A study in second language vocabulary:
Learning and teaching

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1 Introduction

“Learning is not about proving what they already know, but about asking questions to change what they don’t know into what they do know” (Willis 2008:87). This statement shows what school is all about. If children and teenagers already knew everything there would be no point in them going to school every day. Learning a second language, in this case English, is important not just in order to get a good grade but also when it comes to learning for life. Being able to communicate in English both in written and spoken form has many advantages. When communicating, some might say that a rich vocabulary is needed but it is possible to make yourself understood with a limited vocabulary by using body language or by trying to explain with the help of paraphrasing. However, in certain situations and within certain topics, a rich vocabulary is needed in order to take part in the conversation. Therefore, learning vocabulary can be highly important.

This paper investigates what strategies and techniques pupils use as they learn new vocabulary. It also investigates how teachers teach new vocabulary to pupils. A study has been made, where pupils in upper secondary school have answered a questionnaire and teachers have been interviewed. The results are shown followed by a discussion where the results are analyzed in connection with previous research. From this a conclusion is drawn.

When discussing vocabulary it is highly relevant to clarify what is meant with the term word. In this paper word is the lexical item, that is, the single word and its meaning as an isolated word (Nation 2001:51). Finally, intermediate learners in upper secondary school are in focus when discussing learners in this paper.

A number of sources are used in this paper. However, the two main sources are Schmitt (2000) and Nation (2001). Schmitt brings up a number of concerns in connection with vocabulary learning and teaching. He mentions different learning strategies but also different teaching strategies as well as what words to learn. Nation also discusses different teaching strategies and what words to learn.

1.1 Aim

To gain knowledge of how pupils learn new vocabulary but also how to teach vocabulary is very important for teachers. The aim of this study can be divided into three parts. The first aim is to investigate what words pupils need to learn in order to communicate in written and spoken form within different contexts and situations. The second aim is to investigate the
different techniques and strategies pupils use when they learn new vocabulary. The third and final aim is to investigate how teachers teach vocabulary. In order to reach the aims of this paper the following research questions are addressed:

1. What words do pupils need to learn?
2. What techniques and strategies do pupils use when they learn vocabulary?
3. How do teachers teach vocabulary?

The results in this paper show that teachers mainly choose what words the pupils need to learn. They generally choose words they believe the pupils should know. In addition, the results show that pupils use different learning strategies. However, the most common ones are to learn the words in context and repeat them several times. Finally, teachers use different strategies when teaching new vocabulary. One teacher introduces learning strategies in connection with introducing new words. Another teacher reads the words out loud together with the pupils. Finally, one teacher introduces words or expressions that are tied to the word in question in order to enrich the pupils’ vocabulary. However, everyone believed it is important to work with the word in a context.

The conclusion drawn from the results in connection with the background shows that high-frequency words are the most important words to teach since these are the most frequent words in the target language. In addition, pupils should have a say in what words they learn. It could also be motivating to choose words after their future career if they, for example, study a practical program in upper secondary school. In addition, pupils use different strategies. Therefore, it is important to recognize that no strategy is better than another. Teachers should introduce different learning strategies so that pupils can choose what strategy fits them. Finally, a conclusion is drawn that teachers mainly should teach words in context as well as make sure the pupils get to repeat the words often. Spaced repetition could be a good strategy to use as pupils get to work with the words over a longer period of time.
2 Background
This chapter consists of previous research on vocabulary in second language learning and teaching. First, a short description of what it means to know a word is given together with what words should be learned. This is followed by a presentation of different learning strategies and styles pupils can use when they learn new vocabulary. Finally, different teaching strategies teachers can use when they introduce and work with vocabulary together with pupils are presented.

2.1 Knowing a word
There are different conditions that need to be fulfilled in order to say that you know a word. According to Laufer (1997:141) knowing a word means to know its form, which indicates knowing both its written (spelling) and spoken (pronunciation) form. The structure is also a familiar item, that is, the different morphemes, derivations and inflections. Further, the syntactic patterns of the word in a phrase or in a sentence are familiar as well as the lexical relations of the word with other words, such as synonymy and hyponymy. Finally, Laufer argues that knowing a word means to know that there is an awareness of the common collocations in connection with the word. In addition, Carter (1998:239) mentions some important factors that need to be fulfilled in order to say that you know a word. He claims that the user needs to be able to use the word productively, which means that he or she can use the word both in written and in spoken form. Carter further states that an awareness of the word’s part of fixed expressions needs to be understood and as a final point Carter mentions its relations with other words but also words in the first language (L1).

Moreover, Nation (2001:26, 28) claims that there are two different ways of knowing a word. He mentions receptive and productive knowledge as two kinds of ways to know a word. Receptive knowledge means that the user can identify a word when he or she hears it but also when he or she sees it in its written form. Further points that show the receptive knowledge are that you recognize the different parts the word is made up of, for example, prefixes and suffixes. There is also an understanding of what the word means in a context that it is being heard or read in. Two more and final points are that you know the collocations but also the related words. Productive knowledge, on the other hand, means that beyond the points mentioned above the user can also write the word with the correct spelling and pronounce it correctly in its spoken form. A final point is that you can produce synonyms and opposites.
To sum up, Schmitt (2000:4) has simplified the conditions for these two types of knowledge. He states that receptive knowledge is when you understand a word in both listening and reading. Productive knowledge is when you can produce and use the word when speaking and/or writing.

There are two types of words that have different frequency levels in the English language. According to Nation (2001:16), high-frequency words are those words that are very common in both spoken and written texts among the running words. He states that teachers should spend a large amount of time on these words since they are used frequently in the second language (L2). Nation further mentions low-frequency words that are a part of a very large group of words that occur quite rarely in texts. Therefore, teachers should focus less on these words. However, Nation believes they should not be avoided completely as they still are a part of the English language and learners should have some knowledge of these in order to fully understand spoken or written contexts. Finally, many would probably say that longer words are harder to learn. However, Laufer (1997:144-145) brings up that empirical results have sometimes shown the opposite. Many of the longer words consist of several morphemes that can be familiar to the learner. This makes the words easier to learn. One further aspect that needs to be considered, according to Laufer, is morphology features. If for example a noun is irregular in its plural form it is likely that this noun is more difficult to learn. It is also shown that shorter words are not always easier to learn. Laufer (1997:145) claims it is the exposure that influences whether a word is easy to learn or not. The more learners are exposed to the word the more obvious it becomes that they will learn the word no matter if it is a long or a short word.

To sum up there are some words that are considered to be more valuable to know than others. However, it is difficult to point out exactly which words these are. It should be noticed that the words ought to have some meaning to the pupils. Otherwise, there is no point in learning them if they cannot be used. Schmitt (2000:142) claims that learners of English only need a total of 2,000 words to be able to express themselves with simple sentences. However, Schmitt argues that knowing a total of 2,000 words does not enable the learner to carry on an in-depth conversation on any topic. For this, a vocabulary suited to a specific topic will be needed. Finally, Schmitt (2000:144) argues that teachers should consider what kind of situations the pupils are likely to be found in and from there, a suitable vocabulary should be taught.
2.2 Learning strategies

There are a number of strategies pupils can use as they learn new vocabulary. However, it is important to recognize that different pupils learn in different ways. Some even use a number of strategies and not just one in order to acquire knowledge of new vocabulary (Tornberg 2005:97). Pupils should be aware of the different strategies so they themselves can choose which strategy/strategies suit them the best (Nation 2001:219).

In the beginning of the learning process learners usually learn vocabulary through word lists. These are lists containing the words in the L2 in connection with either a synonym or a translation into the mother tongue. Sometimes the words are also accompanied by pictures to illustrate the words in order to help pupils acquire the knowledge necessary (Carter & McCarthy 1988:12). Other common ways of learning vocabulary seem to be through memorization, repetition and taking notes on vocabulary (Schmitt 2000:132). Nation (2001:218) claims that it is important for pupils to know their goals. One way of making sure that they stay motivated is to let the pupils decide what vocabulary they want to learn.

According to Willis (2008:86) it is not unusual for pupils to forget words after a test. Even if they as they learn new vocabulary remember them, it is not unusual that they get blocked if they do not use the words actively in different activities that motivate them to retain the words. However, it is important to recognize that it is a natural fact of learning to forget some words (Schmitt 2000:129). One thing that can help pupils remember a word is if different words sound alike or have similarities in etymology or morphology (Nation 1982 referred to by Carter & McCarthy 1988:14). However, Laufer (1997:146) claims that learners get confused if words sound or look alike. In addition, Willis (2008:83) claims that pupils can lose interest in learning a word if the challenge level is too high or too low. Another way of learning new vocabulary is through listening. However, in order for pupils to learn words this way, Nation (2005:586) claims that the discourse should not contain more than one or two unknown words per 100 words in order for pupils to fully understand and learn through listening. Otherwise pupils will not be able to guess the word from its context.

Bogaards and Laufer (2004:158, 161-162) made a survey where they asked 61 international pupils in Canada with either Korean or Chinese language background how they dealt with unknown words as they read a text. The results showed that 62.3% often guessed the word’s
meaning from the context. 34.4% answered that they sometimes guessed from context. 41% often used a bilingual dictionary and 34.4% answered that they sometimes used a bilingual dictionary. 32.8% answered that they often used a monolingual dictionary and finally 42.6% answered that they sometimes used a monolingual dictionary. These three ways of dealing with unknown words in a text are some ways of working. Stenberg (1987 referred to by Nation & Waring 1997:11) claims that first language learners learn most words from their contexts. In addition, Nattinger (1988:63) states that this way of learning new vocabulary is the most frequent way of learning. In the context you get help from the topic, title, grammatical structures and other words in the discourse. Carter and McCarthy (1988:15) state that “the more advanced the learners, the more likely they are to benefit from learning words in context”.

However, there are negative aspects to consider when learning through context. According to Sökmen (1997:237-238) the process of guessing could be a very slow process. Studies have also shown that pupils rarely guess the accurate meaning. In addition, pupils’ understanding could still be low because of inadequate vocabulary knowledge even though they know how to use flexible reading strategies. Another negative aspect when learning through context is the fact that pupils learn through different styles. Guessing through context might not be suitable for all pupils. In addition, nothing proves that by guessing from context, pupils remember the vocabulary for a long time. Finally, Nation and Waring (1997:11) also mention the fact that pupils might not know enough of the words in a text to understand the context. This makes it hard for them to learn from the context. Pupils should only come across one word per 50 words that they do not understand (Hu & Nation 2000:405). Carter and McCarthy (1988:15) claim that it has not been convincingly proven that learning from context is better than just translating or looking the word up in a dictionary.

Another way of learning the meaning of a word is by looking it up in a dictionary, either a monolingual or a bilingual one. Summers (1988:116) states that by using a dictionary the learners can learn new definitions of a word since it enables them to be exposed to the word in another context as well as different constructions. By using a dictionary in connection with reading the word, pupils are exposed to the word both in the context and in the information gained from the dictionary. There are also a number of other ways of trying to find out what a word means. Some of them mentioned in short could, according to Schmitt (1997:207), be the
following: you can analyze affixes and roots, check for L1 cognate or ask the teacher or your classmates.

Moreover, the following strategies can be used once the words have been encountered; words can be connected to personal experiences; the word can be associated with its coordinates and be connected to its synonyms and antonyms. Words can also be grouped together; new words can be used in sentences and the spelling can be studied. In addition, the words can be repeated in spoken but also in written form. Other ways could be to create word lists, flash cards and make vocabulary notebooks and do word tests (Schmitt 1997:207-208).

Finally, Sökmen (1997:256) claims that it is important that pupils recognize their own learning style/styles in order for them to be independent. Pupils can find out what style fits them by having different exercises in the classroom where they get to try out the different learning styles and through this they discover what style is right for them.

2.3 Teaching strategies

Teaching new vocabulary to pupils is not always an easy task to carry out. Teachers need to consider what words to teach, how to teach them but also decide how many words that should taught per class period. If the techniques are not sufficient enough for the pupils to feel that they learn something, this might make it difficult for them to learn the words given to them.

There are some factors that need to be considered as the teacher chooses words to teach. According to Schmitt (2000:144), the following factor should be considered: the teacher should look at the specific topic the words appear in and from this he or she should choose the words that are relevant to learn in connection with the topic. By studying one specific topic for a longer period of time pupils get to repeat the words within the subject, which makes it easier for them to read but also to improve their understanding of the texts as specific words reoccur in them. Another factor is to find out what words pupils themselves want to learn. Sökmen (1997:240) argues that letting pupils choose the words is motivating for them. They feel that they can affect their learning by choosing the words they believe are important words to learn. This also increases the possibility for the words to be memorized. In addition, Nation and Meara (2002:37) mention two main considerations that need to be well thought-out when teachers choose which words to teach. The first is to reflect on the needs of the pupils. It must be considered thoroughly what kind of vocabulary the pupils need in order to communicate and understand the L2. The second and final consideration, according to Nation and Meara
(2002:37), is the usefulness. It should always be well thought-out how useful the words are in the language. If the words are of no use for the pupils there is no reason for them to be taught.

In addition, Willis (2008:84, 91) believes there are certain aspects that need to be considered when choosing what vocabulary to teach. According to him, teachers should look at the pupils’ interests when choosing vocabulary. If they for instance are interested in politics or sports, vocabulary within these areas will help the pupils to express themselves. Those pupils who are analytical might be interested in learning words that help them to debate and solve problems. Another way of motivating pupils is by using music. Willis further states that many pupils like using music and lyrics as a way of learning new words. Finally, Willis claims that by helping pupils become aware of how the words can help them in their everyday life, they will become motivated to learn.

Besides deciding what words to teach, teachers also need to determine how many words to introduce per lesson. Schmitt (2000:144-145) claims that 10 words per one-hour lesson is a reasonable goal to follow. However, he states that teaching words during classes might not be the most efficient way for the pupils to learn new words. He argues that by just introducing the words and then giving them for homework is a better way. After having had the words for homework they are then further examined in class. Sökmen (1997:255) also claims that it is impossible for pupils to learn all the words in the classroom. Therefore teachers should help pupils gain knowledge in how they can learn words on their own by teaching different strategies and techniques for pupils to use as they come across unknown vocabulary outside the classroom.

There are a number of ways for teachers to present the meanings of new vocabulary. Ur (1996:63) states that teachers can use a dictionary to show a concise definition; he or she can also show a detailed description, that is, show its appearance and qualities. Other ways of presenting new words can be to give examples, illustrations, synonyms and demonstrate how the word can be used. By giving different contexts where the word occurs, pupils gain further knowledge of the word. One final way of presenting new words could be to translate the word into the mother tongue. Laufer (1997:153) states that it is important not to teach words that look alike during the same lesson. If, for example, you teach cancel, conceal and council during the same lesson, pupils can easily get confused and mix the meanings of these words with each other. Teachers can also make it easier for pupils to learn a word by showing the
systematic patterns and analogies. He or she can also show similarities between the L2 and the L1 (Nation 2001:24). Nation (2001:90-91) further argues that teachers should give clear but brief explanations of the meaning of a word. It is also important to repeat the word several times. Since there is usually so much to learn when it comes to vocabulary, repetition is crucial in order for pupils to acquire the knowledge necessary. According to Nation (2001:76) the best way to repeat vocabulary is through spaced repetition. By this Nation means that you should spread the repetitions and not do them close to each other. If you spread them over a longer period of time the repetitions will be more effective. However, this does not mean that you need to spend more time on the vocabulary than you would if you would have had the repetitions closer to each other.

Moreover, there are some aspects that, according to Ur (1996:60-62), need to be taught. First of all pupils should learn the form, that is, the pronunciation and spelling. Second, teachers should teach the grammar and collocations associated with the word. In addition, aspects of meaning should be taught, which is connotation and appropriateness but also synonyms, hyponyms, superordinates and translations. A final aspect should be the word formation. Nattinger (1988:62-64) argues that teachers should make sure pupils understand that they do not need to know all the meanings of a word. As pupils learn a word they usually have no problems remembering concrete nouns. However, nouns, verbs, adjectives and adverbs which have an abstract meaning usually bring difficulties. Nattinger claims we have a tendency to remember the form rather than the meaning. Therefore it is important to teach that by remembering the form it leads you to the meaning of a word. In our brain we store words in different categories. Words that are tied to each other by sound, meaning but also sight are usually stored together. Therefore, teachers should also teach according to this. Finally, Carter (1998:240) states that teaching fixed expressions, like spick and span, is valuable. This highly enriches pupils’ knowledge of vocabulary.
3 Method and Data

This paper consists of a study in which both teachers and pupils participated. The teachers have been interviewed and the pupils have answered a number of questions in a questionnaire. The interviews and questionnaire together with the previous research found in the literature read is used to answer the research questions in this paper.

The data was collected using both qualitative and quantitative methods. The data was gathered at two upper secondary schools in southern Sweden. An upper secondary school is a school where pupils at the age of 16-19 study. Pupils at upper secondary schools study different programs that can be both practical and theoretical. It is mandatory for every pupil to study at least one year English. This course in English is called English A. The course after English A is called English B and is not a mandatory course unless you study a program where the subject is a part of it. If you want to you can also study English C. However, this course is mainly optional. The data in this paper was gathered from one English A class and two English B classes. A total of 60 pupils answered the questionnaire; 14 of these were attending an English A course and 46 an English B course. Three teachers were interviewed of whom two were teaching the pupils that took part in the questionnaire. The interviews as well as the questionnaire were conducted in Swedish in order to avoid misinterpretations (see Appendices I and II).

3.1 The qualitative method

A qualitative method was chosen when interviewing the teachers; this to get a deeper understanding for what strategies they use as they teach vocabulary. The interviews left room for follow-up questions to clarify what the teachers wanted to say. It also enabled them to motivate their answers. A questionnaire could have been handed out. However, this would not give the opportunity for follow-up questions and in-depth answers. When using a qualitative method, comparisons between the interviewed are avoided. A qualitative method is used when trying to understand how people think and argue but also to look for different patterns of behavior (Trost 2007:18, 23).
3.2 The quantitative method

A quantitative method was chosen when asking pupils what techniques and strategies they use to learn vocabulary. This method was chosen to make the survey as broad as possible. It also enabled the study to show general opinions of a group of pupils and not just a few. If a qualitative method had been chosen, the number of pupils would have been decreased since using this method is time-consuming. It would also render the possibility of obtaining a broad result, which was the goal with this part of the study. Trost (2007:23) means that if the study is meant to state frequency a quantitative method should be chosen. If a result that shows percentage of a population is what the study is meant to present, the quantitative method is the method that should be chosen to carry through.

3.3 The questionnaire

The questionnaire was handed out in person by the author. It did not ask whether the pupil was a boy or a girl. The reason for this was because it was seen to be irrelevant to the study. As mentioned above 60 pupils answered the questionnaire which consisted of a total of nine questions. Six of them were multiple-choice questions and three were open questions (see Appendix I).

The first question: How would you estimate that your English vocabulary is? was a multiple-choice question. It said something about how good they themselves believe their knowledge of English vocabulary is. The following three questions: How many words/week do you have in school?; Estimate how many of the words you go through that you remember; Do you get to choose which words to learn? were also multiple-choice questions. These questions were chosen in order to investigate how many words are taught per week and how many of these the pupils actually remember. The third question dealt with to what extent the pupils can influence what words they get to learn, if they have a choice at all or if it is the teacher who chooses which words the pupils need to learn.

The fifth question was: Place in order the three areas where you feel that you learn the most words. This was an open question. It is important to recognize that school is not the only place where pupils acquire knowledge of the English language. English is a language we are surrounded by daily through television, the Internet and computer games. Therefore, it was interesting to see within what three areas the pupils feel they learn the most words.
The next question was: *What do you do if you when you read a text do not understand a word?* This was a multiple-choice question. The reason for asking this question was to investigate what pupils do as they come across a word they do not understand. Question number six: *How do you do when you try to learn a new word* dealt with what strategies pupils use as they try to learn new words and it was an open question. The question was interesting because it helps teachers to know how pupils work individually with learning new words, which can help them gain knowledge about how they can work with teaching words.

The two final questions: *Has your teacher given you tips on different strategies for how you can learn new words?* and *If yes, what kind of strategies?* investigated if the teachers have taught the pupils different strategies that they can use when trying to learn new words but also what strategies these are. The reason for choosing these questions was to investigate if the teacher teaches different learning strategies and if so what kind of strategies.

### 3.4 The teacher interviews

As mentioned earlier, a total of three teachers were interviewed and asked what strategies and techniques they use when they teach new vocabulary to pupils. The interviews were carried through by recording them using a Dictaphone. Two of the three teachers were female. One of them is a teacher at an upper secondary school and teaches English and French and will in this study be referred to as *Teacher A*. The other female teacher works at an upper secondary school and teaches English and Swedish and will be referred to as *Teacher B*. The third and final teacher was male and teaches at an upper secondary school. He teaches English and Swedish and will be referred to as *Teacher C*. The two female teachers are responsible for the pupils who participated in the questionnaire.

The interview originally consisted of a total of nine questions (see Appendix II). However, as the teachers were interviewed one more question was asked. All of the questions were open questions. The first question asked was how many words the teacher introduces to the pupils per week. It can be discussed how many words pupils should learn per week. In addition, the teachers were asked how the words are handled in class. The question was essential in order to see what the process of working with words looks like. The teachers were then asked where they find the words and how they reason as they choose the words. The question was asked because it was interesting to see if they use other material than the textbook and how they justify their choice of material and words. In connection with this question, the teachers were
also asked if the pupils have any say in what words they learn. Previous research highly recommends that pupils are involved in the decision of what words they should learn (Sökmen 1997:240). Therefore, it was interesting to see if they actually have a say in this matter.

The teachers were also asked if they teach the pupils different strategies they can use when they try to learn new words. The question was important in connection with the fact that pupils actually have different strategies and techniques that they use. Therefore, it was essential to see if the teachers believed these strategies and techniques are important to present to the pupils or if this is something that the pupils have to figure out for themselves.

The next question dealt with how long the pupils work with the words in school. The reason for this question was because it is argued in previous research that repetition is important in order for a word to be memorized (Nation 2001:76). Therefore, it was motivating to see for how long the pupils actually get to work with the words.

Question number eight dealt with what aids the pupils can use as they come across a word in a text they do not understand. The answers were essential since it is important to know that there are different ways you can try to figure out the meaning of a word. The final question dealt with if the teachers experience that the pupils remember all the words after, for example, a test. This question is highly interesting and important to analyze since it can be connected to the question on how long pupils get to work with vocabulary before going on to new words.

As mentioned above, a question was added during the interviews. The teachers were asked what they believe it means to know a word. The question was interesting in connection with how they introduce and work with words.

### 3.5 Problems and limitations

The main problem when wanting to conduct the study was to come in contact with teachers who wanted to take part in the study but also who had the time and opportunity to have a questionnaire handed out in their English classes. However, at the end this worked out for the best.

In addition, some pupils did not answer all questions or their answers were not legible. This caused some problems; however, this is a common problem when conducting a questionnaire. In addition, because of the lack of experience when it comes to interviews, the teachers might
have been directed to answer in a certain way. If so, this was entirely unconscious. Finally, the results this study yields cannot be seen as a general overview of learning and teaching strategies that are used by teachers and pupils. This small study only shows limited results.
4 Results

In the following part of this paper the results of the questionnaire and the interviews are given. The chapter is divided into two main parts: The questionnaire and The interviews. Each part is then divided into further sections. The first part is divided into the following sections: Learning words: Memorization and influence, Learning in context and Learning strategies. The second part consists of a summary for each teacher interview. Each summary is divided into the following sections: Teaching strategies, Pupils’ influence and memorization and Learning strategies.

4.1 The questionnaire

The results in this chapter are mainly presented with the help of tables in two ways. Some of the answers the pupils have given are presented after what course the pupils were attending. In addition, some of the answers are presented without consideration of which course the pupils were attending. This is because the alternatives the pupils had to choose from were quite a few and it seems more relevant to focus on their choice of answer than on what course they were attending. A total of 60 pupils have answered the questionnaire, 14 of these were attending an English A course and 46 were attending an English B course.

4.1.1 Learning words: Memorization and influence

In the first question the pupils estimated how well they know English words. As can be seen in Table 1 below, most pupils believed their knowledge of English vocabulary is good. Only one pupil stated that he or she has a bad vocabulary. Three answers were invalid.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Course</th>
<th>Bad</th>
<th>Ok</th>
<th>Good</th>
<th>Very good</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>English A</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>7</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>English B</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>13</td>
<td>19</td>
<td>11</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>16</td>
<td>26</td>
<td>14</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
In addition, the pupils were asked how many words per week they get. As can be seen above in Table 2, the majority of the pupils (37) have 21-30 words per week. Sixteen stated they have 11-20 words per week.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Course</th>
<th>&lt;10</th>
<th>11-20</th>
<th>21-30</th>
<th>&gt;30</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>English A</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>10</td>
<td>-</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>English B</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>12</td>
<td>27</td>
<td>8</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>16</td>
<td>37</td>
<td>8</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

In Table 3 above, the result shows that none of the pupils remembers all of the words. Eleven remember more than 75% of the words and most of the pupils remember more or less than 50%. No difference can be made between the two courses.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Course</th>
<th>All</th>
<th>More than 75%</th>
<th>More than 50%</th>
<th>Less than 50%</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>English A</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>English B</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>21</td>
<td>19</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>11</td>
<td>25</td>
<td>24</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

The last question presented in this section deals with the influence pupils have about what words they get to learn. As can be seen in Table 4 above, the result shows that a small
majority think they have some influence on vocabulary choice but a large minority think that have none.

4.1.2 Learning in context

There are a number of strategies that can be used when trying to figure out what a word means when reading it in context. This section presents how the pupils deal with words in a text they do not understand. But first, this section presents within what three areas the pupils believed they learn the most words.

Table 5 Areas the pupils learn words

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Course</th>
<th>Computer/Internet</th>
<th>Books</th>
<th>School</th>
<th>TV/Film</th>
<th>Music</th>
<th>Talking to people</th>
<th>Games</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>English A</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>12</td>
<td>11</td>
<td>9</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>-</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>English B</td>
<td>20</td>
<td>24</td>
<td>17</td>
<td>40</td>
<td>15</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total</td>
<td>21</td>
<td>25</td>
<td>29</td>
<td>51</td>
<td>24</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

As can be seen in Table 5 above, a majority of the pupils stated they learn the most words through TV/Film. School comes in second place followed by books and music. However, when looking at the courses separately a slightly different result can be seen. A majority of the pupils attending English A have answered that they learn the most words in school but also through TV/Film and music. The pupils attending English B believed they learn the most words through TV/Film. About half of the pupils have stated that, besides TV/Film, they also learn words by reading books and spending time by the computer or on the Internet. Three answers were invalid.
**Table 6** Ways of dealing with unknown words in a text

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Strategies</th>
<th>Often</th>
<th>Sometimes</th>
<th>Rarely</th>
<th>Never</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Guessing from context</td>
<td>37</td>
<td>28</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>-</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Use monolingual dictionary</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>8</td>
<td>17</td>
<td>32</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Use bilingual dictionary</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>25</td>
<td>19</td>
<td>11</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ask a friend</td>
<td>15</td>
<td>30</td>
<td>11</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ask the teacher</td>
<td>13</td>
<td>28</td>
<td>13</td>
<td>6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ignore the word</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>20</td>
<td>28</td>
<td>9</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

The next question brought up how the pupils deal with words they do not understand in a text. However, looking at Table 6 above, guessing from context is the most common way for these pupils to deal with an unknown word in a text. In addition, a majority of the pupils also stated that they ask a friend or the teacher. Only a few look the word up in a monolingual dictionary. Some pupils sometimes ignore the word. However, the majority rarely ignore a word they do not understand. Three answers were invalid.

**4.1.3 Learning strategies**

There are a number of strategies pupils can use when trying to learn a new word. In Table 7 below, a list of some of the strategies the pupils use when learning words are stated. It should be mentioned that a majority of the pupils have stated that they use more than one strategy. Three pupils have not answered the question. The most common strategy is clearly repetition.
Table 7 Strategies for learning words

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Course</th>
<th>Context</th>
<th>Repetition</th>
<th>Think about a similar word</th>
<th>Cover the word</th>
<th>Sing</th>
<th><a href="http://www.glosboken.se">www.glosboken.se</a></th>
<th>Draw parallels to Swedish</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>English A</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>9</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>-</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>English B</td>
<td>13</td>
<td>23</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total</td>
<td>14</td>
<td>32</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>8</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

In addition to the question above, the pupils were asked if the teacher has taught different learning strategies. Below, Table 8 shows what the pupils answered. Two pupils did not answer the question. A total of 48 pupils claimed that the teacher has not given any tips for different learning strategies. Only ten out of 58 pupils answered that they have been given different strategies they can use.

Table 8 If the teacher teaches learning strategies

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Course</th>
<th>Yes</th>
<th>No</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>English A</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>10</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>English B</td>
<td>7</td>
<td>38</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total</td>
<td>10</td>
<td>48</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

The pupils who stated that they have been given tips for learning strategies have also stated what strategies these were. However, two pupils answered that they do not remember. Two pupils claimed that the teacher said that you can write down the words and through this learn them. One pupil claimed the teacher has told him or her that one strategy can be to repeat the words several times. Another pupil stated that the teacher has told them to say the word out loud. In addition, one pupil claimed that the teacher told them that one strategy could be to simply practice. Finally, one pupil stated that the teacher said that you could write down the word then question yourself and finally someone else can question you.
4.2 Teacher interviews

Three teachers have been interviewed where they were asked what strategies they use as they teach new vocabulary but also how much influence the pupils have when it comes to what words they learn. In addition, they were asked if they discuss different learning strategies with the pupils. Finally, they were asked what they believed it means to know a word. Below follows a summary for each teacher who was interviewed.

4.2.1 Teacher A

Teaching strategies

Teacher A stated that the pupils have approximately 30-35 words per week. The words come from different text types such as a text in a textbook, articles and sometimes films. When choosing what words the pupils will learn, Teacher A never looks at the already made word lists. She always looks at the text and from there she picks the words. This is because the words in the word lists often stand in alphabetic order, which, according to her, has shown to make the learning unsuccessful. Instead she picks the words she believes the pupils should learn. The words are often words which are challenging words. It could be words that are difficult to spell or words that are irregular. These are, according to her, significant to learn. In addition, Teacher A stated that she often adds words that are similar to the word that occurs in a text. As an example she gave the expression *apply for a job*. If the pupils are to learn this expression she would choose to introduce it together with words like *applicant* and *letter of application* since these can be connected to the original expression found in the text. By doing so she helps the pupils to widen their vocabulary.

When asked about different teaching strategies, Teacher A stated that these look different depending on what words are being brought up. If the words are special in any way she usually writes the words on the whiteboard. Otherwise, it is common that she together with the pupils do some brainstorming in order to find out what the words mean. However, she mainly introduces the words by looking at a text. The pupils get to underline the words Teacher A believes are important words to learn.

After having had the words for homework, Teacher A usually has a small quiz. She argued it is highly important to learn the words in a context. Therefore the quizzes consist of her saying a sentence in Swedish that the pupils translate into English. Teacher A claimed it is important for the pupils to understand and learn that a word looks different depending on the context.
and the words around it. Therefore, she always tries to use the words in different tenses; this so that the pupils have to think about how to use the word. In addition, the pupils have two larger tests each semester where the words reoccur. Teacher A believes strongly in repetition. Therefore, she advises the pupils to save the word lists and repeat these every now and then. Sometimes she arranges competitions where old words reoccur. This, according to Teacher A, motivates the pupils to remember the words.

**Pupils’ influence and memorization**

According to Teacher A, letting the pupils individually choose what words they want to learn is not a good option. She claimed that it is impossible for her as a teacher to organize one test for each pupil. In addition, Teacher A argued that when the pupils get to chose their own words from a text they usually think they know all of the words because they understand the text. When they then get a test it has shown that they cannot use the words actively. They only understand the words in the context they have been read in. In addition, Teacher A claimed that the most effective way of learning words is to discuss them together in class.

Teacher A experiences that the more difficult the words are, the better pupils remember them. She tries to focus a lot on working with memorization so that the pupils increase their vocabulary as much as possible. She also stated that on a higher level of education the words get more complicated. One example that she gave was in English B where the pupils read more literary texts which contain words that might not be so easy to understand. However, she also stated that most pupils always have some difficulties when trying to learn words.

**Learning strategies**

When asked what strategies the pupils use as they come across words they do not understand, Teacher A believed they primarily try to guess from the context. However, if this strategy does not work, she believed they turn to a dictionary for an explanation or translation into Swedish. According to her, only high achievers occasionally turn to a monolingual dictionary, otherwise a bilingual dictionary is used. Using a dictionary requires knowledge of how to use it. Teacher A argued that it is important to talk about how to use a dictionary in order for the pupils to fully understand how it should be used. Lastly, the pupils also turn to the teacher for help when they do not understand a word.

In addition, Teacher A stated that she sometimes in English A talks about different learning strategies the pupils can use when they try to learn new words. However, she argued that
learning words is fairly easy and most of the pupils already know how to approach new vocabulary. She argued that it is the number of words that can be of trouble. Having 35 words per week is the maximum limit, according to her.

Finally, Teacher A was asked what it means to know a word. According to her, there are two ways of knowing a word i.e. passively and actively. Knowing a word passively, according to Teacher A, means that you can translate it when you hear or read it. In addition, knowing a word actively means that you can pronounce it, use it in different contexts, spell it but also know if it is used in formal or informal English.

4.2.2 Teacher B

Teaching strategies
Teacher B stated that she, with few exceptions, gives the pupils vocabulary homework every week. The number of words the pupils get per week depends on what course they are attending. In English A the pupils have 15-20 words per week. In English B the pupils have a larger number of words, that is, approximately 30-40 words per week. The words mainly come from the textbook in connection with the pupils reading the text assigned to them. However, not all words come from this source. Teacher B also claimed that she turns to different articles and films. Reading books is also effective. However, the book should not be too difficult. If the pupils come across a large number of words they do not understand they only pay attention to these words and forget to focus on the content. Since she only teaches pupils who attend the so called Hotel and Restaurant Program she tries to choose words the pupils can use in their future career within their profession. Then the pupils feel they learn words that are of use. The teacher also argued that by working with words that can be connected to the pupils’ choice of training it makes the course extra interesting and motivating. The pupils also do not experience the course being the same as in lower secondary school.

In addition, the teacher stated that she always looks at the word list next to a text in the textbook and picks out those words she feels are important. Many times the pupils get to cross out words that they do not have any use of. When asked how the teacher introduces the new words to the class, she answered by saying that she and the pupils read the words out loud. Most of the time, after the pupils have had the words for homework, they do a small test.
These tests do not always look the same. Sometimes the pupils just translate the words from Swedish to English. However, occasionally they have to create a sentence or write a synonym. At the end of each unit in the textbook the pupils get a bigger test where some of the words reoccur. After this Teacher B assumes the pupils know the words and she moves on to something else.

**Pupils' influence and memorization**

The pupils sometimes get to influence what words to learn. However, Teacher B argued that the pupils then often choose words they already know. When asked if Teacher B experiences that the pupils remember the words after a test when they turn up later during the semester, she answered by saying that it is a bit of both. Sometimes they do and sometimes they do not. It depends on what kind of words they have learned.

**Learning strategies**

Moreover, Teacher B teaches a number of strategies that the pupils can use when trying to learn new words. This she does at the beginning of the English A course. However, Teacher B argued that they should already have this knowledge since they have studied English for a number of years before coming to the upper secondary school. Teacher B pointed out that she believes it is important to write the words. She also believed this is the most common strategy the pupils use. She also tries to point out that they could read the words out loud to practice their pronunciation. Finally, she stated that the pupils need to take responsibility for their own learning and every pupil is different and therefore uses different strategies.

In addition, Teacher B was asked what aids the pupils can use as they come across a word they do not understand. She answered that they sometimes get to use the computers. However, the access is limited and sometimes the computers do not work. Therefore, the pupils mainly use dictionaries. However, most pupils prefer to ask the teacher. Teacher B stated that she has to be tough and not answer but sometimes she gives in and tells them the meaning of the word. Finally, as a final question, Teacher B was asked what she believed it means when saying that you know a word. According to her knowing a word means that you can understand it in a text, spell it but also use it in different contexts.
4.2.3 Teacher C

Teaching strategies
Teacher C claimed that the number of words he introduces to the pupils per week varies. He stated that he always needs to adjust the number depending on the group of pupils but on average it is somewhere between 20 and 25 words. It is not always unfamiliar words but rather words that he believes should be in focus in connection with a text or which might be difficult to spell.

In addition, Teacher C stated he often presents different learning strategies when he introduces new words. He has worked with web tools where the pupils write the words and through this get tested. In addition, there are computer programs that are connected to the textbooks where the pupils can work with the words. Finally, Teacher C argued that the best thing is to present and work with the words in a context. Therefore, he pointed out that the pupils read the texts where the words occur in order to get a better understanding for the words. When choosing what word to teach, Teacher C usually selects the words that occur in the word list if there is one. Otherwise, he picks out the words from, for example, an article or a book he believes are useful words. If the pupils watch a film or a TV series he chooses those words that help the pupils understand the content of the film or a TV series. When further asked what types of words he chooses, he answered that he mainly selects low-frequency words. Teacher C assumes the pupils know most of the high-frequency words. He argued that most pupils are very good at understanding and finding an overall meaning of a word.

When asking how long they usually work with a specific set of words, Teacher C answered that the words usually reoccur in a test as a separate part of it. Learning words is one of the most important parts of learning English, according to him. Therefore, it is important that the pupils learn the words so that they remember them later on. Teacher C claimed that by having a rich vocabulary you can vary and improve your English. The pupils need to know how to use the words semantically right as well as in a context. The words often reoccur in texts, which is good because they get to use the words once more.

Pupils’ influence and memorization
Teacher C has tried to let each pupil decide what words to learn. However, he thought it was difficult. It especially meant a lot of administrative work when trying to put together a test,
since each pupil needed an individual test depending on what words he or she had chosen. Therefore, he has decided to choose what words the pupils need to learn.

In addition, Teacher C claimed it is good if the pupils remember half of the words given to them. He argued that there are certain words that are more difficult to learn than others. There are also some pupils who are linguistically gifted. These pupils have no difficulties learning English.

**Learning strategies**

Some of the learning strategies Teacher C introduces to the pupils are mentioned above in connection with him introducing new words. He uses web tools and computer programs that are connected to the textbook. The pupils can use these tools and programs to test themselves to see if they know the words. Another strategy Teacher C introduces to the pupils is learning through word lists, which, according to him, is a fairly common strategy the pupils use when trying to learn words. Another strategy the pupils can use is to write the word numerous times. They can also read the word out loud. According to Teacher C, using several senses when trying to learn a word can help you to better remember it. Teacher C claimed that the most common strategies the pupils use are to drill the words into their heads or to let someone question you.

In addition, Teacher C stated that the pupils use dictionaries when they come across a word they do not understand. However, most of the time they mainly turn to him to ask for the word’s meaning. Even though he thinks you should not help them he admits that he most of the time gives the pupils the meaning of the word. Another and final aid the pupils can use to look up the meaning of a word is the Internet. However, according to Teacher C, the time limit makes this aid difficult to use, since the computers are situated in a computer room and not in the classroom.

Finally, Teacher C was asked what he believed it means to know a word. According to him, knowing a word means that you actively can use it both in writing and in speaking. However, knowing a word does not have to mean that you can use it in its full meaning, that is in every context it occurs. Having the word in your vocabulary and knowing the most common meaning is to know a word. Finally, you can have a passive knowledge of the word, meaning that you understand the word but you cannot use it.
5 Discussion

This chapter contains a discussion of the result in connection with the background. In order to make the discussion easier to follow the chapter has been divided into three parts: Knowing a word, Learning strategies and Teaching strategies.

5.1 Knowing a word

When looking at the background and the teachers’ answers on the question concerning what it means to know a word, several similarities can be seen. In the background Laufer (1997:141) argued that knowing a word means you can spell and pronounce it. This is an argument that Teacher A also is in favor of. However, the main argument previous research (Carter 1998:239) as well as the teachers meant is an important factor, is to be able to use the word in different contexts; this includes both spoken and written form. Teacher C, on the other hand, meant that you do not have to be able to use the word in every context it occurs in. This, according to him, is to ask for too much of the pupils. He claimed it is sufficient to know the most frequent meanings and contexts in which the word occurs. Teacher C has a point in his argument. Since one word in English can have a number of meanings it could take a lot of effort trying to learn every meaning but also context in which the word occurs. Knowing the most frequent meanings and contexts it occurs in should be sufficient. Otherwise, pupils can lose interest in learning since there is so much knowledge that needs to be acquired before they fully know a word. Moreover, Schmitt (2000:4) argued that there are two ways of knowing a word, that is to say receptive and productive knowledge. Teacher A as well as Teacher C touched these two when arguing there are two ways of knowing a word. However, they mentioned active and passive knowledge. These two can be connected with receptive and productive knowledge as they mean the same thing. Passive/receptive knowledge means you understand the word in listening and reading but cannot use it and active/productive knowledge means you can use it yourself in both spoken and written form.

In addition, the teachers were asked what words they teach. Here the answers differed. Teacher A stated that she chooses words that for instance are difficult to spell or are irregular in some way. Teacher C, on the other hand, picks low-frequency words because he assumes high-frequency words are words pupils already have knowledge about. Nation (2001:16) argued that teachers should focus on high-frequency words since these are words used frequently in the L2. Low-frequency words, according to Nation, should still be a part of the
learning process. However, teachers should focus less on these. Teacher C as well as Nation have a point. Many pupils probably do know many high-frequency words. Nobody knows them all, especially if you are an intermediate learner. It all depends on the group of pupils you have. Therefore, Nation has a point when he argues that high-frequency words are the words teachers should focus on. These words are highly relevant to know and be able to use when trying to communicate in writing and in speaking. On the other hand, low-frequency words are also important, which Teacher C as well as Nation claimed. They are, as Nation argued, a part of the L2. However, focus should be on the high-frequency words since these are what they state, the most frequent ones. Pupils need to feel they learn words that are useful for them, otherwise their motivation might decrease. Finally, Teacher B claimed she chooses words the pupils can use in their career since the pupils she at the moment teaches study the Hotel and Restaurant Program. Choosing words depending on what the pupils study but also what interests they have is good since this, according to Willis (2008:91), can motivate pupils to learn.

5.2 Learning strategies

As the background showed there are a number of different learning strategies pupils know and use when it comes to vocabulary learning. The study carried out in this paper showed a result that can be connected to the background. To begin with the pupils taking part in the study stated that they learn words through a number of different strategies. Some even use more than one. The most common strategies used by the pupils are repetition and learning in context. Further strategies are to look for similarities between the English word and the Swedish word or between different English words. Some pupils also use a word list and cover the English word and question themselves looking at the Swedish word or the other way around. A final strategy mentioned by one pupil is to use music and sing the words out loud. When comparing these strategies with strategies previous research mentioned, all of these are brought up by authors like Schmitt (2000:132, 1997:207) and Carter & McCarthy (1988:12). It is important to recognize that pupils have different learning strategies and that no strategy is better than the other. The main focus should be that the pupils acquire the knowledge necessary. What strategy they use to reach this goal should not matter.

In addition, the teachers believed most pupils already have the knowledge necessary to study vocabulary. Therefore, Teacher A does not discuss learning strategies with her pupils. Teacher B also argued that pupils should know these. However, she discusses some strategies
at the beginning of the English A course. She mainly talks about strategies like writing words down and reading them out loud. Teacher C was the only teacher out of the three who teaches learning strategies at the same time as he introduces new vocabulary. These strategies consist of web tools and computer programs pupils can use when studying. Finally, he brought up making word lists, reading them out loud but also how important it is to use all of your senses when studying words. In the questionnaire, 48 pupils answered that the teachers have not given them tips for what learning strategies they can use. Only 10 pupils stated that the teacher has taught different strategies. The strategies given by the teacher were to repeat the words several times, read the words out loud, practice a lot and finally to write down the words, question yourself and then let someone else question you. All of these are good strategies pupils can use. Sökmen (1997:256) suggested that teachers should create different exercises in the classroom where the pupils get to try out different learning styles and techniques; this because pupils might have different learning styles when trying to learn new vocabulary. In my opinion, teachers should give pupils tools to help them gain the knowledge necessary. Different exercises can benefit and help pupils who might not use a style that is the best for them. Even teachers who work at an upper secondary school should present this to his or her pupils since the pupils come from different schools. Some of them might not be aware of different learning styles and techniques.

Moreover, 25 pupils stated they remember more than 50% of the words they go through. On the other hand 24 pupils answered that they remember less than 50% of the words. This result shows what Willis (2008:83) argued. He claimed it is normal for pupils to forget words after a test. When asking the teachers if they think pupils remember a majority of the words given to them, Teacher B claimed it depends on what words they have been studying. Teacher C argued that it is good if the pupils remember half of the words. In reality remembering all words you once had for homework probably will not happen. Words that stay in our memory are most likely those words we come across in several contexts over a longer period of time and those we use actively in both writing and speaking.

Finally, the pupils were asked how they approach an unknown word in a text. A majority of the pupils stated that they try to guess the word’s meaning from the context. Other fairly common ways of approaching unknown words are to look them up in a dictionary, mainly a bilingual one. Otherwise, the pupils ask the teacher or sometimes their friends. When comparing this result with the result given by Bogaards and Laufer (2004:158, 161-162)
similarities can be seen. Their result also showed that the pupils mainly try to guess from the context. Secondly, they turn to a dictionary, either a monolingual or a bilingual one. In addition to this, Summers (1988:116) claimed using dictionaries is good because the pupils are exposed to the word in more than one context. The interviewed teachers also stated that dictionaries were being used. Otherwise, the pupils, according to them, ask the teacher. Teacher A was the only teacher who argued that the pupils first of all try to guess from the context. Guessing from context is most likely the most common way of approaching an unknown word since this is where you first encounter the word in question. Pupils asking the teacher might feel this is the most comfortable way since they do not have to do anything themselves. Teachers should try to get the pupils to turn to a dictionary because they, just like Summers argued above, are exposed to the word in more than one way. Through this the pupils can enrich their knowledge of the word in question. However, teachers should help pupils gain the knowledge necessary in how to use a dictionary since this could be difficult.

5.3 Teaching strategies

In the interviews the teachers were asked how many words per week they introduce to the pupils. As can be seen in the result the teachers teach somewhere between 15 and 40 words. Teacher B argued that the number of words vary depending on if it is an English A or an English B course. In addition, Teacher C stated that the number of words depend upon the group of pupils. When comparing the teachers’ answers with the answers the pupil gave in the questionnaire a resemblance can be noticed. A majority of the pupils argued that they have 21-30 words per week, an answer that is similar to the teachers’ answers. In addition, Schmitt (2000:144-145) claimed pupils should have approximately 10 words per one-hour lesson. Generally pupils have English classes twice a week with every lesson lasting about an hour. This means the pupils should have approximately 20 words per week if following Schmitt’s recommendation. Introducing somewhere between 20 and 30 words per week seems to be a reasonable goal if the words are being handled during the lessons. If a teacher’s goal is to just give the words for homework and then test them, having 30 words might seem too much. However, if they are being handled during class the pupils actively work with them and through this they may not be so difficult to learn. It can finally be said that if the words are difficult because of their spelling or grammar it might be a good idea to decrease the number of words in order for the pupils to fully be able to concentrate on the difficult words.
According to Sökmen (1997:240), pupils should be able to influence what words to learn. It will motivate them to acquire the knowledge necessary. However, when investigating what the reality looks like, the study in this paper showed the opposite. Teacher A and C both stated that the pupils do not get to influence what words to learn. Teacher A claimed that she has experienced this to be an ineffective approach. According to her, pupils who individually choose what words to learn, believe they know a majority of the words encountered in a text and therefore they do not study the words thoroughly. When Teacher A later tests the pupils, she has experienced that they do not know the words. Teacher C argued that having the pupils individually choose the words involves a lot of administrative work for him since each pupil needs an individual test. Therefore, he found it easier to choose the words himself. Teacher B is the only teacher in this study who claimed that she sometimes lets the pupils choose what words to learn. However, she experiences that the pupils choose the words they already know. In addition, when asking the pupils if they get to influence what words to learn, 32 pupils stated they sometimes get to choose the words. Letting the pupils influence what words they get to learn is highly important. Sökmen’s argument that this approach is motivating should be considered. The more pupils feel they can influence their education the more they probably will feel motivated to learn. It is, however, important to make sure the pupils choose words that are useful and new to them. It can be understood that the teachers feel it involves a lot of administrative work for them when pupils individually choose the words. Therefore, pupils can as a whole group choose the words they believe to be useful ones. This makes it easier for the teacher to organize the lessons as well as making one test instead of individual ones. Teacher A’s argument that one effective way of learning words is to discuss them together in class is most likely one of the best ways to approach new vocabulary. Therefore, the pupils should learn the same words.

There are a number of different teaching strategies a teacher can use when introducing and working with new vocabulary. Willis (2008:91) claimed that using music can be motivating. Other useful strategies could be to use a dictionary to show what the word means; you can give a detailed description of the word or show its appearance and qualities. In addition, the teacher can give examples, illustrations and synonyms to demonstrate how the word can be used. Finally, the teacher can give different contexts where the word occurs, translate it and show similarities with other words in the L2 or with words in the L1 (Ur 1996:63, Laufer 1997:153). The teachers taking part in the study all believed it is important to work with
words in different contexts. This is an approach that can be connected to the meaning of knowing a word. Knowing a word among others means you can use it in different contexts. Therefore, it is also important to teach the word by using different contexts. In addition, the teachers all use different strategies when they introduce new words to the pupils. Teacher A discusses the meaning of the words together with the pupils; a strategy I believe encourages them to guess from context. In addition, she sometimes adds words similar to the word found in a text. She believed this is a good way for the pupils to increase their vocabulary. Using this strategy is something Nattinger (1988:62-64) also argued to be a good approach since words that are tied to each other by sound or meaning are stored together in our minds. A strategy while worth using as it helps to increase the vocabulary Teacher B usually reads the words out loud together with the pupils before they get them for homework. This strategy allows the pupils to practice their pronunciation of the words which I see as a positive thing. However, using only this technique might not be so effective. This strategy should be used in combination with other approaches such as presenting the word in a context in order for the pupils to see how the word can be used. Finally, Teacher C introduces different learning strategies when he introduces the words. This strategy could be a very good one since he incorporates these strategies with his teaching strategies, making the teaching more effective.

Moreover, the teachers stated that they all test if the pupils have acquired the vocabulary they were assigned to learn. Teacher B stated that she usually has a small test after each vocabulary homework. Later on during the semester the pupils do a larger test where the words reoccur. After this she assumes they know the words. Teacher C claimed the words usually reoccur in a test later on. He believed it is important that the pupils learn the words with the intention of remembering them later on. In addition, Teacher A stated that she strongly believes in repetition. Therefore, she arranges competitions, where old words reoccur. By doing so the pupils, according to her, stay motivated to remember the words ones learned. In addition, Nation (2001:90-91) stated that repetition is of great value when acquiring new vocabulary. Nation (2001:76) further believed spaced repetition is a technique well worth using since it is a more effective approach than if you have the repetitions close to each other. Repetition is most likely one of the most important strategies. Pupils are exposed to the words several times which helps them to remember them. In addition, spaced repetition may be an even better approach since they get exposed to the word over a longer period of time which also helps the pupils hold on to the word.
6 Conclusion

The study in this paper investigated three different areas within vocabulary in second language learning. Firstly, it was studied what words learners should learn. A conclusion has been drawn from the survey in connection with the background saying focus should be on high-frequency words since these words occur frequently in different contexts. However, low-frequency words should not be forgotten as they are still a part of the L2. In addition, it is important that pupils feel they learn useful words. Otherwise, their motivation might decrease as they see no use in the words they learn. Pupils should be able to influence what words to learn since this increases their motivation. Finally, it might be a good strategy to choose words after pupils’ interests or future careers as the pupils feel they learn useful words.

In addition, the study investigated what techniques and strategies pupils use when they learn new vocabulary. It is important to recognize that no strategy is better than another. Pupils are all different and therefore they also use different strategies. The focus should be on acquiring the knowledge necessary. I believe it is important that pupils acquire knowledge of different learning strategies and it should be the teacher’s responsibility to make sure the pupils have this knowledge. Therefore, teachers should introduce different strategies. It should not be an excuse that the pupils are in upper secondary school and therefore they should already have this knowledge. Since these pupils come from different schools it is highly important to make sure that they study on equal terms.

As a final goal for this study, an investigation was conducted to find out how teachers teach vocabulary. The number of words can be significant regarding what kind of words are chosen. If the words are difficult for instance when it comes to their grammar or spelling, a lesser amount of words per occasion might be in favor. Then the pupils can concentrate on those words which bring difficulties. Integrating teaching different learning strategies when introducing new words makes the teaching more effective as two important elements are treated at the same time. Teachers can also add words similar to the word found in, for example, a text to help the pupils enrich their vocabulary. Other strategies teachers can use are to give examples or synonyms to show how the word can be used; present similarities with other words in the target language or even words in the mother tongue. A final strategy could be to present the word in different contexts. The pupils will get a more profound understanding for how to use the word which clearly is positive. Finally, repetition is highly
important when trying to learn vocabulary. Repeating the word over and over again helps the word stick in your memory. One way of repeating words could be through spaced repetition. If the words are treated during a longer period of time they most likely will be remembered for a longer time. However, the number of repetitions does not have to increase; they only take place further apart.

If further studies were to be conducted within this subject, in-depth interviews could be carried out with a few pupils, which would result in a deeper analysis of how they approach and work with vocabulary. Finally, it could also be interesting to study how the memory functions when working with vocabulary. A study could be carried out were a number of pupils are tested to see if spaced repetition is the best strategy when it comes to repetition and learning words.
Bibliography


Appendices

Appendix I Questionnaire

Hur skulle du uppskatta att ditt ordförråd i engelska är?

Dåligt    Helt ok    Bra    Mycket bra

Hur många ord/vecka går ni igenom i skolan?

<10    11-20    21-30    >30

Uppskatta hur många av de ord ni går igenom som stannar kvar i ditt minne?

Alla    Mer än 75%    Mer än 50%    <50%

Får du vara med och påverka vilka ord som ni ska lära er?

Ja    Iblad    Nej

Rangordna de tre områden inom vilka du anser att du lär dig flest ord. Nummer 1 är inom det område du lär dig flest.

1. _____________________________
2. _____________________________
3. _____________________________
Vad gör du om du när du läser en text inte förstår ett ord?

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>действие</th>
<th>часто</th>
<th>иногда</th>
<th>редко</th>
<th>никогда</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Гадайте на основе контекста</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Словарь по-английски-английский</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td>Словарь по-английски-шведский</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Просите друга</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Просите учителя</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Игнорируйте слово</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Другое: _____________________</td>
<td></td>
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</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Определяете, когда вы пытаетесь изучить новое слово?

___________________________________________________________________________
___________________________________________________________________________
___________________________________________________________________________

Был ли ваш учитель рассказывал вам о различных стратегиях того, как вы можете изучать новые слова?

Да    Нет

Если да, какие стратегии?

___________________________________________________________________________
___________________________________________________________________________
___________________________________________________________________________

___________________________________________________________________________

___________________________________________________________________________

___________________________________________________________________________

___________________________________________________________________________

___________________________________________________________________________

_________
Appendix II Teacher interview questions

- Hur många ord/vecka introducerar du för dina elever?

- Hur går det till när nya ord ska bearbetas?
  Introduktion, elevarbete, prov, repetition osv.

- Var hittar du orden?
  Textbok, musik, artiklar osv.

- Hur väljer du vilka ord eleverna ska lära sig?

- Får eleverna vara med och påverka vilka ord de ska lära sig?

- Lär du eleverna vilka strategier de kan använda sig av för att lära sig ord?

- Hur länge får eleverna jobba med orden i skolan?

- Vilka hjälpmedel får eleverna använda då de inte förstår ett ord i t.ex. en text?

- Upplever du att eleverna kommer ihåg alla ord efter t.ex. ett läxförhör eller prov?