme or period. Therefore, all three participants are concerned about preparing pupils for

the test at the end of a period. T1 and T2 mentioned that they teach vocabulary and academic words specific to the writing genre they plan to hold at the end of a period. As one T1 elucidated, “if the plan was for the pupils to write an opinion piece, he asked himself, “OK, what sort of vocabulary do they need in order to be able to write that opinion piece?” and then teach them “vocabulary specific to expressing opinions so in my opinion I believe, on one hand, on the other hand”. In other words, the teachers “build each lesson to meet that goal at the end”. As T1 explained, their main goal with this approach is for pupils to attain an appropriate vocabulary and a precise vocabulary to be able to communicate the topic well and and appropriately in both formal and informal contexts.

In a similar vein, T3 has begun to use an innovative *process writing strategy* which provides opportunities for both formative assessment and summative assessment. In this strategy, pupils first engage with interactive stories—where pupils can make different endings to a story in groups—and then send (in total two) drafts in order received personalized constructive feedback on linguistic features (e.g., vocabulary, grammar) and thus raising pupils’ awareness of how they can further develop their texts. Once they have received the second draft, they are instructed to correct their errors and use the feedback to improve their written piece, as the final draft is graded. T3 states that, given that it is a written assignment, this approach has turned out to be quite enjoyable for learners.

Extramural vocabulary acquisition

All participants perceive extramural learning as a positive trend because it provides pupils with more English input. The input is needed and desired since, as pointed out by two participants, schools cannot provide enough input due to lack of time. T1 takes advantage of extramural vocabulary acquisition to make the classroom a “place for output” activities to “make sure that they get to practice the language.” The participants point out that they do activities designed to “sort of take on whatever they’re doing outside of the classroom and bring it in as much as they can”. Two teachers mentioned sometimes giving pupils the opportunity to “show off” their vocabulary knowledge in class.

However, the participants voiced some challenges related to extramural vocabulary acquisition. T1 in particular was not positive towards the idea of bringing extramurally

learned vocabulary into the classroom, as such vocabulary (e.g., gaming jargon) is often very specific, and thus not very useful in most settings. On another note, T2 indicates that this has increased the demand for teaching appropriacy since many acquire “the language or the vocabulary of the person speaking” on for instance, TikTok and Youtube, which often includes a language register which is not suitable for every real-life situation. As such, pupils need to be made aware of the need to use appropriate language accordant with the type of setting they are in. T3 informs that the extent of vocabulary acquirement is subject to pupils’ interests which can cause a “vast difference between pupils that do and pupils that don’t”, as “one of them is losing ground, the other ones are gaining ground.”

Time spent on explicit vocabulary teaching

As pointed out by all respondents providing an exact account of how much explicit vocabulary teaching is done on a regular basis is a challenging task. For instance, T1 integrates it in “class at all times.” In addition, as T3 pointed out, vocabulary is targeted “every time they need to learn a new word.” Nonetheless, the respondents provided their estimations, which is somewhere between 20 to 30 percent of the time.

The time factor

All three teachers mentioned the lack of time to teach English. T2 voiced that the time factor is one of the things teachers are struggling with the most, as there is often a “large differences in competence levels”. On another note, T3 pointed out that children should be getting more input than they are getting at school and suggests allocating some of the reading and listening activities as homework and then providing output at school. In a similar vein, T2 mentioned there is simply not enough time to target focus words in class. Hence, T2 points out a dependence on pupils working on focus words at home on Quizlet, and Class Notebook.

4.3.2 Discussion

As I stated in the preface, two of the reasons underlying my interest in this topic was because I had the perception that English teaching at the lower secondary was both very content-based and had a very limited time allotment. Therefore, I wanted to find out what strategies teachers employ to cope with these challenges to pupils’ vocabulary development. Based on my findings and the literature, I have gained a substantial overview of both vocabulary learning

strategies and many other points that I intend to integrate in my future practice. Therefore, the remainder of this discussion is designed to walk the reader through some of the most important points and strategies for attaining vocabulary development which I have gleaned from this study.

As T1 pointed out from a vocabulary learning perspective, the first thing teachers should do when planning for a period is to endeavor to gain a general overview over the vocabulary learning goals. A smart approach to achieve this objective is to first both determine which assessment type (oral, written) and genre (e.g., informative, expressive) pupils will be receiving at the end of that specific period. In addition, it is also important to specify if that assessment will cover the topic that was learned within that specific period or not.

The next step is to find out the topic words and phrases pertaining to the genre they will be assessed in. As previously pointed out selecting topic words can be problematic especially for practitioners with little experience in this profession. Hence it is advisable to choose words from an external source such as a high-frequency list. The number of topic words one should select depend on factors such the learning burden of the words. From the findings, the average lands at approximately 12 topic words. When it comes to academic phrases and such, as pointed out by T1/T2, a good strategy for preparing to, for instance, writing a persuasive piece, is to provide pupils with opportunities work with modal texts beforehand so they are familiarized with persuasive words/phrases (e.g., I believe, this will cause) in context.

Once the topic words are selected, rich instruction (or in some cases explicit attention) is required to acquire knowledge about the topic words' form and meaning. Many of the repetitions required at this initial phase can be efficiently done by utilizing vocabulary learning websites such as Quizlet to establish the form-meaning connection. Once pupils have received a few exposures to the words, it is important to target the other aspects of the word to ensure vocabulary depth development. However, the total amount of time one can spend in this (language-focused) strand is limited. Therefore, it is a good idea to identify the *learning burden* of the topic words before selecting time-efficient strategies/activities to deliberately target words within a few occasions while working in this strand.

One highly efficient activity which in essence comprises a number of linguistically-driven vocabulary learning strategies is the graphic organizer. In my opinion, one of the great qualities of this activity is that it can be adapted according to the learning burden of a word. For example, if some of the words to be learned consisted of commonly used *affixes*, I could for instance replace the strand of *identifying words pertaining to a thematic cluster* with a *breaking words into parts* strand (see Table 3). This activity can also be adapted according to the learner's competence level, so it is also useful for differentiation.

However, it is inadvisable to both intensively teach word aspects or spend too much time teaching topic words. As such, opportunities for developing vocabulary explicitly must be interspersed with opportunities for developing vocabulary implicitly in the meaning-focused strands. At this point it is important to ensure that the topic words receive a substantial number of exposures in these strands as the number of exposures that can be provided in rich instruction are limited. This can be systemized by employing one (or more) vocabulary learning procedures, such as the *Quizlet procedure* and the *focus word method* (See section above).

Topic words are often learned in context from reading texts. Pupils will comprehend their meaning in a text if most words are familiar to them. Therefore, providing a text where most words are familiar for pupils is a good way to provide differentiation in the meaning-focused input strand. The need to explicitly target a word for comprehension will often arise in this strand. In such cases, it is up to the teachers' discretion and knowledge. Given the limited amounts of input that are possible in the classroom, it can be useful to assign input activities such as watching films or reading books as homework.

In a similar vein, in this globalized world many pupils are receiving extramural input which contributes to pupils' overall comprehension in English. Therefore, as T1 suggested, a good strategy can be to make the classroom a place for output. However, teachers cannot simply count on extramural input as not all pupils engage in extramural activities. Hence, teachers should take this factor into consideration when endeavoring to strike a balance of types of activities pupils are engaging with.

Providing opportunities for output is an essential part of vocabulary development and consolidation. Therefore, Nation has dedicated two strands for output. Pupils should also be given opportunities to retrieve and produce words (e.g., retelling spoken input activities) as this can motivate pupils to endeavor to listen and read better and raises their awareness of lexical items they need more knowledge in. In addition, every time a word is retrieved and meaningfully used, it is consolidated in the brain increasing both retention and accessibility. A good strategy for making fluency practice more engaging and memorable is incorporating vocabulary games. One particularly fun and low-risk game for all pupils is the speed dating game. (See Table 4) Another type of activity that is also important for consolidation are activities that allow for formative assessment and summative assessment. An innovative and more enjoyable way to incorporate this is by enacting process writing with interactive stories.

From the teachers' statements, it can be assumed that all three teachers are aware of the importance of providing repeated exposures to useful vocabulary in both implicit and explicit contexts. However, the findings reveal that the teachers' preferences in strategy use differs in varying degrees. This is unsurprising as there is no single best strategy or activity that applies in all situations, as the "act of learning and teaching" is "highly individual and personal to both learners and teachers" (Maley, 2016, p. 2). Another minor observation I have made is that when the participants were explaining *why* they used a particular strategy they usually stated that it was because it was either useful, motivational or fun. This gives me the impression that they sometimes employ strategies out of habit or as a reaction to student participation.

Which brings me to one of the greatest realizations I have acquired from this study, which is that as much as I am fond of expanding my vocabulary, my overall strategy for explicitly targeting new words has been faulty as I have been focusing on basically only acquiring learning initial phases of learning a word, and relying too much on memorization techniques, since those are the techniques I have internalized from a good many years ago. This happened because of my ignorance of the notion that word knowledge depth in essence is a culmination of many word aspects. This personal epiphany is a crucial realization for me as a future teacher. The reason being that it has made me quite ambitious to ensure that my pupils learn of and are aware of the importance of employing at least one of each strategy type (e.g., pronunciation, spelling, word parts).

This epiphany has also made me aware that it is wise to be knowledgeable about the specific *word aspects* a strategy targets in order to give pupils a chance to develop in different aspects. Therefore, before I decide to daily implement a specific strategy, I would like to find out about its features (e.g., strengths, potential pitfalls, and word learning stage in which a strategy should be enacted) in order to optimize pupils vocabulary development. Spending the time required to make an informed decision is important for two main reasons: Firstly because as pointed out above, a popular strategy such as *guessing from context* can actually be counterproductive for learners who are unfamiliar with more than about 90% of the running words (see section 2.5.2) (Schmitt, 2008, p. 350). Secondly, since sometimes two seemingly equally important strategies—such as working with *semantic* and *thematic* clusters to strengthen word associations—can in reality lead to a substantial difference in vocabulary learning outcomes for learners in general (Tinkham, 1997).

4.4 Summary

As displayed in the tables above, the activities and strategies the three teachers in this study use amounts to a comprehensive overview of a wide variety of both digital and non-digital vocabulary teaching strategies/activities that can be employed both in each strand of a language course (Nation, 2007), and for differentiation. In addition, the findings have provided me with many insights on what to do (or not to do) and how I can teach vocabulary more efficiently. It also has provided me with a better idea of the challenges and good strategies to overcome them. Overall, the teachers' contributions have provided me with a number of practical realizations and my very own valuable box of (strategy) tools which I am convinced will provide a solid base to start my English teaching journey.

Chapter 5 Conclusion

This study had three main objectives: (1) To find out *how* English vocabulary is learned in a L2, (2) why teaching vocabulary is important for language acquisition, and (3) *how* deep vocabulary development can be employed at the lower-secondary level in Norway. The main reason underlying the interest in exploring this topic came from an observation that time allotted for deep vocabulary development at this level is limited. This is an important concern to address as the new Norwegian National curriculum puts emphasis on ensuring deep learning in the subjects. The concept of deep learning applies to vocabulary given the fundamental role vocabulary plays in a language. However, studies on how vocabulary is developed in Norway are limited. Given my (presumably) future role as an English teacher I decided that this was the topic that was most pertinent for me to conduct my study on.

The data required was gathered by both studying literature and conducting the qualitative method of intensive interviewing. This involved the recruiting of three participants that fit the inclusion criteria which was they had to be experienced teachers of English in Norway at the lowery secondary level. It also involved getting NSD approval, and conducting the interviews, followed with the transcription phase, followed by an inductive analysis of the findings.

The main contributions from the literature are that vocabulary development is a gradual process which is best achieved through a variety of different types of meetings with words. These meetings are provided in class through activities and strategies that target the basic skills and vocabulary learning strategies. This finding supports the rationale of creating a repertoire of vocabulary teaching strategies to ensure mastery in a language.

In addition, the findings gathered from the interviews brought to light a number of rich insights into both why teaching vocabulary is important in relation to the LK20, and many of the factors which need to be taken into consideration in order to optimize vocabulary development. The first half of the findings (from RQ2) essentially provided a comprehensive list of vocabulary learning strategies in the different strands of language learning. While the discussion on RQ2 provides the reader with a “tour” of some of the most important factors one must consider when planning and teaching. Hence, the sum of the findings in this study

are very relevant for English language pedagogy and have greatly contributed to my preparation for professional practice.

The scope of information and insights that emerged from just three interviews, reveal that it would be useful if there were to be conducted more research in this topic. Some suggestions for topics that would further contribute in this field could include: making English teaching relevant, research on the efficacy and pitfalls from using Edtech in vocabulary teaching, further research on the best strategies, activities and games, the best online educational resources in Norway.

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Appendices

Appendix 1– Interview guide

(This interview guide is a semi-structured guide i.e., questions are open-ended and the list of questions may vary according to how the conversation develops.)

Background question: How long have you been teaching English in lower secondary school?

(1) How important do you think the development of pupil's vocabulary is at the lower secondary level?

- Why?

(2) How much emphasis would you say that you put on vocabulary instruction in your classes?

- To what extent do you teach vocabulary explicitly? If you do;

(2a) Do you pick out a list of target words to focus on for a specific period?

- How do you go about picking the target words?

(2b) What kind of learning material do you use in English teaching?

-

(2c) How much explicit **input** (from listening and reading) do you think is necessary to familiarized pupils with new vocabulary?

- What strategies/activities do you use to teach new vocabulary?

- **Why do you use these strategies in particular?**

- Do any of these strategies allow for differentiation?

- Roughly what percentage of your classes is dedicated to providing pupils with input related to new vocabulary, do you think?

(2d) How much **output** (speaking and writing) practice do you think is necessary for pupils to practice new vocabulary?

- What strategies/activities do you use to develop pupils' written and oral vocabulary skills?

- **Why do you use these activities in particular?**

- Do any of these strategies allow for differentiation?

- Roughly what percentage of your classes is dedicated to providing pupils with activities related to speaking and writing vocabulary that they have been learning, do you think?

(2e) Do you otherwise allot time for pupils to **consolidate** their input and output skills without introducing new vocabulary? Do you give them time to practice what they have learned.

- Do you use vocabulary games? If so, How often? Which ones?

(2f) Do you take time to focus on the form (spelling, pronunciation, grammar) of new vocabulary?

- Roughly what percentage of your classes is dedicated to providing pupils with activities that focus on form, do you think?

(3) Findings from a number of studies show that an increasing number of pupils acquire English vocabulary outside the classroom. What do you think about this trend?

- To what extent do you think the English vocabulary attained outside the classroom has been beneficial to pupils' proficiency in English?
- Have you tried to make use of pupils' extracurricular vocabulary in your classes? Why or why not.
- If you have, can you give some examples?

(4) Is there something you would like to add?

Appendix 2 – Information letter

Information and consent letter for interviewees participating in my research project,

The role of explicit vocabulary instruction in Norway

In this letter I will give you information about the purpose of my project and what your participation will involve.

My focal point in my MA-thesis is examining the benefits and importance of explicit vocabulary instruction and exploring to what extent vocabulary development is focused on at the lower secondary school level. In order to get a sampling of how teachers scaffold pupils' vocabulary development in Norway, I have decided that the method best suited for my aims is the qualitative method; gathering data by means of interviews.

I have formulated the following research questions:

RQ 1- What strategies do Norwegian lower secondary English teachers use to ensure that their pupils attain a productive vocabulary? **Subquestion 1-** Why do they use these strategies in particular?

RQ 2- To what extent do English teachers make use of pupils' out-of-classroom acquired English vocabulary in classroom instruction?

Who is responsible for the research project?

OsloMet is the institution responsible for the project.

What does participation involve for you?

If you chose to take part in the project, this will involve that you answer a number of questions in an interview. It will take approx. 40 minutes. The interview includes questions about activities related to vocabulary instruction. Your answers will be recorded electronically.

Participation is voluntary

Participation in the project is voluntary. If you chose to participate, you can withdraw your consent at any time without giving a reason. All information about you will then be made anonymous. There will be no negative consequences for you if you chose not to participate or later decide to withdraw.

Your personal privacy – how I will store and use your personal data

I will only use the data gathered for the purposes specified in this information letter. The interviews will be recorded with the nettskjema diktafon (research server) which is especially designed to protect the participant's personal privacy. The data will be processed confidentially and in accordance with data protection legislation (the General Data Protection Regulation and Personal Data Act).

The data will be primarily handled by me. The only type of personal information I would like to present in my thesis is *how many years you have been an English teacher*. Otherwise, your name and gender will be anonymised. I will be referring you and the other interviewees as Teacher 1, Teacher 2 etc. to ensure that you are not recognisable. I will also be using this code when transcribing the interview.

It is likely that my advisor will be giving me feedback on how I present the data gathered. My advisor is Mona Evelyn Flognfeldt, an associate professor at OsloMet

What will happen to your personal data at the end of the research project?

The project is scheduled to end by the 16th of May. The digital recordings will be deleted. My transcriptions will be kept in a locked file on Onedrive until I receive the results of MA-thesis. This is a precaution for me to be able to use the data if my MA-thesis is not approved. The transcriptions will be deleted once my MA-thesis is approved.

Your rights

So long as you can be identified in the collected data, you have the right to:

- access the personal data that is being processed about you
- request that your personal data is deleted
- request that incorrect personal data about you is corrected/rectified
- receive a copy of your personal data (data portability), and
- send a complaint to the Data Protection Officer or The Norwegian Data Protection Authority regarding the processing of your personal data

What gives us the right to process your personal data?

We will process your personal data based on your consent.

Based on an agreement with OsloMet, NSD – The Norwegian Centre for Research Data AS has assessed that the processing of personal data in this project is in accordance with data protection legislation.

Where can I find out more?

If you have questions about the project, or want to exercise your rights, contact:

- **student:** Angelina

e-mail: s325182@oslomet.no

mobile number: +47 40 09 02 11

- **advisor:** Mona Evelyn Flognfeld

e-mail: monaf@oslomet.no

phone (office): +47 67 23 72 21

- **NSD** – The Norwegian Centre for Research Data AS, by

email: personverntjenester@nsd.no

phone: +47 53 21 15 00.

Yours sincerely,

Project Leader
(Researcher/supervisor)

Student


Appendix 3 – The participants (anonymised) signed consent forms

Consent form

I have received and understood information about the project *The role of explicit vocabulary instruction in Norway* and have been given the opportunity to ask questions. I give consent:

- to participate in *an interview with Angelina Marvin*
- for my personal data to be stored after the end of the project until the student's MA-thesis is approved.

I give consent for my personal data to be processed until the end date of the project, approx. 16.05.22

 2.3.2022

(Signed by participant, date)

Consent form

I have received and understood information about the project *The role of explicit vocabulary instruction in Norway* and have been given the opportunity to ask questions. I give consent:

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(Signed by participant, date)

