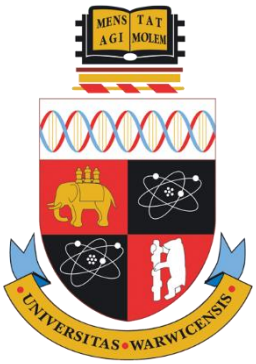

A CASE STUDY CONCERNING THE USE OF VOCABULARY LEARNING STRATEGIES AMONG MALAYSIAN SOJOURNERS IN THE UNITED KINGDOM

By

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L2 – Second language

LL – Language learning

LLS – Language learning strategies

VLS – Vocabulary learning strategies

VLSQ - Vocabulary learning strategies questionnaire

VLT – Vocabulary levels test

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Declaration

The work in this thesis was developed and conducted by the author between November 2015 and July 2019. I declare that, apart from work whose authors are explicitly acknowledged, this thesis and materials contained in this thesis represent original work undertaken solely by the author. I confirm that this thesis has not been submitted for a degree at any other university.

Parts of this study have been presented on several occasions, including:

1. The Investigation into Vocabulary Learning Strategies in a Target Language Community. In *15th British Association for Applied Linguistics (BAAL) Language Learning and Teaching in Different Contexts* (2019). University of Bath, UK.
2. Vocabulary Learning Strategies among Malaysian Sojourners in UK (Poster Presentation). In *British Association for Applied Linguistics (BAAL) Vocabulary Special Interest Group Conference* (2019). Manchester Metropolitan University, UK.
3. Understanding Shifts of Vocabulary Learning Strategies among Malaysian Sojourners in UK – The Use of Vocabulary Levels Test. In *21st Warwick International Conference in Applied Linguistics* (2018). University of Warwick, UK.
4. Vocabulary Learning Strategies among Malaysian Sojourners in UK – the Challenges in Data Collection. In *CES 6th Annual Interdisciplinary Postgraduate Conference* (2018). University of Warwick, UK.
5. Understanding Vocabulary Learning Strategies among Malaysian Sojourners in UK – a Pilot Study (Poster Presentation). In *CES 5th Annual Interdisciplinary Postgraduate Conference* (2017). University of Warwick, UK.
6. Vocabulary Learning Strategies among Malaysian Sojourners in UK – a Pilot Study. In *School of Education, Doctoral Research Conference* (2016). University of Birmingham, UK.

Abstract

This thesis investigates the Vocabulary Learning Strategies (VLS) used by Malaysian sojourners in learning English in UK in relation to context and learners' agencies. Strategies used in formal education and daily life are explored and their vocabulary language learning experiences in Malaysia are taken into account. The study investigates the case of ten Malay native speakers who were living temporarily in the UK for a period of three to four years. Four participants were students, three had full-time jobs, two had part-time jobs and the other one was stay-at-home spouse. The participants were asked about the strategies they used in the UK, and also to reflect on their language learning in Malaysia. This study also asked how their VLS progressed and changed as they moved from their home country to the UK.

This study adopted a mixed-method approach and data was collected through semi-structured interviews, learning diaries, Vocabulary Levels Tests and VLS questionnaires in three phases; over a period of fourteen months. Interview data was coded into themes and was supplemented with data from learning diaries and questionnaires. In relation to research question one, it was found that Malaysian sojourners used a mix of vocabulary learning strategies throughout their vocabulary learning journey starting from school, HE, their workplace and Coventry. The participants' VLS were more or less consistent across their learning English journey. Frequency of use for each strategy very much depended on who or what was available to them and their willingness to learn new words. The participants also started to use more technological tools as these tools became widely available. In respect to research question two, Malaysian sojourners encountered new words in all sorts of situations. These encounters could be a mix of intentional and incidental as one could be purposely read an academic article and found new words. However, a large number of the encounters came from technological based tools such as watching online movies, surfing the Internet and reading online. The frequency of encounters differed depending on the opportunities the participants had. Some opportunities were specific to participants' status such as being a student, working, and not working. Other opportunities were common and were experienced by all, e.g. travelling, seeking health advice and using media.

The study offers a model of Vocabulary Learning in Context (VLC) in which context and agency are considered. In particular, the model shows that learners have to make decisions whether to encounter new vocabulary and what actions they should take about it. If they choose to try and learn new vocabulary systematically, they would engage in the process of transferring the new vocabulary from short-term memory to long-term memory. The vocabulary learning process will start again when learners use the new words in context as the context will, repeatedly, provide new opportunities of encountering other new words. Recommendations for L2 learners, L2 teachers, researchers and those supporting language learning more informally are given.

Keywords: Vocabulary learning strategies, language learning strategies, context, agency

CHAPTER 1 INTRODUCTION

This thesis is about sojourners' efforts and engagement in vocabulary learning in a target language community. It captures the experiences, opportunities, limitations, feelings and progress during their sojourn, including their past language learning experiences. This study looks at how Malaysian sojourners learn vocabulary and what affect their choice and use of strategies.

This chapter starts with a brief introduction of the thesis, the role of technology in vocabulary learning, and the background to English education in Malaysia. It also describes my personal significance of conducting this study. This chapter is written to provide an early understanding of the research, and a brief explanation of the following chapters will be included at the end of this chapter.

1.1 The Thesis

In mastering a language, learners need to be able to comprehend what is being said or written, and to be able to use the language in spoken and written form. "However, without the proper vocabulary to encode the intended meaning of the transmitter, a message can never exist in the first place" (Mohd Nawi, 2005:5). Nothing can be conveyed without vocabulary. In other words, language cannot be taught or learned without vocabulary. Vocabulary, however, needs to be learned and vocabulary size needs to grow. The question is how do learners do this best?

This thesis is a study of ten Malaysian sojourners, with varying degree of English, learning vocabulary in the United Kingdom. Initially, I wanted to focus on how they learned vocabulary in the UK only. However, once I had started my data collection, I realised that they were unexpectedly competent in English. This situation had made me widen the thesis focus by looking at how they had become proficient English learners. Hence, I took a step back and looked at their vocabulary learning experiences in Malaysia as well as in the UK. I examined how their language experiences in Malaysia influenced their language learning in the UK, specifically in relation to vocabulary learning strategies. I also explored the sojourners' daily life routines and looked at their experiences of communicating in English and reading English materials. Furthermore, these sojourners had different purposes for coming to the UK. Some of them studied here, some worked

here, and some accompanied their studying spouses. I examined whether their roles had any significance in relation to their vocabulary learning strategies. In addition, I also looked at vocabulary learning strategies recorded by the participants in their learning diaries. It is hoped that this study will contribute to vocabulary learning research, and to language learning overall by understanding the vocabulary learning process of second language learners of English in an English-speaking country.

1.2 The Importance of Vocabulary, Vocabulary Learning Strategies and the Research Questions

As the building block of a language, vocabulary is the most important language component. The more vocabulary learners know, the more opportunities they have to use language. For example, to enable language learners to understand what they have read, they need to understand the words they encounter in the texts they are reading. By understanding the reading materials, they would learn more vocabulary and eventually would read more and in turn, understand more texts. On the other hand, if learners cannot understand what they read, this might make them read less, understand less and could result in being low proficiency language learners. Similarly, if learners have a good grasp of vocabulary, they are better able to understand an interlocutor's message, to give an appropriate response and go on to converse with more people. On the contrary, if learners cannot understand vocabulary, they might slowly withdraw from using the language.

This issue is explained using Nuttall's (2000) circles: the vicious circle of the weak reader and the virtuous circle of the good reader. These circles represent two types of readers but have wider significance (see Figure 1.1). In the vicious circle, learners who do not understand what they read will read slowly, which leads them to not enjoy reading, and the unenjoyable reading experience makes them reluctant to read more. In the virtuous circle, learners who understand the reading materials will read more. As they are able to understand the text, they enjoy the reading experience and therefore, read faster.

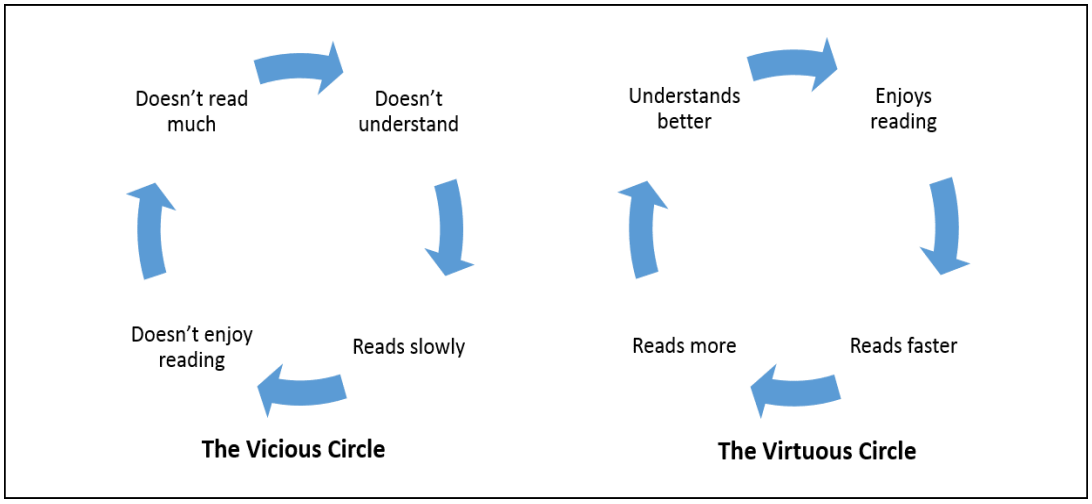


Figure 1.1 The vicious circle and the virtuous circle (Taken from Nuttall, 2000)

More is at stake than vocabulary but one way for learners to experience the virtuous circle is to expand their vocabulary. This is where vocabulary learning strategies (VLS, henceforth) play a crucial role in helping learners to increase their vocabulary size. With a better vocabulary, they are not held up by words they do not understand. They could read more fluently and could have a better understanding of the text. By understanding VLS, learners have guidance on what they could or should do when they encounter, seek to memorise and use vocabularies. In addition, knowledge of VLS encourages learners' independence especially when they encounter vocabulary outside language lessons. VLS also allow learners to become autonomous and more responsible in their vocabulary learning.

Vocabulary learning is not restricted to the classroom as learners encounter new vocabulary when they are outside class. This applies to learning language in both native language community and target language community. In the former, learners might have access to films, newspapers, advertising slogans, books, food label, and magazines in the target language. In the latter, encountering vocabulary in the target language becomes increasingly common - in particular, with the use of technology. For example, in Malaysia, learners' experience of English is not restricted to learning formally in the classroom as it was for earlier generations. But for the newer generation, they encounter English in their daily life, working life and home life. It is important that we understand these changing patterns. Opportunities are dramatically enhanced when people live in a target language community and they encounter all sorts of new opportunities for learning language.

At the initial stages in learning a language, learners need to get as much language input as possible before they can use the language. This language input is gained from reading and listening to target language materials which are available in language classrooms and largely, outside the classroom. As Alyami (2011:3) said "vocabulary cannot be all acquired or learned in the classroom". Thus, a good learner will learn vocabulary independently without relying on the input given in the classroom only. It then becomes important to understand how learners of English or another language make sense of all the language they are exposed to, and how they try to learn from this exposure. Realising this, VLS researchers have shifted their attention from teaching methodology to the learners themselves, and focus on the wider experiences that might influence the learning process (Yazdi and Kafipour, 2014).

Most research on VLS has been carried out quantitatively, focusing on large scale studies of frequency and range of VLS use (for example Sanaoui, 1995; Gu and Johnson, 1996; Takac, 2008). Researchers often looked into the strategies used by successful and less successful learners. In addition, they have studied the relationship between VLS and other factors such as vocabulary size, motivation, gender, explicit and implicit teaching of vocabulary (for example Stoffer, 1995; Nakamura, 2000; Marin, 2005). To the best of my knowledge, there has been no previous VLS study that focuses on adult Malaysian sojourners who lived in the UK. The emphasis of this study was to observe how these Malaysians used VLS in an English-speaking country and the reasons for using the strategies they did. This study raised the issue of understanding the role of context and agencies in vocabulary learning.

This led me to consider a set of research questions that was developed and adapted during the course of the thesis. These questions finally resolved themselves into an overarching question which is 'How do Malaysian sojourners learn vocabulary?' Below are the sub-questions that would help answering the big question.

RQ1 What vocabulary learning strategies do Malaysian sojourners use?

RQ2 Where do they encounter new words?

1.3 Definition of Vocabulary Learning Strategies (VLS)

In defining vocabulary learning strategies (VLS), there are three important terminologies that need equal attention: strategy; language learning strategies (LLS); and the term vocabulary learning strategies itself. The word strategy means a plan, or an action carried out towards achieving a task or a set of objectives. Some strategies are planned well ahead, and some are spontaneous. Language learning strategies are the techniques or steps taken in learning a language. Researchers defined LLS using words such as steps, processes, tactics, activities or approaches taken to enhance the learning of a second language (L2). Questions here are first, whether the terms used in defining LLS refer to general strategies, specific strategies or the actual strategies used by language learners? Secondly, are LLS conscious, subconscious, or sometimes conscious and sometimes not conscious? Oxford's (1990) definition of LLS answered the first question. According to her, LLS are "specific actions taken by the learner to make learning easier, faster, more enjoyable, more self-directed, more effective, and more transferable to new situations" (p8). As regards the second question, although these strategies are often used consciously, at times their use can become subconscious. For example, we might consciously decide to ask questions to other people, or we might subconsciously guess the meaning of a sentence by looking at the interlocutor's facial expressions.

By looking at the keywords in defining LLS which are specific actions, conscious and unconscious, vocabulary learning strategies can be defined as the specific actions employed by language learners, consciously or subconsciously, to learn vocabulary in a second language. Researchers have different opinions on the categorisation of VLS and these categories will be discussed in the literature review.

1.4 The Role of Technology

In this section, I will discuss the role of technology in language learning and the benefits that technology brings to vocabulary learning. Technology is now part of our everyday life and is easily accessible almost everywhere in the world with the invention of the Internet. The Internet allows people to continuously connect, share and exchange ideas all around the world. This opens a huge opportunity for language learners to practise language beyond borders and time. Synchronous and asynchronous communication tools, for example, email, forums, and text messaging, make language learning accessible to all people, regardless of age and status. Without the need to put a 'face' when

interacting, learning may be more comfortable and less embarrassing, and could increase motivation and engagement. The Internet also makes interactive language learning possible by allowing two-way communication, almost instantly, with other language learners and teachers in various parts of the world. This was not possible in the past.

When the mobile phone was first created in 1973, its use was limited to making and receiving calls and texts. Mobile phone users had no choice but to pay for the outgoing calls and texts. Its evolution continued with the first touchscreen in 1992. The combination of smartphones and the Internet have brought a huge change in language learning. This is true especially with the creation of social media which is free to use. People have more opportunities to stay in contact with families and friends using social media platforms such as WhatsApp, Facebook and WeChat. These social media platforms were not available 20 years ago. Social media can keep relationships going between students, families, colleagues and friends. The availability of these media bridges the gap between native speakers and second language (L2) learners. English L2 learners have more opportunities to communicate frequently with English-speaking lecturers, classmates or friends. Social media also provides opportunities for vocabulary learning and growth. In addition, the emergence of dictionary websites, mobile dictionary applications and language translators brings a major transformation in vocabulary learning. Language learners are able to learn about vocabulary, almost immediately and learners can potentially keep a list of the vocabulary they learn in mobile phone note applications for future use.

1.5 The Role of English in Malaysia

The use of English in Malaysian schools was a feature of British colonisation from the eighteenth until mid-twentieth centuries. The colonial government assigned British teachers to teach Standard British English as the medium of instruction in school (Thirusanku and Yunus, 2014). Since then, British English (BE) has been used in the Malaysian education system. In 1957, English was retained as the co-official language alongside Malay, but with the intention of making Malay as the national language and to remove the status of English as an official language after ten years (Thirusanku and Yunus, 2012). The National Language Acts 1963/67 officially states the use of Malay as the only national language but at the same time allows the use of English (National Language Act, 1963). In 1969, the Ministry of Education (MoE) introduced a policy

instructing all schools to become Malay-medium. Despite the priority given to the Malay language, English has been officially recognised as the second language (L2) in the education policy and planning. This recognition leads to making English as a compulsory subject in all levels of education (Darmi and Albion, 2013). English is tested in two national public exams which are Form 3 Assessment (PT3) and Malaysian Certificate for Education (SPM) for Form 5 students. In 2012, the Education Ministry introduced a new policy "To Uphold Bahasa Melayu and to Strengthen the English Language" (MBMMBI). This policy was introduced to students in school and higher education. Although the Malay language (Bahasa Melayu) is the national language, English is widely used for social and professional purposes (Yamat, Umar, and Mahmood, 2014). The MBMMBI policy illustrates the government's aspiration in making Bahasa Melayu as the medium of unity and communication towards achieving 1Malaysia (One Malaysia) (Ahmad, Majid, Mamat, Rambely, Muda, Jaaman, Suradi, Ismail, Shahabuddin, Nazar, Samsudin, Zin, Zahari, and Rafee, 2011). Equally, MBMMBI aims to enhance English proficiency to enable students to explore new knowledge at national and international levels.

Malaysia is of course a multilingual society. There are a large number of Chinese and Indian people in the country. There are also non-Malay-medium national-type primary schools nationwide, or known as vernacular schools, which use Mandarin and Tamil as the medium of instructions. These languages, however, do not have the official language status in Malaysia. Even though there are schools with different medium of instructions, all schools admit students regardless of racial and language backgrounds.

In kindergarten and nursery, English is taught as a subject although no minimum teaching hours are specified. In primary schools, English is taught for at least 160 hours a year which is equivalent to five hours per week. In secondary schools, English is taught for at least 112 hours which is equivalent to three and a half hours per week. The English teaching hours vary depending on the types of school, especially in special education and vernacular schools.

Generally, English is used widely in Malaysia especially in the private sectors. In many private companies, English is the preferred language used in written communication such as emails, office circulations and even in job interviews. However, in the government sectors, although English is encouraged in spoken communication, all official documents

must be written in Bahasa Melayu. In relation to locality, the use of English is more widespread and understood in large cities and tourist-friendly areas.

1.6 Background of the Participants

This study involved ten Malaysians whose native language was Malay (technically, this is often described as Bahasa Melayu but for clarity, I will just use the term 'Malay' from now on). They came to the UK either with an intention to pursue studies or to accompany their spouses who were studying. According to the UK Council for International Student Affair (UKCISA, 2018), the latest statistics showed that there were 16,370 Malaysian students in the UK in 2016/2017. Out of this number, 3,195 were postgraduates and the others were undergraduates. These students constituted only four percent of all non-UK/EU students in the UK. The number of Malaysian students coming to the UK in that year decreased since the previous year, 2015/2016, which was 17, 405. The UK Council for International Student Affairs (UKCISA) provides detailed data for all UK students showing gender, field of study, level of study and mode of study in UK Higher Education (HE). However, for each of the non-EU domicile, such as Malaysia, the UKCISA website only presents general data on the level and mode of study without any data on age, gender, field or place of study. The latest statistics available on the university website where these participants or their spouses were studying, show there were 9, 854 international students (non-UK/EU) in 2017/18. Out of that number, there were 386 Malaysian undergraduates and 75 postgraduates currently studying in the university in 2017/2018 (ibid). These statistics could be used as an indication of the opportunity the participants had in communicating in Malay among the Malaysian communities in Coventry. It can be concluded that as there was only a small number of Malays in Coventry, the participants had more opportunity to use English than Malay.

1.7 My Personal Experience

I have always been interested in languages as I came from a multiracial country, Malaysia, which has Malay, Chinese and Indian as the three main ethnics. I was exposed to at least four languages since I was young which were Malay, Mandarin, Tamil and English. Back at home, my mom was a big fan of Hindustani movies. I was exposed to Hindi as well. Believe it or not, I can grasp what is being said when I hear Hindi speakers converse or even when I watch movies without subtitles. That took years of exposure and hundreds of hours of watching Hindi movies. In addition, I still remember how I was addicted to

Spanish telenovelas, Japanese movies and Korean dramas. Whenever I watched the dramas, I always tried to mix and match the dialogue spoken to the subtitles. I believe those days indirectly gave me my passion for using and researching languages.

When I was in secondary school, there were two great teachers who inspired me to learn English. One was my softly-spoken English teacher at school while the other was my over-enthusiastic English tuition class teacher. The former taught English in a unique way that made me not afraid to make mistakes. I experimented with a lot of words and she guided me through it. The latter encouraged me, in exciting ways to practise, to speak and to use English in front of other students. I did not feel embarrassed at all because the way she taught made me want to try more and be an active student in class.

My passion towards languages became more obvious when I was in higher education. I became highly interested in learning discourse analysis, grammar, structures of English and so on. I knew this was my cup of tea since I started my bachelor's degree in Teaching English as a Second Language (TESL). However, one thing that I noticed was I felt very envious when my classmates were more articulate, while I struggled to understand what they were saying. For example, I was very frustrated when my classmates kept using the word 'desperate' as I did not know what that word meant. I acted like I knew the meaning, but actually I was only able to guess a few days later, based on their conversation. I tried to find reasons why I had such a wide gap with my classmates. At that time, I concluded that my classmates came from different background and lifestyles. Some of them came from the capital of Malaysia which is Kuala Lumpur where English is used widely, some were debaters in secondary school, some were hardcore fans of English songs, some watched only English movies, some used English at home, and some spent their childhood in English speaking countries. What about me? I lived in a small town where English was not widely used, I was not a debater at school, I rarely listened to English songs, I did not watch a lot of English movies and I did not use English at home. I did not have the same exposure to English in my life.

I still remember when I was in primary school, I had one book allocated for spelling tests. By the end of the week, the students were tested on spelling words that were learned on that particular week. I could still recall one of the words I did not know how to spell which was 'exhibition'. Well, it was a meaningful act as I can still remember vividly how

I secretly copied my classmate's spelling. That was more than 20 years ago. When I was in secondary school, I could not recall any explicit teaching of vocabulary. My vocabulary learning depended on my own efforts to look up in a dictionary for any unknown words. The learning that I had was mostly incidental and independent learning.

When I graduated, I worked as an English teacher at a school for the deaf. I had to learn sign language to communicate with and teach deaf students. It was a challenge for me as there are thousands of English and Malay words that needed to be translated into sign language. It took me months to synchronise my thought with my hands, so the signs would flow smoothly when I talked and signed simultaneously. I love using and learning sign languages as I know it is an advantage for me to be able to communicate with deaf community which not many people can. Nonetheless, I have to admit that I always mixed up the signs for English and Malay. I faced difficulties as the daily conversations were signed using Malay sign languages while in English lessons, I had to use English sign languages. I had to repeatedly use any new sign that I learned so it would be stored in my long-term memory. I also was, on a few occasions, a sign language interpreter at school events. During those times, I can still remember how I mixed up the English and Malay sign languages. When I seemed lost, helpful colleagues, who sat among the audience, signed words that I did not know how to sign. At one point, I reflected on myself and felt concerned about my students. As much as how challenging it was in retaining and synchronising sign languages for me, I realised that my deaf students faced greater challenges in learning.

Deaf students in Malaysia communicate mainly using sign languages and only a small number of them can communicate verbally. Their level of deafness varied from mild, moderate, severe to profound. Most of my students were deaf from birth and some from their infant years. Since most of them were already deaf during the critical years of language development, they did not receive sufficient vocabulary exposure for language development. Their lack of vocabulary affected their ability to read and write, especially in Malay. English was considered as their third or foreign language as their first language was sign language and second, Malay. It was very difficult for me to teach them vocabulary as I had to ensure they were able to relate the word taught with their first language and real object or situation. As deaf students rely mainly on their vision to learn, repetition of English words outside lesson is very limited hence they easily forget the word learned.

Even in a deaf community in which they do not verbally say the word, it is crucial for them to learn vocabulary for academic purposes and for their own survival. This was a turning point as I knew I had the chance to help other people to improve their language learning, especially in vocabulary learning. Vocabulary is not only important for people who can speak and hear, it is also fundamental to the deaf community.

Based on my experience as a student and an English teacher, I figured that vocabulary is an essential part of learning any language. Therefore, when I had the opportunity to study for master's degree (TESL), I decided that my dissertation must be about vocabulary acquisition. I wanted to find ways that could vary vocabulary teaching and learning. Thus, I investigated whether word pairs have any effect on vocabulary acquisition. The results proved that word pairs had positive effect on various aspects of word knowledge. My interest in vocabulary learning remains and I decided to continue explore this area for my PhD.

The experience I had within the first few months of my arrival in the UK strengthened my intention to conduct this study. I met many people from various English language backgrounds. Some of them became close friends. We were close enough that I could recognise some of them had poor English proficiency. One of these, let us just call her Z. Whenever Z received a phone call from English speakers and if I was nearby, Z would pass the phone to me. Z said she could not understand what the caller said and at the same time, Z could not explain herself well. Another close friend, X, also had very poor language proficiency. Once, he was offered a job as a laboratory assistant. However, on the first day, he reported himself to work, he was asked to do cleaning job such as vacuuming floors instead of dealing with cleaning chemicals and apparatus. When he came back from work, he got a phone call from his supervisor. He passed the phone to his wife as she was more proficient than him. It turned out that the supervisor explained that he had difficulties to communicate with X and he politely asked X not to come to work anymore. The incident upset X deeply and it took some time for him to recover from this demotivation. Z avoided any circumstances that needed her to speak English and if possible, relied on someone else to take over her conversation. X lost his opportunity to earn a living. Both situations that Z and X faced were caused by a lack of vocabulary. As the UK is an English-speaking country, Z and X had no choice but to use English. They needed strategies to add more vocabulary to their language register. These

strategies will help them build their self-esteem, and also to lead a less dependent life in regards of language use.

Personally, as I am currently studying in the UK, I find it challenging to understand some of the words used by native speakers. I also face difficulties to engage in informal conversations as I feel my vocabulary and expressions are limited. This personal problem that I have made me curious as to how my colleagues and friends from Malaysia cope with this situation in their daily life in the UK. This study is very close to me as it examines a problem that I personally face, but at the same time I hope I will be able to benefit other English second language learners. This study will hopefully shed some light on vocabulary learning and how sojourners adjusted their vocabulary learning strategies as they lived in a target language community.

1.8 Guide to the Thesis

This thesis consists of six chapters. In this chapter, I have explained the background of the thesis including the definitions of the key terms used, the position of English language in Malaysia and my motivation for conducting this research.

Chapter 2 is divided into two main sections. The first section looks at sociocultural theory and its place on the language learning research. The second section covers literature review on vocabulary learning such as vocabulary tests, word knowledge and categorisation of VLS.

Chapter 3 explains the methodological approach used in this study and the research design. It also describes the ontological, epistemological and methodological assumptions underpinning this study. It also explains the participants' profile, the research methods and the three-phase research procedure. This is followed by a detailed explanation on how the data was transcribed, coded and analysed.

Chapter 4 presents the research findings based on the aggregated codes from the analysis. This chapter starts with the participants' reflections on their language and life in Coventry, followed by the findings of VLS used in Malaysia and Coventry.

Chapter 5 discusses the findings of this study with comparison and reference to other studies. It also discusses the possible meanings and implications of the findings. The chapter is arranged based on the research questions.

Chapter 6 summarises the key findings, concludes the study with the research contribution, and presents the limitations of the study. It also suggests directions for future research.

We now move on to the literature review.

CHAPTER 2 LITERATURE REVIEW

This chapter covers three major areas pertaining to the study. The first part is more general. It discusses language learning strategies, sociocultural theory (SCT) and the role of SCT in language learning research. The second part focuses on vocabulary and discusses the literature concerning what learning a word means, and the challenges in learning a word. The third part focuses on the key area of the thesis which is vocabulary learning strategies.

2.1 Definitions of Language Learning Strategies

This section looks at the issues in defining language learning strategies (LLS) and several taxonomies researchers have presented.

There is no single definition of LLS that is generally accepted: definitions are "immensely ambiguous phenomena and nothing is clear-cut about them" (Dornyei, 2005: 162). Lack of theoretical soundness, theoretical inconsistencies and the difficulties in defining 'strategy' (Hajar, 2015) have also contributed to these unsuccessful attempts in defining LLS.

However, Table 2.1, drawing in part of Hajar (2015) and Takač (2008), provided a list of common definitions of strategies within the literature. Although they show a certain degree of variety, there is some agreement that a strategy is an action that somebody does in order to help them achieve language goals. Some researchers talk about regulating their learning, some talk about facilitating their learning and some talk about being more effective. Most definitions have the idea of specificity and consciousness. Some definitions have dual focus on thought and cognition and behaviour, while some definitions are more focused on action.

Table 2.1 Definitions of language learning strategies (Adapted from Hajar, 2015 and Takač, 2008)

Source	**Definition**
Bialystok (1978)	Optimal means for exploiting available information to improve competence in a second language.
Tarone (1981)	An attempt to develop linguistics and sociolinguistic competence in the target language.
Rubin (1987)	What learners do to learn and do to regulate their learning.
Chamot (1987)	Techniques, approaches or deliberate actions that students take in order to facilitate learning, recall of both linguistic and content information.
Oxford (1990)	Specific actions taken by learners to make language learning easier, faster, more enjoyable, more self-directed, more effective, and more transferable to new situations.
O'Malley and Chamot (1990)	The special thoughts or behaviours that learners consciously employ to help them comprehend, learn, or retain new information.
Weinstein and Hume (1998)	Any thoughts, behaviours, beliefs, or emotions a learner involved in during learning to facilitate the acquisition, integration, storage in memory, or availability for future use of new knowledge and skills.
Cohen (2012)	Thoughts and actions, consciously chosen and operationalised by language learners to assist them in carrying out a multiplicity of tasks.
Griffiths (2013)	Activities chosen by learners to regulate their own language learning.

Takač (2008), in commenting strategies, felt that early definitions focused on the outcome of LLS use and more recent definitions stress the processes and characteristics of LLS. Takač's (ibid) own definition of LLS was "specific actions, behaviours, steps or techniques that learners use (often deliberately) to improve their progress in development of their target competence in the target language" (p52).

In looking at strategies, Macaro (2006) and others have asked four main questions: 1) do LLS refer to specific or general behaviour? ; 2) are LLS observable or mental, or both? ; 3) are LLS conscious or unconscious? ; 4) what motivates the use of LLS? (Macaro, 2006). I will comment upon each.

(1) The first issue relates to the definition of 'strategy'. Goh (1998) defined strategy as a general approach and used the word 'tactic' to refer to specific actions or steps. For example, when a learner uses a comprehension strategy, he or she is using an approach, but the tactics used are the steps taken to improve comprehension. Goh's definition was grounded from Schmeck's (1988) viewpoint that LLS fall into the "dimension of behavioural specificity-generality" (p171). Similarly, Stern (1986) defined strategies as general approaches to learning and techniques as the specific actions. Oxford (1990) stated that the word strategy and tactics share similar features such as planning, competition, conscious, manipulation, and movement toward a goal. But she later defined LLS as "specific actions taken by learners to make language learning easier, faster, more enjoyable, more self-directed, more effective, and more transferable to new situations" (p8) (see Table 2.1).

Macaro (2006: 325) described strategy as "having a series of essential features rather than defined". He established three underlying prepositions as the features: a) researchers should describe strategies in terms of a goal, a situation, and a mental action; b) strategies are the raw materials of conscious cognitive processing, and their effectiveness or ineffectiveness derives from the way they are used and combined in tasks and processes; c) strategies need to be distinguished from subconscious activity, language learning processes, skills, learning plans and learning styles. In overcoming the problem in defining the term 'strategy', Takač (2008) stated that researchers opted to replace the term strategy with "individual language strategy to refer to the kind of behaviour Stern calls techniques"(p47).

(2) When deciding whether LLS should be observable or not, Stevick's (1990) term 'Outside-Inside Problem' best describes the problematic area. He explains that "no clear relationship exists between external acts and the mental constructs to which they are attributed" (p144). According to him, it is very difficult to separate mental entities or quality with the actions which resulted or shaped from the mental activities. Researchers'

stance on this issue depends on their theoretical perspectives of the LLS. Cognitive psychology researchers "tend to locate LLS in two domains, namely observable behaviours and mental process" to show that LLS could be both observable and mental processes (Hajar, 2015: 23). Cognitivist researchers replace the words 'behaviours' and 'thoughts' with more general words such as tools (Oxford *et al.*, 2014), methods (Bialystok, 1978) and approaches (O'Malley and Chamot, 1994) to show the interrelationship between observable behaviour and mental processes.

(3) Referring to Table 2.1, it seems that a majority of the researchers agree that the LLS are conscious strategies taken by learners. Bialystok (1978) asserted that strategies might start off as a conscious practice with the purpose of "automatising it and transferring it" (p77) to subconscious practice. This means that it is not necessary for learners to always be conscious of their strategy choice, especially in speaking and listening. Oxford (2011), in her cognitive information-processing stages, agreed with Bialystok that conscious strategies can become tacit. Oxford offered a three-stage information-processing. In the first stage, learners encounter new L2 information (declarative knowledge). This is followed by practising the new L2 information in the second stage (associative stage). This learning then becomes automatic and habitual in the third stage (procedural stage). She emphasised that "when the strategy has become automatic through extensive practice, it is no longer a strategy but has instead been transformed into something else, which would be called an unconscious habit" (p51).

(4) In explaining what motivates the use of LLS, Macaro (2006) set out motivational components which are goals, attribution and self-efficacy. Having language goals is important as "human action is normally considered to be directed by purpose and dependent on the pursuance of goals" (p328). Macaro explained this further by referring to Locke's (1996) criteria in order for goals to be an effective element for motivation: a) goals have to be established through the free choice and commitment of the individual; b) must be specific and explicit; and c) have to appear attainable. Referring back to Macaro's motivational components, he defined attribution as how past successes or failures predict and formulate future strategies. The term attribution comes from the attribution theory by which Dornyei (2005) explained as the mediating link of past experiences and future achievement efforts. He gave a detailed example by saying "if we ascribe past failure in a particular task to low ability on our part, the chances are that we

will not try the activity ever again, whereas if we believe that the problem lay in our insufficient effort of the unsuitable learning strategies that we had employed, we are more likely to give it another try" (p79). The third motivational component from Macaro is self-efficacy. Self-efficacy is learners' feelings or belief on how well they can perform or use a certain strategy. All three, goals, attribution, and self-efficacy, are interlinked. For example, a learner may have the goal of developing presentation skills in L2. This would need to be an attainable goal in that they need to have enough language. In creating a strategic plan, they will call up techniques they feel have been successful in the past. For example, techniques of rehearsal would be part of the strategic plan and they would have a sense of self-efficacy that they could perform a presentation in another language.

2.1.1 LLS taxonomies

In trying to provide more detail about language learning strategies, various taxonomies have been put forward. Rubin (1981) is often seen as producing the first LLS taxonomy by considering learners' thoughts, actions and social behaviours but the taxonomy was seen as a list rather than a framework (Stevick, 1990; Dornyei, 2005) and is not included here. In 1990s, two well-known taxonomies were developed by Oxford (1990) and O'Malley and Chamot (1990). Based on these two taxonomies, Dornyei (2005) then developed his taxonomy by combining the main components in the two earlier taxonomies but did not include the sub-categories. Table 2.2 lists the main categories in the taxonomies.

Researchers have organised the taxonomies differently but cognitive, metacognitive, social and affective strategies seem to be present (Takač, 2008). Cognitive strategies generally refer to the manipulation or transformation of language materials or language input, for example, repetition, summarising, and using images (Dornyei, 2005). Cohen (2011) regards cognitive strategies as the nuts and bolts of language use, and they play an important role in activating learners' knowledge. Metacognitive strategies are defined as involving higher-order strategies, for example analysing, evaluating and planning, that allow learners to coordinate, organise and monitor the strategy use (Cohen, 2011; Dornyei, 2005; Oxford, 1990). Social strategies involve interpersonal behaviour by initiating interaction with other people and native speakers, for example asking for clarification or cooperating with others (Cohen, 2011; Dornyei, 2005). Affective strategies relate to the regulation of learners' emotions, motivation and attitudes to lower anxiety

and self-encouragement (Cohen, 2011). Despite these categorisations being used widely, Griffiths (2013) argued that it is impossible to exclusively classify a particular strategy into one group or another. For example, she tried to classify LLS into metacognitive and cognitive strategies, but found that in practice, it is difficult to do so. She also asked, "Is listening to songs in order to relax myself cognitive or affective?" (p44). She suggested that categorisation of strategy "should be done on a case-by-case basis and justified to the particular learners, situations and goals involved" (p44). This grouping should also consider the research purpose, the learning purpose and the learning context.

Table 2.2 Language learning strategies taxonomies.

Source	**Main strategies**	**Sub-categories**
Oxford (1990)	Direct categories	Memory strategies
		Cognitive strategies
		Compensation strategies
	Indirect strategies	Affective strategies
		Social strategies
		Metacognitive strategies
O'Malley and Chamot (1990)	Metacognitive strategies	Selective attention
		Planning
		Monitoring
		Evaluation
	Cognitive strategies	Rehearsal
		Organisation
		Inferencing
		Summarising
		Deducing
		Imagery
		Transfer
		Elaboration
	Social/ affective strategies	Cooperation
		Questioning for clarification
		Self-talk
Dornyei (2005)	Cognitive strategies	
	Metacognitive strategies	
	Social strategies	
	Affective strategies	

2.1.2 Self-regulation

So far, we have looked at definitions and taxonomies and now we turn our attention to how these strategies work in practice. Here, the idea of self-regulation is important.

Dornyei (2005) argued that language learning strategy is a process and it is not necessarily about the strategies, tactics or techniques applied, but the efforts learners put in to improving their learning and the capacity they have. He then suggested that the LLS field should be replaced with the notion 'self-regulation', drawn from the field of educational psychology, which is defined as "the degree to which individuals are active participants in their own learning" (p191). Tseng, Dornyei, and Schmitt (2006) agreed and highlighted "the importance of the learners' innate self-regulatory capacity that fuels their efforts to search for and then apply personalised strategic learning mechanisms" (p79). Zimmerman (2001) offered a simpler definition of self-regulation as "a self-directive process through which learners transform their mental abilities into task-related academic skills" (p1). Although this term is difficult to define theoretically and to operationalise empirically (Boekaerts, Pintrich and Zeidner, 2000), self-regulation has created a space for researchers to look beyond strategies, and make headway in understanding new aspects of learning. Self-regulation allows researchers to explore variables that are dynamic and process-oriented, but taking into account the cognitive, metacognitive, motivational, behavioural, and environmental processes the learners experience.

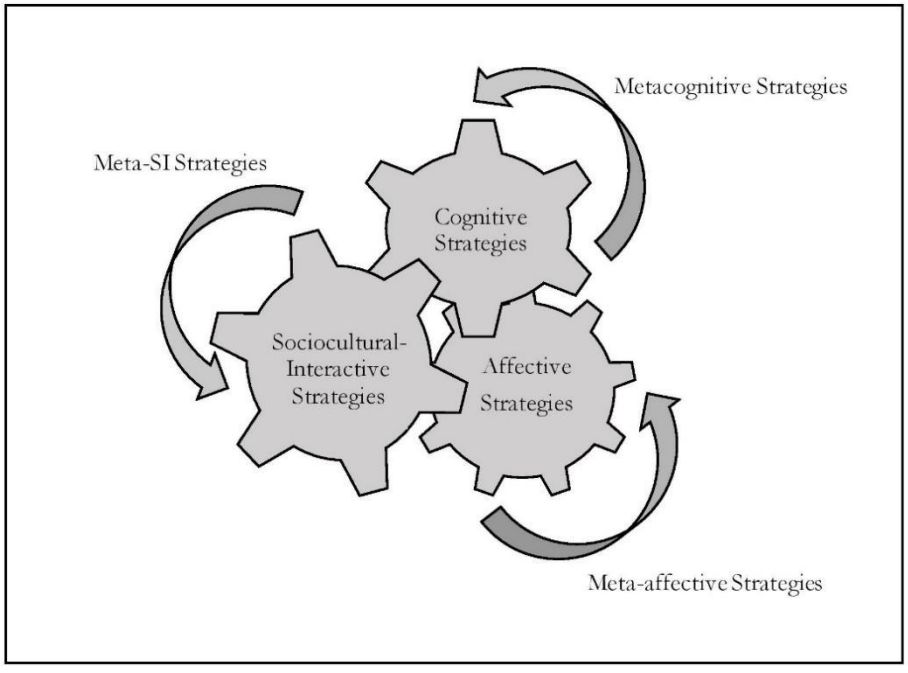


Figure 2.1 Dynamic interaction of strategies and metastrategies for L2 learning (cogs and arrows metaphor) in the S^2R Model (Oxford, 2011: 17).

Oxford (2011) developed a model of strategic self-regulated (S^2R) learning (see Figure 2.1) that comprises of three major strategies: cognitive, affective and sociocultural-

interactive. These three strategies are controlled by metastrategies- metacognitive; meta-sociocultural-interactive (SI) strategies; meta-affective, which allow learners to control and manage the use of the major strategies. Metastrategies control by paying attention, planning, obtaining and using resources, organising, implementing plans, orchestrating strategy use, monitoring and evaluating (ibid). The metastrategies combine different strategies, as shown by the interlocked cogs in Figure 2.1.

To look at how the notion of self-regulatory has changed the direction of LLS research, Rose, Briggs, Sergio, and Ivanora-Slavianskaia (2018) reviewed 24 studies and found that some studies have embraced self-regulation (for example Tseng *et al.*, 2006; Mizumoto, 2012; Mizumoto and Takeuchi, 2012; Ranalli, 2012) but most of the studies they reviewed were either a validation or adaptation of Tseng *et al.*'s (2006) work. They also found that in shortlisting studies for their review, many LLS studies conducted between 2010 and 2016 were either dismissive or unaware of self-regulation. This trend opens an opportunity for future researchers to go further into the field of self-regulation. However, instead of shifting the focus of the LLS with self-regulation, Gao (2007) suggested that the learning strategy should be used to complement the self-regulation by using qualitative and multi-method approaches to make LLS a promising research field. Similarly, Cohen (2011) suggested that researchers take context into consideration to offer a wider perspective in understanding strategic learning.

2.2 Sociocultural Theory

This section looks at sociocultural theory and two key concepts of the theory: learner agency and context. It also looks at the role of these concepts in LLS research. Post-behaviourism, language learning research was heavily influenced by cognitive approaches in which researchers focused on individual learners and the mental processes of learning (see, for example, the overview in Firth and Wagner, 1997; Gao, 2010). Following the 'social-turn' (Block, 2003), researchers have started looking at language learning in a broader perspective in what is called 'a more interdisciplinary and socially informed approach'. Here, sociocultural theory (SCT, henceforth) drawing on Vygotsky (1978) is important. Through the sociocultural lens, language use in real-world situations is seen as fundamental to learning. Learning is mediated; in other words, learning is understood as supported by language and physical artefacts. Though SCT does not deny the cognitive process in learning a language, it believes that "development does not proceed as the

unfolding of inborn capacities, but as the transformation of innate capacities once they intertwine with socioculturally constructed mediational means" (Lantolf and Pavlenko, 1995: 109). In fact, SCT sees sociocultural and mental activities as "bound together, in a dependent, symbolically mediated, relationship" (p109). The theory attributes learners' strategy use to their participation in socially-mediated activities in what is called a 'semiotic process' (Donato, 2009). The concepts of context and learner agency are discussed in the following sections.

2.2.1 The role of context in LLS research

Context is defined as "a combination of material conditions, sociocultural discourses, sociocultural networks, and the social relations underlying the alignments and arrangements of various contextual elements" (Gao, 2010: 18). Oxford (2003) gave a broad definition of context by including physical and literal surroundings such as a classroom, a home setting or a travel environment. Context could also be in terms of less tangible forms. For example, cultural capital which refers to the benefits gained by being in a society who have access to particular skills or understanding (Bourdieu, 1986); or social capital which refers to the "connections among individuals – social networks and the norms of reciprocity and trustworthiness that arise from them" (Putnam, 2000: 19). Context may also refer to the history and culture beyond the classroom setting (Sullivan, 2009). Looking at the different definitions of context, it can be said that context covers resources that can be seen or accessed with or without learners' awareness.

Gao (2010: 21) describes three types of contextual resources that mediate the use of LLS: 'discursive resources' which refer to learning resources; 'material resources' which refer to artefacts and material conditions with their associated cultural practices; and 'social resources' which refers to the social agents. These resources are discussed below - drawing on Gao but additional resources as well (for example Palfreyman, 2006; Young, 2008).

(1) Discursive resources are defined by Gao as the dominant values, attitudes and beliefs that could affect or change strategy use. In defining discursive resources, Gao (2010) differentiated their use in micro and macro levels. At a micro-level, discursive resources organise and control learners' mental processes by selecting the environment, planning and articulating steps to solve a problem. While at a macro-level, perceived discursive

resources are the values that learners attach to the target language and the goals that they set through strategy use. This idea is developed by Young (2008) who related discursive resources to achieving the intended goals, and he viewed discursive resources as a repertoire. In this sense, learners interact to achieve their goals but the actions in the interaction may happen with or without the learners' awareness.

(2) In Gao, the availability and accessibility of material resources help learners to use different strategies from the time these resources are not available or accessible. Gao associates these resources with different "cultural practices in particular contexts" (p21). He gave an example of an English text which might be used for learning in a classroom but the text could also be read for fun by learners outside the classroom context. These resources are activated by learners for assistance or inspiration in language learning. Relevant here is Palfreyman (2006) who viewed material resources as two resources that complement each other to allow language learning. Material resources could be a 'hardware' such as television or a book that is used as a carrier to support the learning for its 'software' such as the target language television channel or information about the language. However, he added that the existence of 'hardware' and 'software' is insufficient for the learning to take place. Learners must have access to these and be ready to use them for learning. This is helpful but in this digital era, material resources could be expanded by including the use of technology. Technology devices are the 'hardware' that act as the mediator for learners to access endless 'software'. For example, using online dictionaries and social media. In addition, the existence of smartphone makes both hardware and software easily accessible.

(3) In Gao, social agents are the human beings that surround the learners such as teachers, other learners, colleagues and family. Learners interact with other human beings for assistance or support towards language learning. However, this interaction could be less or more problematic depending on the relationships between the learners and the social agency. Such a relationship varies and depends on: the content (e.g. topic and focus); the direction (e.g. helping or being helped); and the strength (frequency of contact or quality or quantity of content) (Garton, Haythornthwaite, and Wellman, 1997)

2.2.2 The role of agency in sociocultural LLS research

Agency is seen as a hypothetical construct and is difficult to define (Mercer, 2012). Ahearn (2001: 112) defined agency as a "socioculturally mediated capacity to act". Ahearn's definition, however, brings forth questions of what he meant by sociocultural mediation and what kind of sociocultural mediation is involved (van Lier, 2008). Duranti (2004: 453) described three principles of agency: control over one's own behaviour; producing actions that affect other entities; and producing actions that are the object of evaluation. van Lier's (2008) principles are similar to Gao's (2010) definition of agency which include learners' power, will, intent and beliefs to perform the strategy. Mercer (2011) sees agency as being composed of two interrelated dimensions which cannot be separated. The first dimension is learner's sense of agency which refers to how agentic a learner feels in respect to specific and general contexts. The second dimension is the learner's agentic behaviour in exercising the "agency through participation and action or deliberate non-participation and non-action" (Mercer, 2012: 42).

van Lier (2008) provided a more holistic definition by referring agency as a "contextually enacted way of being in the world" (p163). The term contextual shows that agency is influenced by various components for example, sociocultural; motivational; physical; cognitive; and affective capacities, and these components are interdependent of each other. The independency shows that agency is a complex yet dynamic system that allows learners to constantly alter their strategy use based on contextual resources to achieve their goals (Gao, 2013). However, learner agency should be seen as proactive actions in response to the learning context, instead of only as reaction to contexts (Gkonou, 2013).

The dynamic and complexity of agency make it "constantly in flux" (Chen, 2017: 76) because different components will lead to different strategies. Agency is generated from multiple interactions between the components in unpredictable ways, and the results differ depending on the overall state of the components (Lantolf and Genung, 2002). Agency is often seen as "goal oriented, intentionally invoked and effortful, or strategic" (Gao, 2010: 26). Thus, agency acts as a 'special characteristic' (Gao, 2010) that allows learners to have 'the element of choice' (Cohen, 1998: 4).

2.3 What is Vocabulary and What Is Meant by a Word?

This section looks at what is meant by vocabulary and a word, how a word is defined, the processes involved in learning a word, and vocabulary tests.

2.3.1 About vocabulary

When I tried to define vocabulary, I was frustrated as I could not find literature that clearly described the meaning of vocabulary. What I have found was focused more on definitions of a word, how words are counted, vocabulary size and types of vocabulary (see Carter, 1992; Schmitt, 2000; Nation, 2001; Milton, 2009). Carter (1992:7) pointed out that "the uses of the word *word* or *vocabulary* have a general, common-sense validity and are serviceable when there is no need to be precise". However, I do not agree, and I see vocabulary and words as different entities. Based on my understanding and reading, and how researchers relate vocabulary with a word, I am in the opinion that vocabulary is a group of words that build a language. As said by Wilkins (1972: 111), "Without grammar, very little can be conveyed (but) without vocabulary, nothing can be conveyed".

The number of words (vocabulary size) in the English language is calculated differently (see later) but most researchers use the idea of word families. Goulden, Nation, and Read (1990) reported that there are 114,000 word families excluding proper names in Webster's Third New International Dictionary (1953). This number is reduced to 54,000 when a base word; inflected form; or transparent derivations, are included in a word family. Not all words of course are equally useful (Nation and Waring, 1997) and usefulness is measured by grouping words into word frequency. Word frequency refers to the word occurrence in normal use (ibid). For example, the word *this* is very useful in English and occurs frequently. *This* is included in the 1,000 word level which means it is among the 1,000 high frequency words used in English. Having said this, the words in the 10,000 word level are used less frequently or known as low frequency words. The question is, how many words does a second language learner need? It actually depends on the purpose of learning. If the purpose to is to communicate orally on an everyday basis, 6,000- 7,000 word families are required (Nation, 2006). For written vocabulary, an estimate of 8,000-9,000 word families are required and to read widely, learners need around 8,000 word families (ibid).

In addition, vocabulary is often categorised differently based on the contexts in which it is used. For example, academic vocabulary such as *accumulate*, *achieve*, *compound* and *complex,* are often found in academic texts (Nation, 2001). Technical vocabulary is a list of words that are useful for learners in a particular discipline such as law, electronic and computing. For example, *cloture*, *indict* and *per curiam* are words used in the field of law.

Every language learner possesses two types of vocabulary which are receptive vocabulary and productive vocabulary (Quigley, 2018), or sometimes known as passive and active vocabulary. Receptive vocabulary refers to the words that we hear and read, and productive vocabulary refers to the words that we say and write. Often learners are able to understand a word when it is heard or read but cannot use the word when speaking. It is also possible that learners are able to use a word in speaking but do not know the correct spelling of the word. These conditions show there are different degrees of knowing a word and it is called word knowledge (sometimes known as vocabulary knowledge or depth of vocabulary).

Table 2.3 shows what is involved in knowing a word. At the general level, knowing a word means knowing its *form, meaning* and *use*. Each of these levels is further divided into three aspects (in column 2) with its own receptive and productive knowledge. For example, the receptive knowledge of word *form* involves knowing what a word looks like, what it sounds like and its affixes. The productive knowledge of word *form* involves knowing how to say a word, the written form of a word, and how to use appropriate affixes to express meaning. The receptive knowledge of *meaning* involves knowing the meaning of a word, understanding the concept behind a word and knowing related words. The productive knowledge of *meaning* involves being able to produce a word to express meaning, being able to use a word in different contexts and being able to use synonyms and antonyms for a word. The receptive knowledge of *use* involves being able to identify the correct use of a word in a sentence, knowing other words that occur together with a word, and knowing the limitations of using a word. The productive knowledge of *use* involves being able to use a word correctly in a sentence, being able to use other words that occurs together and being able to decide on the limitation of using a word.

Table 2.3 What is involved in knowing a word (Nation, 2001: 27)

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 spelt?
	Word parts	R	What parts are recognisable in this world?
		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

2.3.2 About a word

As explained previously, vocabulary consists of words that form a language. I will now elaborate what is meant by a word and discuss the tensions within the definitions. Jackson and Amvela (2007:58) defined a word as "an uninterruptible unit of structure consisting of one or more morphemes which typically occurs in the structure of phrases". They pointed out that there are different ways to define a word depending on whether to focus on the word representation, the thought the word expresses or the formal criteria. They also indicated that there are four characteristics in defining a word in English. First, a word is an uninterruptible unit; second, it may consist of one or more morphemes; third, a word occurs typically in the structure of phrases; and fourth, each word should belong to a specific word class or part of speech.

Carter (1992) defined a word differently on three levels which are orthographic, lexical-semantic and morphological. On the orthographic level, he describes a word as "any sequence of letters (and a limited number or other characteristics such as hyphens and apostrophes) bounded on either side by a space or punctuation mark" (p4). This definition is incomplete and problematic as it neglects meaning differences and ignores issues such as polysemy, homonymy and grammar functions (Takač, 2008). Are words like *man* (an adult male human being) and *man* (the person who is in charge of something) counted as a word or two words? On the lexical-semantic level, Carter (1992) defined a word as the minimum meaningful unit of language. Using this definition, the problem for the word *man* is solved by considering similar words with different meanings as different words (polysemy). However, this definition can be questioned because there are units of meaning that are conveyed by more than one word, such as *bus conductor* and *dinner lady*. This problem also exists with words that cannot stand on its own to make meaning such as *but, could, when* and prefixes such as '*de-*' in *deactivate*. The third definition given by Carter is from the morphological point of view. At this level, a word is considered as stable, can stand on its own and cannot be subdivided. With this definition, *yes* and *no* are counted as a word. However, Carter admitted there are words that do not meet the minimum criteria such as *because*. *Because* cannot be used independently and needs to be contextually attached to other words. Additionally, idioms cannot be further divided without loss of meaning and is regarded as an upset in the attempts of defining words in "any neat formal way" (p6).

McCarthy's (1990) definition is similar to Carter's definition of a word on a morphological level. McCarthy stated that "a word must consist at least one potentially freestanding morpheme" (p3). Given that definition, the word *deactivated* consists of three morphemes – *de-*, *activate* and *-ed,* with only *activate* as the word in its own right. However, the word *basketball* consists of two morphemes – *basket* and *ball*, with both words capable to stand on its own in other contexts. In brief, McCarthy suggested that a word could be a single morpheme that cannot be further divided, a morpheme that has other morphemes attached to the root word as derivations or a morpheme that is combined with other freestanding morphemes. McCarthy's definitions bring a problem in defining a word that has the same form but has different meanings when used in different contexts (Takač, 2008).

In deciding what is counted as a word, Nation (2001) suggested several ways that would help which are *tokens, types, lemmas* and *word families*. *Token* is a way to count each and every word form in a spoken and written text based on occurrence. For example, the sentence 'It is not easy to say it correctly' contains eight words by counting *it* as two words because *it* occurs twice. This way of counting a word is used when we try to answer questions such as 'How many words have you written in the essay?'. The second way of counting is using *types*. *Types* contradict with *tokens*. *Types* only count a word as one even though it might occur a few times in a sentence. For example, using *types*, the sentence 'It is not easy to say it correctly' only contains seven words instead of eight because *it* is counted as one even though *it* occurs twice. *Types* can be used when we ask questions like 'How many words do you need to know to read this book?'. The next way of counting a word is using *lemmas*. "A lemma consists of a headword and some of its inflected and reduced (*n't*) forms" (p7). By using *lemmas,* inflections (e.g. plural, past tense, and comparative) and spelling variants (e.g. British vs. American spelling) are counted as the same word. However, a word form that is used in a different part of speech, such as *run* as a noun and *run* as a verb, is counted as a different lemma. The other way of counting a word is using *word families*. Bauer and Nation (1993) defined a word family as a list of words that contain a base word and all its derived and inflected forms that can be recognised with little or no extra effort. For instance, *read, reading* and *reads* belong to the same word family and same lexeme, *read*. However, *read* and *readable* would not be members of the same word family because they belong to different part of speech.

To simplify definitions, linguists use the term *lexeme* or *lexical unit* which is defined as "an abstract unit that includes various orthographic, phonological, grammatical and semantic features of a word" (Takač, 2008:5). The term *lexeme* also includes compounds, phrasal verbs and idioms. However, in this study, I prefer the term *lemma* to refer to participants' knowledge of the base word, inflections, contractions and spelling variants. I do not want to assume that the participants know the wider meaning of a word which *lexeme* implies. Furthermore, I use *vocabulary* when referring to vocabulary repertoire and *word* when referring to *lemma*.

In sum, defining vocabulary and word seem to be simple but is actually complicated and difficult. The complexity can be seen when I tried to accurately define both vocabulary and word. The definitions are not straight-forward as they depend on the purpose of

counting a word and can be broken down in different ways. This is complicated for researchers but also difficult for learners. Knowing a word does not simply mean the ability to understand, spell or say a word. It goes beyond that, as can be seen in Table 2.3. The extensive word knowledge aspects listed in Table 2.3 rejects the assumption that if learners know a base word, it can be assumed that they know all aspects of a word. In my thesis, I am very careful in using the word *know*. Unless stated otherwise, I use *know* to refer to *lemma*.

2.3.3 How words are learned and the processes behind the learning

We have looked at various definitions of a word in the previous section. This section looks at how learners learn a word. English vocabulary contains 54,000 word families (Goulden *et al.*, 1990). This number is beyond the capability of native speakers and almost impossible to be taught in second language classrooms alone. Only a fraction of these words is acquired through formal study, leaving the rest to be acquired through exposure to the language or it is not acquired at all (Schmitt, 2000).

Vocabulary can be acquired intentionally and incidentally. Intentional vocabulary learning refers to conscious efforts made to learn vocabulary and to transfer the learning to memory. For example, teachers might start the English lesson by first teaching about the vocabulary related to the lesson content. In contrast, incidental vocabulary learning refers to any learning that is not explicitly targeted to vocabulary learning (Hulstijn, 2001) and occurs when language is used for communicative purposes. This could be from watching television and listening to songs. Language learners need both intentional and incidental vocabulary and both should be seen as complementary. In addition, vocabulary is learned gradually through repeated exposures in various contexts, and it is impossible for learners to learn thousands of words intentionally (Nagy and Herman, 1985; Schmitt, 2000). However, it is suggested that frequent words in any language should be learned intentionally and infrequent words should be left to be learned incidentally (Schmitt, 2000).

Vocabulary is also learned by connecting learners' existing knowledge to new knowledge, which is theorised in Krashen's (1989) input hypothesis. This is seen as "building of a connection between a newly encountered word, and a word that already exists in the learner's lexicon" (Meara, 1990: 118). The connection and exposure will allow the words

to be encountered and repeated frequently and will lead to more connections with other words. These connections will gradually lead to vocabulary acquisition. The process of building the connection of a new word with learners' existing knowledge shows that vocabulary learning is incremental. As forgetting is natural in learning, words learned are in the state of flux until the word is mastered and 'fixed' in memory (Schmitt, 2000). This acquisition process is closely related to learners' ability to store the words into their short-term and long-term memory. Short-term memory is where information is stored, held and processed for a short duration, 15 to 30 seconds. With rehearsal such as repetition, this duration can be extended. Short-term memory only has a limited storage and capacity while long-term memory has unlimited capacity and storage (Robinson, 2003). The main purpose of vocabulary learning is to transfer the information from short-term memory to long-term memory. This transfer can be done by linking or attaching the new information to existing information in the long-term memory.

However, vocabulary learning is much more than just memorising words. Vocabulary learning means learners are able to remember, recall and use the words learned when they meet or re-meet these words in different contexts, and to help them learn new vocabulary (Mastropieri and Scruggs, 1998; Nation, 2008). Craik and Lockhart (1972) proposed the levels of processing model which focuses on the depth of processing involved in memory. Instead of categorising memory into short-term and long-term memory, Craik and Lockhart suggested that three ways of information processes: structural processing; phonemic processing and semantic processing. Structural and phonemic processing are categorised as shallow processing. Structural processing is the process of encoding physical qualities of a word such as the typeface of a word or how the letters look. Phonemic processing is the process of encoding the sound of a word. Both structural and phonemic processing are seen as maintenance rehearsal to help learners hold information in the short-term memory. The third process, semantic processing, is counted as deep processing. Semantic processing is the process where learners encode the meaning of a word and relate it to other words similar in meaning. This process involves more elaborated analysis of information such as thinking and association and leads to better recall.

Levels of processing was criticised and these questions were asked: 1) What exactly constitutes a level of processing, and 2) how do we know that one level is deeper than

another? (Nelson, 1977; Baddeley, 1978; Eysenck, 1978). Lockhart and Craik (1978) responded to the criticism by acknowledging the lack of operational definitions of the term depth, and they also acknowledged the importance of investigating the effect of the encoding tasks, retrieval tasks and processes.

Other than memory, there are other cognitive processes which affect vocabulary learning. Laufer and Hulstijn (2001) developed the Involvement Load Hypothesis which predicts that higher involvement in a word initiated by any tasks will result in better retention. Involvement consists of three components which are need, search and evaluation (Hulstijn and Laufer, 2001). Learners' vocabulary retention depends on the presence or absence of these components. The first component, *need*, refers to the motivational element of involvement. When *need* is imposed by an external agent, such as being asked by teachers to learn a sentence, it is rated as moderate but when it is intrinsically motivated, *need* is rated as strong. The second component, *search*, refers to the attempt to find the meaning or form of an unknown L2 word. The third component, *evaluation*, refers to the "comparison of a given word with other words, a specific meaning of a word with its other meaning, or comparing the word with other words in order to assess whether a word does or does not fit its context" (ibid: 544).

Each component is rated based on the degrees and is given marks to indicate the involvement load: strong = 2; moderate = 1; and absent= 0. Hulstijn and Laufer (2001) gave examples of tasks which have different involvement loads. In the first task, learners are asked to write sentences which words are translated or explained by teacher. In this task, the *need* is rated as moderate (*need* = 1), *search* is absent (*search* = 0), *evaluation* is strong (*evaluation* = 2). Hence, the involvement load is three (1 + 0 + 2 = 3). In another task, a learner has to read and answer questions based on a text which has glossed words. In this task, *need* is rated as moderate (*need* = 1) as the need to look at the glossed words are imposed by the task, *search* is absent (*search* = 0) and *evaluation* is absent (*evaluation* = 0). The involvement load for the second task is one (1 + 0 + 0 = 1). Hence, the first task has a greater involvement load than the second task, and it is assumed that the learners completing the first task have better retention than when completing the second task. Hulstijn and Laufer (2001) have consistently found that tasks with a higher involvement load achieved superior results to those with lower involvement loads. However, Webb (2002) disagreed with the hypothesis as his study found that tasks with a lower

involvement load had better retention than the tasks with high involvement load. He suggested that other factors such as context, similarity between direction of learning and type of test might affect the involvement load as well.

Nation (2001) looked at how a word is learned by assessing the learning burden. Learning burden is defined as the amount of effort needed to learn and remember words. The more aspects of a word that are known, the lighter the learning burden is. Learning burden depends on learners' previous experience and knowledge of English and their first language. L2 words that have similar features or spelling with L1 have a lighter learning burden. For example, the word *ceiling* has similar meaning and pronunciation as *siling* in Malay and this shows that *ceiling* has a lighter learning burden and easy to learn and retain. Another example is if learners already know some parts of a word, they might be able to learn it easily too. For instance, if learners know the word *install* and other words that has suffix –*ment*, then the word *instalment* has a low learning burden to the learners.

In brief, vocabulary learning can be both intentional and incidental. Both are complementary and require great effort to ensure the vocabulary is fixed in the mind. But, there are multifaceted processes involved in vocabulary learning. Each new word raises different challenges. Firstly, the challenge of learning burden. For example, L2 words which have similar features with L1 are easier to learn compared to L2 words which do not share any similar features. Secondly, learners' involvement when learning a new word also affects the learning process. The more involved learners are, the more likely word retention is to occur. Thirdly, the information processes that occur when learners learn a new word: the deeper the process is, the easier it is for learners to recall the word learned. These complicated processes demonstrate the challenges of trying to place the word learned in long-term memory. If the effort is insufficient, the involvement load is low, or the learning burden is high, it is possible that the words learned will only enter short-term memory and then go.

2.3.4 Vocabulary test

Vocabulary can be measured in terms of how many words learners know (size or breadth of vocabulary) and how well learners know a word (depth of knowledge). For each category, there are two types of vocabulary tests which are receptive and productive tests.

Vocabulary tests have different formats such as yes/no tests, definition completion tests, multiple-choice tests, translation tests and matching.

Vocabulary size can be measured by estimating the total vocabulary size or by measuring each frequency level. There are various tests available in measuring different types of vocabulary, but Vocabulary Levels Test is probably the most widely test used in ESL context (Schmitt, 2010). Paul Nation has made a huge contribution in vocabulary testing by developing numerous tests focusing on measuring total vocabulary size and on measuring vocabulary knowledge at different levels of frequency. Nation has also developed online tests that are accessible to language teachers and researchers. One well-known vocabulary size test is Vocabulary Levels Tests (VLT) and this test has been revised and developed at different levels of frequency by many researchers (for example Laufer and Nation, 1999; McLean and Kramer, 2015; McLean, Kramer, and Beglar, 2015; Webb, Sasao, and Ballance, 2017) In answering VLT, depending on the levels and the test, learners are asked to read statements and answer true or false, answer multiple-choice questions or fill in the blanks. This thesis used the VLT developed by Nation (2001) and Schmitt, Schmitt, and Clapham (2001) which will be discussed further in Chapter 3.

In measuring depth of knowledge, learners are tested on how well they know different aspects of word knowledge. Examples of tests used for depth of knowledge are Wesche and Paribakht's (1996) Vocabulary Knowledge Scale (VKS) and the interview done by Nagy, Herman, and Anderson (1985) and Anglin (1993). In the VKS, learners are given a list of words and for each word, they are asked to categorise their understanding of the word. In the interviews, learners are asked about their understanding and knowledge of several aspects of a word. Learners are given repeated opportunity to answer the question. However, the interview must be carefully planned to ensure that the early parts do not give hint or answer to the later parts (Nation, 2001).

The most recent issues in vocabulary testing are raised by Schmitt, Nation, and Kremmel (2019). The first issue they point out is that the current tests do not include score interpretation. Instead, they include a general statement for example, "The Vocabulary Levels Test is designed to give an estimate of vocabulary size for second language (L2) learners of general or academic English" (Schmitt *et al.* 2001). Also, "The Vocabulary Size Test was developed to provide a reliable, accurate and comprehensive measure of a

learner's vocabulary size from the 1st 1000 to the 14th 1000 word families of English" (Nation and Beglar, 2007: 9). However, Nation described the test in detail later on his website. According to Schmitt *et al.* (2019), vocabulary tests should include a better specification of the purpose the test is being developed for, the intended type of learners, and educational contexts. There is also a need for test developers to include a user manual describing the appropriate uses of the test, how the test should and should not be administered, and whether the whole test needs to be used or only parts of it can be used. The second issue raised by Schmitt *et al.* (2019) is test validation. There are many tests available, but very few studies have validated these tests as have Beglar and Hunt (1999), Powers, Schedl, Wilson-Leung, and Butler (1999), Schmitt *et al.* (2001), Beglar (2010), and McLean *et al.* (2015).

In sum, as there are many vocabulary tests available, teachers and researchers need to be careful in choosing which test to use. They need to make sure the test chosen serves the purpose of testing and if possible, use a validated test even though validation does not guarantee the test can be used for different types of learners or in various contexts. For test developers, it is important for them to be wary before revising a current test as they might retread a test with hidden flaws. The new revised test also needs validation before it can be published or distributed.

2.4 Vocabulary Learning Strategies

Vocabulary learning strategies (VLS, henceforth) are a specialised subgroup of language learning strategies. They are defined as "the LLS employed to learn vocabulary in the target language" (Lin, 2008: 20). Catalan (2003) provided a detailed definition of VLS as the steps or actions taken by learners in order to achieve one or more of these goals: (a) to find out the meaning of unknown words; (b) to retain them in long-term memory; (c) to recall them at will; and (d) to use them in an oral or written mode. As a prominent researcher in vocabulary, Nation (2009), however, did not provide any definition of VLS but insists that a strategy would need to: (a) involve choices of strategies; (b) be complex which means there are several steps to learn; (c) require knowledge and benefit from training; and (d) increase the efficiency of vocabulary learning and vocabulary use. These features of VLS, however, do not apply to all strategies; for example, repetition does not involve any complex steps. VLS are also interpreted as "conscious and unconscious, planned and unplanned steps and actions that second language (L2) learners take to

discover and consolidate the form, meaning and usage of words" (Marin, 2005: 74). Marin's definition fulfils the important aspects of language learning strategies as can be seen in first section (see section 2.1), which defined a strategy as including conscious and unconscious actions done deliberately (or not) to achieve language goals which in this sense, to learn vocabulary.

2.4.1 VLS taxonomies

Previous research used bottom-up procedures to elicit as many VLS as possible, and then the researchers used top-down and interactive procedures "to put these strategies into theoretically plausible categories" (Gu, 2012: 6115). This has led to the development of a few taxonomies. This section looks at the categorisation and taxonomies of VLS.

Early studies on LLS were concerned with good learners' (GL) strategy use. The assumption was that finding out what strategies GL used would help weak learners to adopt the strategies and improve their learning. Influenced by LLS research, Porte (1988) carried out a study to look at the VLS used by poor language learners and found that the strategies used were similar with good learners, but the poor learners applied the strategies inadequately. The research on VLS as a whole was first investigated by Ahmed (1989). His focus was to discover any differences in the vocabulary learning strategies used by good and poor Sudanese learners of English. He found that the poor learners used a more limited range of VLS, were less able to connect the new words to old knowledge and showed a lack of knowledge about language when meeting new word. Ahmed (1989) compiled the strategies used by both groups of learners and identified six macro-strategies (general approaches) and 38 micro-strategies (specific strategies) as can be seen in Table 2.4.

Table 2.4 List of macro- and micro- strategies (Ahmed, 1989: 10-11)

Macro-strategies	**Micro-strategies**
Information sources	Ask classmates Guessing Ask teacher Overlook Ask for L2 paraphrases Ask for L1 equivalent Ask for example of use Group work

Macro-strategies	Micro-strategies
	Dictionary
Dictionary use	Monolingual dictionary Bilingual dictionary Look up meaning Look up derivation Look up word class Look for example of use
Memorisation	Write and repeat aloud Repeat aloud Write, repeat and L2 synonym Write, repeat and L1 equivalent
Practice	New word in real situation New word in imaginary situation Ask for test Ask others to verify knowledge Use written source to verify knowledge Self-test
Preferred source of information	Asking somebody Group work Dictionary
Note-taking	Take notes at all Notes in margin Vocabulary book Ordering new words sequentially Organising words by meaning Spelling info L1 equivalent L2 synonym L1 equivalent and L2 synonym Word derivations Grammatical info

Sanaoui (1995) investigated the use of VLS among English and French L2 learners with the purpose of emphasising the importance of having control of one's own learning. Learners were asked to write daily diaries about what they did to memorise any new words they encountered. Sanaoui revealed that the learners' strategies fall into two approaches: structured and unstructured (see Table 2.5). The approaches are "contextualised as two extremes continuum on how much vocabulary is 'organised' or structured by learners" (p24). Learners in both groups can be differentiated in terms of their features. Those who showed strong tendencies towards a 'structured' approach controlled and organised their learning compared to the unstructured group, in which learners relied on the teachers and the materials given in the language course. They also engaged themselves in various

activities, were systematic in keeping records of vocabulary, viewed the records extensively and sought opportunities to use the vocabulary in and outside classroom. In contrast, learners who showed strong tendencies towards an 'unstructured' approach had restricted self-initiated activities, minimal or ad hoc records of vocabulary and very rarely reviewed the records kept.

Table 2.5 Features of a 'structured' and an 'unstructured' approach. (Sanaoui, 1995: 24)

Structured approach <----------> **Unstructured approach**	
Opportunities for learning vocabulary	
self-created independent study	reliance on course minimal independent study
Range of self-initiated activities	
extensive	restricted
Records of lexical items	
extensive (tend to be systematic)	minimal (tend to be adhoc)
Review of lexical items	
Extensive	Little or no review
Practice of lexical items	
self-created opportunities in and outside classroom	reliance on course

Stoffer (1995) carried out a large-scale study of 707 university learners. The purpose of the research was to explore the frequency of VLS use and the relationship between VLS and the learners' previous language learning experience, course level, language studies, previous VLS, instruction, age, and gender. Stoffer designed a questionnaire called Vocabulary Strategy Inventory (VOLSI) derived from Oxford's (1989) Strategy Inventory for Language Learning (SILL). The participants were asked to rank the frequency of using the strategies listed as 53 items in the questionnaire. The individual strategies were then categorised into nine main categories:

1. Strategies involving authentic language use;
2. Strategies involving creative activities;
3. Strategies used for self-motivation;
4. Strategies used to create mental linkages;
5. Memory strategies;
6. Visual/ auditory strategies;

7. Strategies involving physical action;
8. Strategies used to overcome anxiety;
9. Strategies used to organise words.

The findings revealed that the fourth category (strategies for creating mental linkages) was the most frequently used strategy and the second strategy (strategies involving creative activities) was used the least. Another interesting finding was learners who learned a language lexically distant from English (e.g. Russian or Japanese) used vocabulary learning strategies more frequently. Stoffer also found that more experienced learners and older learners used strategies more often than novice and younger learners. However, there was no significant difference in terms of gender and strategy use.

Lawson and Hogben (1996) used think-aloud strategies to observe the strategies used by 15 Australian university students learning the meaning of 12 new Italian words. The findings showed that: 1) repetition was the most frequent strategy used; 2) strategies involving more detailed internal information (e.g. paraphrasing, use semantic context, analysing word parts) were used less frequently; 3) learners who recalled more words used a wider range of strategies and used strategies more often than those who recalled fewer words. The study also revealed that when learners used context to guess the meaning of a word, they rarely used the recall strategy. Nation and Coady (1988) similarly found that the richness of context enabled learners to guess meaning, but less likely to put more effort to learn the word. Lawson and Hogben (1996) also concluded that a rich text may be helpful for understanding the meaning of new words, but it does not necessarily lead to long-term retrieval of the word, meaning that learners "need not engage in detailed examination" (p130).

Gu and Johnson (1996) conducted a large-scale study of 850 Chinese students in Beijing with the aim of exploring the relationship between the students' strategy use with their vocabulary size and also their English proficiency. For the purpose of the study, Gu and Johnson developed a Vocabulary Learning Questionnaire (VLQ) with two major parts which examined beliefs about how vocabulary should be learned and use of VLS. The findings revealed that the students believed vocabulary should be acquired in context and memorised. They also believed vocabulary learning required conscious application and active use. The findings further showed that the students' vocabulary size and English

proficiency were positively related to each other. There were positive correlations between vocabulary size and the following groups of strategies: selective attention strategies; self-initiation strategies; extended strategies of dictionary use; strategy of looking up words in a dictionary; activation strategies; semantic encoding strategies; and meaning-oriented note-taking strategies.

In addition, Gu and Johnson (1996) discovered that mechanical memorisation was not a popular strategy among the Chinese learners. They found that two metacognitive strategies, self-initiating and selective attention, were important but visual repetition was not. Gu and Johnson uncovered five types of learners based on the clustering of the learners' beliefs and strategies: readers; active strategy users; non-coders; coders; and passive strategy users. With regards to vocabulary size and proficiency, they found that learners in the 'readers' (reading as a means to learn vocabulary) and 'active strategy users' (used a great range of strategies) were the most successful learners while the 'passive strategy users' (believed in memorisation) were the least successful learners.

Schmitt (1997) designed a VLS taxonomy based on Oxford's (1990) and Stoffer's (1995) classification system with the addition of the determination strategies. The taxonomy is divided into two general classes which are discovery and consolidation strategies. Each class is further subdivided into subcategories - determination, social, memory, cognitive and metacognitive (see Table 2.6). As admitted by Schmitt, it was difficult to differentiate cognitive and memory strategies as both strategies aimed "to assist recalls of words through some form of language manipulation" (p205). He then adopted Purpura's (1994) division of storing and memory strategies. Although not completely satisfied with the imprecision, Schmitt labelled cognitive strategies as those that are not "obviously linked to mental manipulation" (repeating and using mechanical means) and Memory strategies are "those similar to traditional mnemonic techniques (associating, linking with prior knowledge, using imagery and summarising)" (p206).

Schmitt introduced the idea of discovery strategies which is about getting information about a new word. These strategies are divided into determination and social. Learners use determination strategies when they meet a new word by analysing the new word's part of speech, affixes and root; L1 cognates; and any global clues such as pictures or guessing

from context. Social strategies are the strategies used with other people such as asking the teachers, native speakers or classmates for meanings.

Table 2.6 Schmitt's VLS taxonomy (Schmitt, 1997: 207-208)

Strategies for the discovery of a new word's meaning	
Determination (DET)	Analyse part of speech
	Analyse affixes and roots
	Check for L1 cognate
	Analyse any available pictures or gestures
	Guess from textual context
	Bilingual dictionary
	Monolingual dictionary
	Word lists
	Flash cards
Social (SOC)	Ask teacher for an L1 translation
	Ask teacher for paraphrase or synonym of new word
	Ask teacher for a sentence including the new word
	Ask classmates for meaning
	Discover new meaning through group work activity
Strategies for consolidating a word once it has been encountered	
Social (SOC)	Study and practise meaning in a group
	Teacher checks students' flash cads or word lists for accuracy
	Interact with native speakers
Memory (MEM)	Study word with a pictorial representation of its meaning
	Image word's meaning
	Connect word to a personal experience
	Associate the word with its coordinates
	Connect the word to its synonyms and antonyms
	Use semantic maps
	Use 'scales' for gradable adjectives
	Peg method
	Loci method
	Group words together to study them
	Group words together spatially on a page
	Use new words in sentences
	Group words together within a storyline
	Study the spelling of a word
	Study the sound of a word
	Say new word aloud when studying
	Image word form
	Underline initial letter of the word
	Configuration
	Use Keyword Method
	Affixes and roots (remembering)
	Part of speech (remembering)

	Paraphrase the word's meaning
	Use cognates in study
	Learner the words of an idiom together
	Use physical action when learning a word
	Use semantic feature grids
Cognitive (COG)	Verbal repetition
	Written repetition
	Word lists
	Flash cards
	Take notes in class
	Use the vocabulary section in your textbook
	Listen to tape of word lists
	Put English label on physical objects
	Keep a vocabulary notebook
Metacognitive (MET)	Use English-language media (songs, movies, newscasts, etc)
	Testing oneself with word tests
	Use spaced word practice
	Skip or pass new word
	Continue to study word over time

When learners want to remember a new word, they use consolidation strategies which include social, memory, cognitive and metacognitive strategies. Social strategies involve other people in learning or practising the new vocabulary. Memory strategies involve connecting the new word to learners' prior knowledge based on learners' previous experiences or known words. These strategies can be supported with imagery or grouping. Cognitive strategies consist of the use of study aids such as flash cards, note-taking and written or verbal repetition. Metacognitive strategies are the strategies used by learners to control and evaluate their own learning. This could be done by maximising exposure by reading books, magazines and newspapers that are written in L2. They could also watch movies or television programmes that are delivered in L2.

Although Schmitt's taxonomy is currently "the most comprehensive typology of (exclusively) this subgroup of learning strategies" (Takač, 2008: 67), Schmitt admitted that some individual categories can fit into both discovery and the consolidation strategies. In fact, all discovery strategies can be used as consolidation strategies. Takač (2008) pointed that Schmitt's taxonomy only included major VLS, and it is difficult to decide whether "a procedure qualifies as an individual and independent strategy or is merely one of its variations whose number would be too huge for a classification to be manageable" (p71).

She then suggested that further research should be conducted to set criteria for strategy delineation (or combination) and the criteria for strategy categorisation.

Instead of a taxonomy, Brown and Payne (1994, cited in Hatch and Brown, 2000) came up with five-step vocabulary learning strategies:

1) Encountering new words;
2) Creating a mental picture of word form;
3) Learning the word's meaning;
4) Creating the strong linkage between word form and meaning in memory;
5) Using the word.

Brown and Payne regarded the steps as five sieves, filtering out words at every stage. If, however, learners can follow all the steps, they will learn more words. The first step, encountering new words, refers to meeting words from different sources. For example, from reading, watching TV, listening to radio, having conversations with native speakers, studying language textbooks and using dictionaries. The second step, getting the word form, refers to getting the visual and/or auditory image of the written and spoken form of the words. This could be done by relating the new word with other language(s) that the learners know or by using phonetic script. The third step, learning the word's meaning, is done by asking other people for the meaning, guessing from context or using a dictionary. The fourth step is done by using any kinds of consolidation and memory strategies such as using flash cards, reviewing materials or using mnemonics. The final step is about using the words in sentences, conversation and various contexts. Learners' engagement on each step depends on their learning goals. The deeper the learning goals are, the further learners go down the steps and more words get through each step. On the other hand, if the goal is passive, for example if a learner only wants to learn the meaning of a word without the intention of using it, he/she might not go beyond step 3.

Nation (2001) proposed a taxonomy of vocabulary learning strategies which consists of three general classes of strategy: (1) planning vocabulary learning; (2) sources of vocabulary knowledge; and (3) learning processes. Each class has its own strategies. The general classes can be interpreted as the steps in vocabulary learning in which learners first plan what word to learn, they then look for information about the word and finally learn the word. The taxonomy is shown in Table 2.7.

Table 2.7 Nation's taxonomy of vocabulary learning strategies (Nation, 2001: 218)

General class of strategies	Types of strategies
Planning: choosing what to focus on and when to focus on it	Choosing words Choosing the aspects of word knowledge Choosing strategies Planning repetition
Sources: finding information about words	Analysing the word Using context Consulting a reference source in L1 or L2 Using parallels in L1 and L2
Processes: establishing knowledge	Noticing Retrieving Generating

In Nation's taxonomy, the first class is planning vocabulary learning. This involves choosing words, choosing the aspects of word knowledge, choosing strategies and planning repetition. In choosing words, learners need to identify their learning goals. For example, if learners want to learn vocabulary commonly used in ordering food, their choice of words should reflect this goal and they will expect to learn words such as starter, dessert, and menu. Moreover, in choosing aspects of word knowledge, learners need to decide which aspect of word knowledge they want to focus on. For instance, if learners want to focus on the pronunciation of the word 'dessert', they should be looking for phonetic signs or listen to its pronunciation. This learning phase continues when the learners choose strategies to gain the vocabulary knowledge that they seek. For instance, learners could start by checking the phonetics of 'dessert' using an electronic dictionary. This will be followed by listening to the audio available from the dictionary or the Internet. Then, they could use the Internet to look for examples or photos of 'dessert'. In planning repetition, learners are expected to return to the words that they have learned to retain the knowledge. Repetition is necessary to encourage remembering the word and also to maintain the knowledge gained.

The second class is sources. This involves analysing the target word, using context, consulting a reference source and using parallels with previously learned languages. Analysing the word is about the learners' familiarity with affixes and stems. This strategy could help learners in seeing connections between related words and strengthening knowledge of form. Using context is related to learners' ability to relate the new word with various kinds of cues such as background knowledge and linguistic ones. Consulting

a reference source can be divided into formal sources such as dictionary, glossaries, lists and spontaneous sources such as asking teachers, friends, or native speakers for further information. Using parallels in other languages is related to a word learning burden, which depends on the various similarities the word has with learners' L1 or other L2.

The third class in the taxonomy is processes. This entails noticing, retrieving and generating, and consists of ways of remembering vocabulary and making it accessible when needed. Noticing involves recording the new word and carrying out oral or visual repetition. Retrieving involves recalling knowledge and can take different forms such as receptive, productive, oral, visual, in context and decontextualized. Generating involves strategies to establish or expand new vocabulary knowledge to the new words learned for example semantic mapping, creating context, collocations, and mnemonic strategies.

Marin (2005) conducted a study of 185 EFL Mexican learners and came up with a taxonomy consisting of four main categories: namely dealing with unknown vocabulary, taking vocabulary notes, memorising/retaining vocabulary and further practice/ consolidation of new words (see Table 2.8).

Table 2.8 Marin's VLS Taxonomy (Marin, 2005)

Categories	**Subcategories**
Dealing with unknown words	Guessing Dictionary use and other sources Asking others
Taking vocabulary notes	Location of notes Content of notes Organisation of notes
Memorising/ retaining vocabulary	Repetition Association
Further practice/ consolidation of new words	Testing oneself Creating imagined situations Seeking opportunities

Dealing with unknown vocabulary consists of three subcategories: guessing; dictionary use; and asking others. Guessing involves gaining word meanings from context or word structure. Dictionary use involves not only translation but information about phonetics and accessing examples of sentences. Asking others involve using friends, teachers, colleagues for word meaning, pronunciation and usage.

Marin's second main category is taking vocabulary notes. This comprises of three subcategories: location of notes; content of notes; and organisation of notes. Location of notes refers to where notes are kept such as in an electronic or handwritten notebook. Content of notes refers to what is written such as word definition and examples of sentences. Organisation of notes refers to how the notes are arranged such as classifying new words by alphabet, grammatical category or word class.

The third main category is memorising and retaining vocabulary. This consists of two subcategories: repetition and association. Repetition includes saying the word aloud or in silence and even repeating the translation in L1 or the new word itself in a sentence. Association means relating the new word with known antonyms or synonyms in L2.

The fourth main category is practice/ consolidation of new words. This includes testing oneself; creating imagined situations and seeking opportunities. Testing oneself refers to question oneself or ask others to question oneself on the new words. Creating imagined situations refers to practising saying the words. Seeking opportunities refers to looking for opportunities to encounter new words in English.

Takač (2008) conducted three large-scale empirical studies of Croatian elementary school students with different aims. The first study was carried out for the purpose of developing a VLS. The Vocabulary Learning Strategy Questionnaire for Elementary Schools (VOLSQES) was developed after constant testing, modification and conducting several factor analyses. The questionnaire consists of three broad categories of VLS with 27 individual strategies as can be seen in Table 2.9.

Table 2.9 Vocabulary learning strategy classification proposed by Takač (2008)

Strategies of formal vocabulary learning and practicing	Repeating new words aloud when studying Repeating words mentally Writing down words repeatedly to remember them Testing oneself Testing oneself with word lists Regular reviewing outside classroom Remembering words if they are written down Planning for vocabulary learning Making word lists Using spaced word practice

	Translating words into L1
Self-initiated independent vocabulary learning	Taking notes when watching films and TV programs Taking notes while reading for pleasure Imaging word's orthographical form Grouping words together to study them Connecting words to physical objects Imaging word's meaning Associating words with the context Reading and leafing through dictionary Using new words in sentences
Spontaneous (incidental) vocabulary learning (acquisition)	Remembering words from books, magazines Using circumlocution Listening to songs in the target language Remembering words from the Internet Associating new words with already known Using synonym in conversations Remembering words from films and TV programs

Table 2.9 shows that the strategies used by elementary school students were categorised into three general categories which are strategies of formal vocabulary learning and practising, self-initiated independent vocabulary learning and spontaneous (incidental) vocabulary learning. The first category includes rote memorisation, reliance on L1 and a metacognitive aspect of regular and planned revision. The second category refers to the exposure to the target language and the strategies used in deeper learning of vocabulary. The third category refers to the spontaneous learning that could happen individually or via communication with other people.

Takač's second study explored the relationship between VLS and vocabulary teaching strategies (VTS, henceforth). Takač intended to investigate if there was any difference between learners' strategy use whose teachers used VTS and whose teachers did not use VTS. The findings showed that regardless of whether the teachers used VTS or not, learners selected their own strategies and chose what was available to them. However, Takač pointed out that there was a certain degree of association between certain teaching strategies and learning strategies. For example, when the teacher used a picture to explain the word meaning, the learners tried to memorise the meaning by linking it to the picture shown.

Takač's third study was a cross-linguistic study of VLS used by two groups of elementary school learners studying, respectively, English as a foreign language (FL) and German as a FL. The results showed these two groups used VLS differently in terms of frequency. The English learners used more strategies in spontaneous incidental vocabulary learning categories (see Table 2.9) and the German learners used more strategies under the formal vocabulary learning and practising, and the self-initiated independent vocabulary learning categories. Takač attributed this difference to how learners were exposed to their target language in Croatia. The English learners were exposed to informal English learning in which they benefited from "the fact that films and other programmes in Croatia are subtitled and not dubbed" (p144) and they were exposed to authentic English daily. In contrast, the German learners learned German in a traditional way (school-based formal language instruction) and used memory and metacognitive strategies as part of planned learning. Takač concluded that the position of a foreign language in the learning context plays a role in the selection and use of the VLS.

Although the researchers grouped the categories differently, there are some sort of consistent strategies across the VLS taxonomies. For example, memory strategy exists in almost all taxonomies as it is an important strategy to put words in long-term memory. One common feature of these taxonomies is the impression they give - such that learners have a wide option of strategies to choose from. The question is how do these strategies help learners in learning? Are learners expected to use as many strategies as possible to help them grow vocabulary size (or depth)? Or are there steps in learning vocabulary as suggested by Brown and Payne (1994) that learners need to follow? There is no clear indication of how these taxonomies benefit the learners. However, a general guideline is that a variety of VLS "should be used at different stages of learning to commit words to memory and to automate the use of these words in real language use contexts" (Gu, 2012: 6116). Having said this, learners should be able to use strategies for vocabulary learning. But how should these strategies be taught to learners? Are teachers responsible to teach all the strategies or can they pick and choose? Is it relevant to teach all strategies? Is VLS really important in vocabulary learning or should other factors be considered as well? Should learners rely on a preferred strategy or mix and match?

To get insight into these overarching questions, this thesis, focusing on individual learners, explored their use of vocabulary learning strategies in a target language community and looked at other aspects that might influence their vocabulary learning.

2.5 Chapter Summary

This chapter has looked at the LLS literature and the different views as to how a strategy is defined. Researchers, including Oxford (1990), O'Malley and Chamot (1990) and Dornyei (2005) have developed LLS. The big idea behind LLS is that there are different dimensions involved in learning primarily cognitive, metacognitive and social functions. The chapter has also explained how language learning is shaped and influenced by the different contexts learners find themselves in and the role of learners' own agency. It has also discussed definitions of a word and vocabulary and discussed the complexity of learning a word. Finally, a number of VLS taxonomies have been presented including Sanaoui (1995), Schmitt (1997) and Nation (2000). The literature derived in the first place from analysing the strategies good learners used. The vocabulary taxonomies imply that good vocabulary learners should have a repertoire of strategies. These strategies are sometimes divided between structured and unstructured. Common to most literature is the idea of vocabulary learning as a process. For example, stages from unpicking meaning to consolidating knowledge of a new word through using the word.

We now move on to the methodology.

CHAPTER 3 METHODOLOGY

This chapter outlines the methodology of this study which includes the theoretical background of the study. I then explain about the participants: their background and English proficiency. This is followed by a detailed description about data collection procedures, how the data was collected, and data analysis.

3.1 Research Paradigm

Research paradigms are philosophical and theoretical traditions which attempt to understand how social worlds are conducted (Blaikie, 2007). Research paradigms offer different theoretical perspectives on how research should be carried out. The most common paradigms discussed are positivism and interpretivism. Positivism assumes that that there is an objective and absolute truth to be discovered about the world, and research is geared towards finding the truth. Positivism often uses statistical analysis and its research is often quantitative and experimental. In contrast, interpretivism views the world as subjectively perceived and is interested in how we understand and make sense of the world. An interpretivist approach is often qualitative and focused on interpretations arising from researchers' experiences in data collection and data analysis (Creswell, 2013).

Table 3.1 Differences between positivism and interpretivism

	Positivism	**Interpretivism**
Ontology (what is reality?)	World is real objective	World is subjectively received
Epistemology (how do you know?)	Objective reality exists beyond the human mind	Knowledge of the world is intentionally constituted through a person's lived experience
Methodology (how do you find it out?)	Experimental, deductive, mainly quantitative, cause-effect relationship, statistical analysis	Interpretation. Mainly qualitative. Purposive and multipurpose sampling
Contribution to knowledge	Predictive models	Ways of organising thoughts
Validity	Objective validated knowledge	Trustworthiness, relatability

These two paradigms stand along a continuum (Hanif, 2016). So that in Table 3.1, it can be seen how these two contrasts in respect to ontology, epistemology, methodology, contribution to knowledge and sense of validity. A problem with setting positivism and interpretivism out in this way is that most research does not fall into one particular camp. So people who use quantitative methods do not necessarily believe they are producing objective accounts. They accept the world is objectively perceived but argue for the unclear sense of positivism that it makes sense to come up with models that explain cause and effect. Similarly, interpretivists, while believing the world is subjectively perceived, believe it is possible to come up with relatable, reliable, trustworthy accounts of how people's perceptions of the world are. Most people had been looking around for a new term such as mixed methods to describe a middle approach to this question of positivism – interpretivism.

My study is largely interpretivist in that I am concerned with human experience and I am making an effort to understand the experiences of sojourners. I believe that reality and individual's experiences cannot be separated, and our perceptions about the world are bound to the experiences we have had throughout our lives (Weber, 2004). This study is broadly interpretivist as it focuses on understanding and finding meanings of the sojourners' experiences in the context of Coventry. This study also is a mixed method as I am pragmatic and use different methods in trying to understand the participants' experiences. This study is the first mixed method study in LLS field that emphasises on attaining a contextualized picture of the VLS used by a group of Malaysian sojourners in a living abroad context including their past language experiences.

This study also adheres to the methodological assumptions of mixed methods outlined by Johnson and Onwuegbuzie (2004) in terms of data collection procedures and data analysis. It is pragmatic in that methods are chosen as when they are fit for purposes. It is mixed as I employed four methods – Vocabulary Levels Test (VLT), interviews, Vocabulary Learning Strategy Questionnaire (VLSQ) and learning diaries. The aim of using mixed methods is to utilise the strengths from different methods in answering the research questions (Creswell, 2014). In this study, I sought to understand the experience of 10 individuals' vocabulary learning experience in Coventry. A semi-structured interview was the main research method and was conducted twice. Additionally, a learning diary was used to gain richer understanding of the data collected. As regards data

analysis, mixed method researchers highlight important statements, sentences or quotes, and develop these into themes. These significant quotes and themes are later used to describe the individuals' experiences. In this study, I developed themes from the data and later narrated a story of the experiences based on these themes.

3.2 Research Design

This is a case study. A case study is defined as "an empirical inquiry that investigates a contemporary phenomenon (the "case") in depth and within its real-world context, especially when the boundaries between phenomenon and context may not be clearly evident" (Yin, 2014: 16). Merriam (2009) characterised a case study by the unit of analysis and stressed on the concept of bounded system in determining whether a study is a case. Similarly, Creswell (2013) saw a case study as "a qualitative approach in which the investigator explores a real-life, contemporary bounded system (a case) or multiple bounded systems (cases) over time, through details, in-depth data collection involving multiple sources of information and reports a case description and case themes" (p97). A case is chosen by looking at a bounded entity such as a person, organisation, behavioural condition, event and other social phenomenon (Yin, 2012).

There are three types of a case study which are exploratory, descriptive and explanatory (Yin, 2012). An exploratory case study investigates phenomena with the aim to define questions and hypotheses as "fieldwork and data collection are undertaken prior to the final definition of study questions or specific methodological procedures" (p29). A descriptive case study focuses on describing a phenomenon or situation in a particular context. An explanatory case study seeks to investigate the causality of a case (or cases) by linking a phenomenon with what might cause the phenomenon to occur.

In practice, these distinctions between exploratory, descriptive and explanatory are not watertight. My study has elements of all three. Firstly, it was exploratory because I was not looking to test a hypothesis. I started very much with an open mind and wanted to see what came up. Secondly, it was descriptive in that in my findings I give detailed description in experience and how the findinggs explain the situation. It was also explanatory because in the discussion, I produced a model of vocabulary learning which aims to capture the relationship of living in Coventry with vocabulary learning. I started data collection with general questions about language and attempted to understand this

by investigating ten adult Malaysian sojourners and examining their experiences and perceptions. This research design allowed me to 'enter' the participants' lives to make sense of their vocabulary learning experiences. The study is a case of language development, in particular vocabulary learning built around the experiences of Malaysian sojourners in Coventry.

3.3 Research Context

This research was conducted in Coventry, a city in West Midlands, United Kingdom. Coventry was known for its cloth and textiles trade during the Middle Ages (Lambert, 2019). During the 19th and 20th centuries, it became the centre of the British bicycle and motor industry. As an industrial city, Coventry has attracted immigrants from other parts of Britain and overseas. These people came for work and money. A large part of the city was destroyed from the bombing in the World War II and after the war, the city was extensively rebuilt. In the 1950's, car production plants were booming, and the region experienced full employment. Coventry became a city which attracted many newcomers and resulted in a relatively mixed population. The city underwent a transformation in the 1970's. The car industry collapsed, and the region experienced higher rates of unemployment and depressed wages. Over time, new industries were developed including new car companies. Today, the city has a population of 66.6% of White British and 34.4% of black and minority ethnics (BME) and the BME is higher than the national average (Coventry City Council, 2019). Many of the social statistics of Coventry are typical of the Midlands in general, which show us generally a mixed picture of employability.

There are two international universities in Coventry with high reputation respectively for their research and teaching. This is another factor that makes Coventry a diverse community; i.e. many overseas students come to study, with approximately 10,000 international students in Coventry University and 8,500 in University of Warwick in 2016/17 (UKCISA, 2019). Most Malaysians who have come to Coventry are connected to a university. Either they or their spouse came here to study. A small number continued staying and worked here, while others went back to Malaysia after they had completed their study.

Malaysian students came here to study because of the reputation of the universities and the status that the degree awarded in England given back home. Studying abroad is made

possible by sacrifices by parents to send their children overseas. In the case of PhDs, it is made possible by being sponsored by ministries or companies. Coventry itself is unlikely to be a major attraction to students. The attraction is the universities. Coventry should be seen neither as push or pull for students. One benefit it has is that it is conveniently placed in central of England with good travel connections, and it is cheaper to find housing than it would be in London or Oxford. On the other hand, Coventry has very little reputation as a tourist destination and is not seen by many as an attractive place in which to live.

Malaysians who are sponsored to study here can make ends meet, but they have little extra for travel or leisure. They also tend to live in small housing and lower status housing in Coventry than in Malaysia. That means it is normal for the spouses to work to supplement the income. The spouses also have to care for the children while their wife/ husband studies. As regards their children, they often enjoy going to school and manage to adapt relatively easily as second language speakers of English. Schools are used to catering for children of overseas students and the children often meet other children from similar backgrounds. In fact, these children use English more often than Malay language even with their family. As a small community in Coventry, Malaysians often meet formally and informally as a means for sharing news, providing practical advice and emotional support. Many Malaysians enjoy the experience of living and studying abroad.

3.4 Research Participants

Leading on from this, the study concerns the experience of Malaysians here in Coventry. There were ten participants in this study, consisting of three males and seven females aged between 22 and 35 years old. Four of them were students in a university in UK and the other six were spouses of postgraduate students. I purposely looked for some participants who were not students to contrast with students. Among the six non-student participants, three had a full-time work, two had a part-time work, very occasional work and a further one did not have a job at all. Nine participants were married and one was single. The participants were approached based on two criteria: they had Malay as their first language and they lived temporarily in UK (see Table 3.2).

3.4.1 Getting voluntary participation

This section would not be complete without explaining access issues and the relationship that I had and still have with my fellow Malaysian friends and colleagues here in Coventry.

Firstly, I would say that the Malaysian Coventry Society (MCS) was and is still a big family of Malaysians. As we come from a multiracial country, the MCS has many people from Malay, Chinese and Indian ethnic backgrounds. Although MCS puts on activities that involve all backgrounds such as football, family days, festival celebrations, and BBQ events, it organises specific events for ethnic Malays in MCS. The Malays meet once a fortnight for religious classes. These classes are light touch in terms of religious input but also serve a social role by allowing adults and children to mix. The people I met knew I had no sponsor for my study and were keen to support my work. I guess because of this they agreed to participate in my study.

The degree of commitment needed from volunteers made it difficult for me to convince more to participate. Most of the people I approached were married as I had met them through family gatherings; I did not have a close relationship with single Malaysians. One participant, Rahmah, asked in detail what was needed from a participant. After I explained about the data collection phases and processes, she took a long time to respond. She said "This study will take a lot my time and is difficult to me. But because you are a close friend of mine, I will help you". In another example, Basirah, politely declined my request as she said, "I am afraid I cannot commit to your study because I have two sons who require lots of my attention and with the baby coming, I think I cannot handle this". Getting male participants was more difficult. I contacted the wives, asking them to ask their husband on my behalf to participate in my study. Only after the male participants agreed, I personally contacted them via WhatsApp and explained about the study.

What my research was addressing needed to be undertaken and the high commitment of the study, and my limited relations with Malay males and undergraduates left me with only ten participants. In the beginning, I thought ten participants were too small of a sample. But by the end, I realised ten participants were enough as the amount of data collected from each participant was extensive. The strength of my study is depth rather than breadth.

3.4.2 The participants' English proficiency

I had a problem in trying to establish the participants' English language proficiency level because there was no one test that was taken by all participants. Four of the participants sat the IELTS test for university entrance – the minimum requirement was 6.5. When I

asked other participants about their English result in Malaysia (SPM - Malaysian Certificate of Education), some of them could not recall their results because it was more than 10 years earlier.

IELTS and SPM give a general language proficiency test for language learners. However, they do not provide an accurate measure of vocabulary. Because of this, I decided to use Vocabulary Levels Tests (VLT) to get an estimate of my participants' vocabulary profile which will be discussed later in this chapter. In Table 3.2, I give a general idea of all participants' English skills. These are my estimates based on their IELTS score and on my observation and conversation during the interviews. My best estimate is based on the Common European Framework of Reference for Languages (CEFR), three of them were very advanced C2, five were C1, one was B2 and one was A2. I really wanted people with low proficiency, but it was difficult to find low proficiency participants especially among those who were studying. They were required to have a minimum of IELTS 6.5 as a condition to study in a university. Another reason for the difficulty was the status of English as a second language in Malaysia. English is taught at all levels of education – from kindergarten to higher education. This status has made English as a common language seen, spoken and accessible everywhere especially in the media. However, English is used more widely in urban cities than in small towns.

Table 3.2 Participants' background

Name	**Age range***	**Family**	**Occupation**	**English proficiency****
Azza	31-35	Married with 3 children	Postgraduate student	C1 (IELTS 6.5)
Mazlina	26-30	Married with 3 children	Postgraduate student	C2 (IELTS 7)
Salwa	26-30	Married with no child	Postgraduate student	C2 (IELTS 6.5)
Syikin	21-25	Single	Undergraduate student	C1 (IELTS 7.5)
Adam	31-35	Married with no child	Work full-time	A2
Alisha	31-35	Married with 2 children	Homemaker	B2
Hanum	26-30	Married with 2 children	Work full-time	C1

Name	Age range*	Family	Occupation	English proficiency**
Rahmah	31-35	Married with 2 children	Homemaker, occasional work	C1
Razali	26-30	Married with no child	Homemaker, occasional work	C2
Zailan	26-30	Married with 3 children	Work full-time	C1

*The exact age is not given as the participants might be identifiable

**An estimation of CEFR

3.4.3 Participants' profiles

This section provides a pen portrait of the participants. The first four participants were students and the others were non-students.

Azza, 33 years old, was a third year PhD student. She had been living in UK for almost three years when I first interviewed her. She scored Band 6.5 in IELTS. Azza had a bachelor and master's degree in physics and a diploma in education. These qualifications were taken and completed in Malaysia. Azza spent her childhood in a town where English was not widely used. When she grew up, her family moved to a bigger town where Azza had more exposure in using English. Azza worked as a teacher in a secondary school in Malaysia. She came to the UK with her husband and three children in 2014. Coming to the UK had always been Azza's dream. She was motivated to undertake further studies when she witnessed her father's determination in studying for a degree in his 40's.

Studying in a department where she was the only Malay postgraduate, Azza had a lot of opportunity for using English. Occasionally, Azza taught undergraduates in the laboratory. She also presented at conferences. Azza was a sociable person and had a wide circle of friends in the UK. She often contacted them via WhatsApp and Facebook. Azza loved travelling and had visited destinations in the UK and Europe. Azza had developed a small line in buying and sending back items to friends in Malaysia. This made her a little bit of money. She ran this alongside her hectic study schedule. Azza was a confident English speaker. It had always been her principle that it was more important for people to understand her, and for her to understand people than worrying about the accuracy of the language used.

Mazlina, 32 years old, was a third-year PhD student. She had been living in the UK for almost two years when I first interviewed her. She scored Band 7 in IELTS. She had a bachelor and master's degree in TESL. Both these degrees were taken and completed in Malaysia. Mazlina spent her childhood in a town where people used Malay and her first formal English learning was in a primary school. Mazlina had four years working experience, teaching various English courses in a secondary school and a public university.

Mazlina came to the UK with her husband and two children. A year later, she gave birth to her third child. While her youngest daughter was very young, she tended to spend most of her study time at home rather than going to the university. After a year, and when her other children had gone to school, she felt more confident of leaving her youngest with her husband. Mazlina started to study in her office again and this meant more engagement with her colleagues. Mazlina can be described as a committed and enthusiastic learner of English who felt as though her English has developed a lot during the period. Mazlina always looked forward to improving her language skills by practising on social media.

Salwa, 33-year-old, was a fourth-year PhD student. She had been living in the UK for almost three years when I first interviewed her. Salwa reported a level of C6 in Malaysian SPM English 1119 paper which was equivalent to Band 6.5 IELTS in the university she studied. Salwa had a bachelor and master's degree in TESL, completed in public universities in Malaysia. Salwa spent her childhood in a town where people used Malay and her first formal English learning was in primary school. Salwa worked as an English teacher in a rural primary school for five years before she came to England.

Salwa lived with her husband in a town three-hours away from the university in which she studied. As a couple, they decided to live so far away at this distance because her husband had to attend classes every day in another university where he was taking his master's degree. Consequently, she did not have a settled space in which to work. She could have worked from home all the time, but she preferred not to. She tended to go to the local library to work or worked in public places. By not spending much time at her university meant her circle of friends and acquaintances was narrowed. Salwa only had a small number of close friends in the town in which she lived. As she rarely met other

people, she spent her time mostly with her husband. The couple did not have any children.

Having an academic background in English teaching, Salwa was a confident English speaker. She was not particularly challenged by studying in English but aware that she had not made as much progress as she might have.

Syikin, 24 years old, was the only single participant in this study. Syikin had been living in the UK for almost two years when I first interviewed her. she scored band 7.5 in her IELTS. She spoke French and Arabic too. Syikin came to the UK to get a degree in Economics and was approaching the end of her study. Before she came to the UK, she took International Baccalaureate (IB) in a private college in Malaysia. Studying in a private college gave her a lot of opportunity for using English with international classmates.

Throughout her study in the UK, Syikin attended lectures and seminars, wrote assignments individually and in groups. Syikin actively participated in societies. She had a lot of opportunity in using English because most of her classmates were international students. Syikin only used Malay with Malay friends, who she usually met outside her study time. Studying in the UK seemed to be a family tradition because her father and brother had studied here too. Syikin appeared determined and strong-willed. She was motivated to complete her study. She had lost her mother during the study period and she reported symptoms of depression in her final year.

Adam, 34 years old, came to the UK to accompany his wife, a PhD student. Adam had been living in the UK for a year when I first interviewed him. Adam's first degree was in a Malay medium university. He spent his childhood and attended schools in a small town. Adam worked as a teacher of 'living skills' in a secondary school. Adam ran a small family business in Malaysia, selling used clothes. He had his own shop in his hometown and sometimes he sold the clothes at night markets. Adam described his opportunities in using English as limited because he used Malay in teaching, and he rarely used English with his customers. He only used English when he had to attend business meetings with international suppliers.

In Malaysia, Adam and his wife had a long-distance relationship in Malaysia as they worked in different states. They only met on weekends and during school term breaks throughout their five years of marriage. Therefore, the couple really looked forward to coming to the UK so they could spend more time together and live in the same house. Still not having any children, Adam used his time to work at three different places as a cleaning assistant. Other than that, Adam was also a personal shopper and frequently went to factory outlets to buy items and check latest offer. Adam was a good cook too and often sold Malaysian food.

Adam came to the UK as an unconfident English speaker. He faced difficulties communicating in English and securing a job when he first arrived. He felt forced to get out of his comfort zone and learned English because this would give him more job opportunities. He received 'endless support' from his wife, an English lecturer, and his confidence level slowly increased.

Alisha, 33 years old, came to the UK to support her husband who was studying for a PhD. Alisha had been living in the UK for a year when I first interviewed her. Alisha had a diploma in public administration from a Malay medium university. Her late father encouraged her to learn English and sometimes spoke in English. When Alisha was a child, she came to the UK for a year to be with her mother who was taking a master's degree. However, Alisha did not have an opportunity to study in a school in the UK. Alisha worked in a variety of different jobs in Malaysia. All her jobs required her to use English some of the time.

In contrast to her life in Malaysia where she dealt with a lot of people, Alisha rarely met other people in the UK. Alisha's husband went to his office to study on weekdays, during office hours. This left Alisha as the only one caring for their two children, a toddler and an infant. Caring for her small children, not having any transport and living far from other Malaysians limited her social interactions. In addition, Alisha was selective in adding friends on her social media accounts. Her husband's long study hours did not allow her to look for a formal job.

Alisha had very little time for herself since she had children. However, after her eldest child started nursery, Alisha found herself again. She started to read again. Alisha was a positive person. She loved reading inspirational stories to keep her motivated.

Hanum, a 30-year-old, came to the UK to support her husband who was a PhD student. Hanum had been here for two years when I first interviewed her. Hanum spent a year of her childhood life in the UK but did not attend a school in the UK. Hanum obtained her degree in engineering in an English medium university in Malaysia. She worked as a mechanical engineer in international companies in Malaysia. Coming to the UK with two children to support her husband, Hanum was very excited and looking forward to living here. The couple had been waiting for more than a year before they got confirmation on the husband's scholarship.

Hanum worked at a call centre in an international company, handling customers with a wide range of English accents. In addition, working at a call centre gave Hanum the flexibility to balance her working hours with her commitment to the family. Hanum shared responsibilities with her husband for caring for the children. Hanum came with a good background of English. Her family and experience in school inspired her to learn English. Describing herself as a competitive person, Hanum worked hard to prove her language ability and to be in the same level as her school friends. Hanum can be described as an independent and motivated learner of English.

Rahmah, 35-year-old, came to the UK with her husband, a PhD student, and two children. She had been here for two years when I first interviewed her. Rahmah first learned English in a primary school. Rahmah rated herself as an 'average user' of English. Rahmah had a bachelor and master's degree in electrical engineering. Her first degree was obtained in Malaysia while her second degree, in the UK. Rahmah worked as a lecturer in a public university teaching engineering subjects to local and international students. She used English in her work.

Rahmah was excited to live in the UK with her family as she had lived here before. Seeing herself as a supportive wife, Rahmah cared for the children, sending and collecting them from school, so that her husband could focus on his studies. As family commitments constrained her from having a formal job, Rahmah decided to start a small food selling

business on the side. Rahmah sold cakes, desserts and Malay delicacies through WhatsApp and sometimes she set up a stall at food festivals. Rahmah was also a personal shopper. She collected orders from customers in Malaysia and bought the items in the UK.

When Rahmah first arrived in the UK, she knew she had a good background in English but worried about the possibility that people might misunderstand her, or she might use inappropriate vocabulary. Rahmah's main reason in learning English was to help her children develop their English in the UK.

Razali, 30 years old, was a husband to a PhD student. He had been living in the UK for three years when I first interviewed him. Razali had a very good background in English before he came. That was because he had always been interested in English and his family supported him. Unusually, he moved to Russia when he was 13 years old and went to an international school where he was taught in English. Razali also spoke Russian, French and Spanish. Razali worked in international companies in Malaysia and often dealt with American and British clients in his line of work.

Razali had come to England to support his wife. It was her decision to come. The couple did not have any children. Razali did not get a formal job in the time he was here and he was not studying either. However, he had developed a side-line in selling car. This gave him a sense of purpose in England and helped him feel that he was helping to support his family. Although he had little formal interaction with other people as he was not studying or working, he had a circle of friends and stayed in touch with other people through social media. Razali came having a strong background in English, as somebody who was confident in English from the start, and he felt that he did not have much to improve on.

Zailan, 32 years old, came to the UK to accompany his wife, a PhD student. He had been living in the UK for two years when I first interviewed him. Zailan rated himself as a good user of English. Zailan had a degree in telecommunication from a public university in Malaysia. He had been working in international companies for almost ten years. His current job as a technical engineer required him to travel around the globe for training purposes. Working in a technical assistance call centre, Zailan provided support through

online phone calls and emails for international clients. Communication among colleagues was done in English.

Coming to the UK was a big decision for Zailan because his parents disapproved of him going so far away. Nonetheless, Zailan decided to come here to support his wife. Another factor contributing to his decision was that his job allowed him to work remotely. Working in a Malaysian-based company in the UK time zone meant Zailan's working hours were different. His shifts started as early as 2200 hours and ended at 1000 hours the next day. His unusual working hours limited his chances to develop close relationships with other people.

Due to his work experience, Zailan had always been a confident user of English. He was more nervous about experiencing different cultures and living in a different country than he was about his language ability. Although Zailan had limited interaction with people other than his family, he had plenty of opportunities for using English in his line of work.

3.5 Data Collection

Data was collected in four phases, preceded by a pilot phase, over the period of 21 months, starting from August 2016 to April 2018. The pilot study aimed to test the feasibility of research methods, research procedure and to hone my skills in collecting data. The full study was conducted in three phases. Phase 1 was about getting the general overview of the participants' language and vocabulary learning experience in Malaysia and in the UK. I also tried to get a picture of their experience when they first arrived in the UK. Phase 2 looked at what was happening in their vocabulary learning as they lived their life. Phase 3 was an opportunity to reflect on their experience. Table 3.3 illustrates the phases of data collection. All research methods are included in the Appendices.

Table 3.3 Data collection phases

Phase of study	**Research activities**	**Where? (Online or face-to-face)**	**Who took part?**
Pilot study	Step 1: Vocabulary Level Test (VLT) Version A Learning diary	Face-to-face	4 female participants
	Step 2: Individual Interviews Vocabulary Learning Strategies Questionnaire (VLSQ)	Face-to-face	3 female participants
Phase 1	Step 1: Vocabulary Level Test (VLT) Version A	Both	All 10 participants
	Step 2: Individual Interviews	Both	
	Step 3: Vocabulary Learning Strategies Questionnaire (VLSQ)	Face-to-face	
Phase 2	Step 1: Learning diary	Online	All 10 participants
Phase 3	Step 1: Follow-up interviews	Face-to-face	All 10 participants
	Step 2: Vocabulary Level Test (VLT) Version B	Face-to-face	

3.5.1 Pilot study

A pilot study was conducted between August 2016 and January 2017 to determine the suitability and practicality of research methods and procedures. There were two stages for the pilot study. The first stage was piloting a VLT and learning diary, and the second stage was piloting interview questions and the VLSQ. Participants were interviewed briefly on their opinions about the research instruments and procedures. This section explains the pilot study in more detail.

a) Research participants

The participants for the pilot study were Malaysians who were going back to Malaysia within the next few months after the pilot had finished. As I realised I could not include them in the full study, I chose them to be my participants as I wanted to make use of their availability. In the first stage of the pilot study, I approached four female participants: two PhD students and two Master's students. I also approached two male participants who were spouses of other postgraduate students. In the second stage, I approached three

female participants. Among seven of them, one was single and the other six were married, four of whom had children.

I had a good response and participation from female participants, but not from the male participants. One of the male participants ignored my texts on the meeting day even though he had agreed to be a participant prior to the meeting. The other participant made me wait for two hours and I had to cancel the meeting as I could not wait any longer. This experience had shown me that close relationships and good rapport were important in conducting this research, and it made me realise that I might not be able to get an equal number of male-female participants. I was also made aware that getting participation from students was difficult as they had busy schedules.

b) Methods that I piloted

Vocabulary levels test (VLT)

Both versions of the VLT (which are discussed later) were piloted to check whether the instructions were clear. The VLT was testing five different levels of word frequency – 1k (the 1,000 most frequently used word), 2k (the 2,000 most frequent word), 3k (the 3,000 most frequent word), 5k (the 5,000 most frequent word) and 10k (the 10,000 most frequent word). These tests can be administered separately but I wanted learners to go through each level. This meant that the participants had 160 items to answer and most managed to do this within 30 - 40 minutes.

The 1k VLT test required participants to answer true-false questions. The other VLTs required participants to select answers from a multiple-choice format. Once shown, the participants understood how to answer the questions. They were asked not to guess the answer if they did not have any ideas about the word. However, if they could guess, they should try to do so.

Based on the participants' feedback, I had to change three items to avoid confusion. Item no. 6 'This country is part of the world' (testing recognition of the word 'world') had caused confusion to some participants as they thought a picture of a country (a specific country) should be included. To overcome this, I changed the item to 'All the world is under water'. Another item that had to be changed was item no. 20 'You can go by road from London to New York' (testing 'road'). The participants commented this might

confuse New York in the USA with York in England. Therefore, I changed the item to 'Cars move on a road'. Another item changed was no. 21 'Silver costs a lot of money' (testing 'silver') as cost is subjective and a lot of money depends on what silver is being compared to. I changed this item to 'You can eat silver'. Based on the participants' feedback, I realised that these tests took a long time. However, the tests were doable. I also had to change some items.

Interviews

The purpose of piloting the interview questions was threefold. The first was to estimate how long the interview would take, the second was to test whether the questions were suitable to get an initial understanding of the participants' experience and VLS use and the third, to practise my skills in conducting interviews.

The pilot interviews took up to one and a half hours to finish with some shorter interviews around 30 – 40 minutes. This was long, and I was concerned about the time taken. I was worried about this as I also wanted them to fill a questionnaire at this meeting, after the interview. Overall, the participants were interested in the interview and clearly keen to tell me about their experiences. However, one or two of the participants had not been informed about how long the interview would take and I noticed they looked restless at times and I decided to miss one or two questions.

During the first interviews, I was aware of being too 'rigid' and accepting the participants' answers without asking for clarification. I needed to be inquisitive and probe more. To help, I listed possible follow-up questions as a guidance. I also felt that there was a barrier between me and the participants, and I could sense some awkwardness and restlessness.

Based on my experience in the pilot study, I made two important decisions about the interview in the full study. I decided to seek a more relaxed interview setting so I would conduct the interview over cake and coffee. Additionally, I decided to send the interview questions via email prior to the meeting so that I could get some feedback before the interview itself. By doing this, I would also be able to prepare further questions based on their answers.

Vocabulary learning strategies questionnaire (VLSQ)

The VLSQ is explained in section 3.6.3. When piloting the VLSQ, the participants wanted me to go through all the questions with them. They said they were not familiar with the subject matter and sometimes needed more explanation in Malay. They were glad they could ask me right away. During the session, the participants were confused whether I was asking about the strategies they used in the past or ones that they currently used. Being aware of this problem, I saw that they should share any strategies they had ever used. They took around 35 to 45 minutes to complete the VLSQ which had 85 items.

c) Learning diary

Initially, for the study, I wanted the learning diary to be written over three months. I asked the pilot study participants' opinion on this and they said the duration was too long and they could not commit as they had family and study work to do. I then asked them to write a learning diary for two weeks in order to record new words that they encountered and to give an idea on how they used strategies in real life. The diary format was sent to them via WhatsApp. They were given the flexibility to write the entries manually and submit at the end of the two weeks, or alternatively via WhatsApp and submit everyday. Five out of six chose to do this via WhatsApp. However, unsurprisingly, those who submitted via WhatsApp did not do so everyday as I had hoped. However, all of them engaged in the exercise and sent at a minimum of five or six entries. In order to encourage participants, I sent out reminders every two days. As regards the participant who kept the diary manually, she had entries for almost every day.

d) Reflections of the pilot study

The pilot study was a priceless learning experience for me. I gained confidence that the data collection methods would work, and I was ready to proceed with the full study. However, I started to get a more realistic view of the study. I was aware that it would be difficult for me to get a large number of participants and I should go for quality of engagement rather than numbers. However, this would impose demands on my participants. I could not give out monetary reward as an attraction and instead I started to realise that a good rapport was key in getting participation. I approached those I knew or ones of whom I had mutual friends. I needed to make the interviews as pleasant as possible and decided on the importance of cake and coffee.

The feedback I received from the participants showed that it was not easy for them to get involved in a study that required a long-term commitment especially to those who were studying and married. After considering suggestions from the participants, I also decided that I would send the VLT and the initial interview questions via email to save time. As regards the diary, I realised the longest duration they were willing to write the diary was a month. If I proceeded with a 3-month duration, I might have ended up with no participants. The participants faced no problem with the format of the diary. However, they suggested to include email as a tool to submit the diary and I accepted the suggestion.

3.5.2 The full study

A few weeks before I started the full data collection, I contacted the participants via WhatsApp and gained their permission to participate. Before I approached the male participants, I texted their wives to ask the male participants on my behalf. After they had agreed, I contacted the male participants personally. After they had given verbal consent, I gave them printed consent forms to sign.

In Phase 1, the participants were sent the VLT Version A via email a few days prior to meeting. Some participants requested that I brought the printed VLT as they preferred it that way. The interview questions were also sent via email to save time and enable the participants to reflect on the interview questions. All interviewees replied to these questions before the interview. Based on their answers, I was able to prepare further prompts for the interview itself. The purpose of this interview was to understand the participants' background, language learning experiences and their experiences in moving to the UK. After the interview questions were asked, I went through the VLSQ with the participants. At the end of each section of the VLSQ, I tried to get more responses from the participants by asking them the reasons for using certain strategies. At the end of the meeting, I explained that I would ask them to complete a learning diary in four weeks' time and I would come back for a further interview after another 12 months.

In Phase 2, the participants were asked to write a learning diary for a month. One participant chose to write the diary in her own book and two participants chose to submit via email. These participants submitted their diary once a week. The other seven participants submitted their entry via WhatsApp daily. Reminders were sent every two days.

In Phase 3, the participants were re-interviewed. The focus was to elicit information about any changes they had in their daily life and their VLS use in the UK since the first interview about a year earlier. Phase 3 was also an opportunity for me to clarify points arising from the data analysis in Phase 1 and 2. The participants were also given the transcript of their interviews for verification. They were asked about their experience in writing the learning diary.

3.6 Research Methods and Data Analysis

This section describes the methods used for data collection and data analysis in more detail. I began data collection in February 2017 and completed the process in April 2018. Data was collected using four main methods which were Vocabulary Levels Tests (VLTs), individual interviews, Vocabulary Learning Strategies Questionnaire (VLSQ), learning diary and follow-up interviews. Data was collected over a long period to explore learning experiences, changes in VLS use and progress of VLT.

3.6.1 Vocabulary levels test (VLT)

The particular VLT used in this study measured receptive knowledge of 1,000 to 10,000 of the most frequently used words in English. This Vocabulary Levels Test (VLT) was originally developed by Nation (1983 and 1993). Nation (1993) developed two equivalent versions of a 1,000 (1k) VLT in order to measure vocabulary as a means to help teachers or learners set learning goals. These tests were equivalent, i.e. they tested the same words but in different sentences or contexts. Schmitt (2000) made a major improvement and replaced Nation's VLT (1983) with another VLT (Version A) at four word levels: 2000 (2k), 3000 (3k), 5000 (5k), 10 000 (10k) word level. The purpose of these VLTs was to get a profile of a learner's vocabulary size for each level, not to combine the score for all tests (Schmitt, p.c.). An equivalent version, Version B, was developed by Schmitt *et al.* (2001). These tests were chosen in this thesis as they are widely used (Schmitt, 2010) and have been validated by Schmitt *et al.* (2001) and Golkar and Tamini (2007).

I did not know the participants' language level in advance and I asked them to answer 1k VLT developed by Nation (1993) together with the VLTs developed by Schmitt *et al.* (2001) for the other four levels. The participants were given VLT Version A before the first interview in Phase 1, and they answered VLT Version B after the follow-up interview in Phase 3 so that I could assess progress.

The 1k VLT consisted of 40 true-false items. Each item is a sentence that describes the use, meaning or context of the tested word. In some questions, pictures are used to test learners' understanding. To avoid guessing, learners are allowed to write 'X' if they do not understand the sentence. The mark for 1k VLT (Nation, 1993) is calculated by multiplying the total score out of 40 by 2.5. The score shows the percentage of the 1,000 most frequently used words in English.

The other VLTs (2k, 3k, 5k and 10k) consisted of 30 multiple-choice items. Again, a score is calculated by counting the percentage of correct answers. For example, 2k VLT = [(student score/30) x 100]. For instance, if a participant scored 21 marks in the 2k VLT, his/her score was calculated as, (21/30) x 100 = 70% which meant he/she recognises 70% of the 2000 most frequently used words.

3.6.2 Interviews

A research interview focuses on participants' self-report and records "what people say they do, what they say they believe, what opinions they say they have" (Denscombe, 2014: 184). It is useful for research that explores phenomena such as opinions, emotions and experiences which aim to get in-depth understanding. Interviews benefit the researcher as they give an opportunity to cover a broader range of issues compared to other research methods such as observation (Hobson and Townsend, 2010). Interviews also allow two-way interaction for interviewers to clarify information and probe more responses from participants to get more detailed responses. Phellas, Bloch, and Seale (2012), however, argued that interviews might be biased as the interviewer could influence the interviewee by sharing their own opinion. This leads to the issue of trustworthiness of data because there is a possibility that some participants may not give accurate or truthful answers. There is no ultimate way of verifying the participants' answers as interviewers are not 'mind readers' (Denscombe, 2014). Some suggestions given to overcome this issue are via triangulation and respondent validation.

The interviews I carried out confirmed this picture from the literature. I was able to go into depth with participants and the conversations enabled me to clarify what was happening and to probe. As regards possible bias, I was aware of my relationship with some of my participants might lead them into saying things that they thought I might want to hear. This meant I had to continually explain to them that I had no agenda and I

wanted them to explain as carefully as they could in their own words. Occasionally, I saw some of my participants at social events. What they were telling me in interviews was consistent with how they behaved in the events that I shared with them. I did not think that there was a strong bias in what they said as the topic was not sensitive, and I was not judging them on their English performance.

Interviews are classified as structured, unstructured and semi-structured. A structured interview is an interview in which the questions are set out in advanced and the questions read in the same order to all interviewees. The interview is not flexible and both interviewer and interviewee have little freedom to improvise. An unstructured interview does not have any predetermined questions. The interviewer starts the session by introducing a theme or topic and lets the interviewee develop their own ideas and thought (Denscombe, 2014). A semi-structured interview follows a few predetermined questions with follow-up questions based on the interviewee's answers (Collier-Reed, Ingerman, and Berglund, 2009). A semi-structured interview allows participants to elaborate on developing themes (Barkhuizen, Benson, and Chik, 2014) while giving a degree of open-endedness. I chose semi-structured interviews in my study as this allowed me to follow a consistent pattern, but also to improvise follow-questions geared towards an individual's experiences.

I had prepared the questions in Malay but I had also prepared them in English for my supervisor. I decided to give participants the opportunity of using English if they wanted to, given that we were living in England and some of them were using English a lot in their study and daily life and might prefer to do this. In fact, I was surprised six of them preferred to do this is English for the most part. Whereas the other four preferred to use Malay. Table 3.4 shows the language used by the participants in the interviews.

Table 3.4 Language used during interviews

Language used	**Participants**
Predominantly English	Azza, Hanum, Mazlina, Salwa, Razali, Zailan,
Predominantly Malay	Adam, Alisha, Rahmah, Syikin

The questions sought information on the participants' vocabulary language learning during their schooling years, higher education and in their workplace. I also asked about their feelings and experiences when moving to the UK. Additionally, the participants were also asked about English use with family and friends in the UK. Table 3.5 shows the interview questions.

The follow-up interviews were conducted in Phase 3, between 10 to 12 months after the first interview. Again, this was a semi-structured interview. The main reason for the follow-up interview was to go deeper into the responses from the first interview and to elicit more information about their learning diary and the VLSQ, and to discuss changes in strategies and learning development. In particular, the participants were asked about their diary entries, the gap they had between the entries and the reason for choosing the actions they did. I also used the follow-up interviews to validate the first interview transcription and to elicit more information on the emerging themes from the initial analysis of the Phase 1 interview transcriptions. Questions were asked about any changes they experienced since the last meeting. Participants were also asked about their usual daily activities to help identify the patterns of vocabulary learning strategies. Table 3.6 shows the follow-up interview questions.

Table 3.5 Individual interviews questions

Interview questions (Phase 1)
1. When and where did you first learn English formally? 2. Do you still remember how you learned English in school and/or university? 3. When did you come to Coventry? 4. What were your feelings? 5. Any concern about language when you came? 6. Do you feel confident/ not confident in using English in UK? 7. What makes you feel more confident now? 8. When do you feel less/ more confident? 9. Do you feel confident/ not confident with any certain people? 10. Are there any certain people that make you confident/ not confident? 11. Have you ever heard about Vocabulary Learning Strategies (VLS)? 12. Do you still remember how you learned vocabulary in school and/or university? 13. What do you think of the way you learn vocabulary? 14. Are you aware of how your learning strategies change? (From kindergarten- primary-secondary school- higher education – work – Coventry) 15 Tell me when you use English? 16 Do you have access to TV or radio in English? 17 How often do you watch TV/ listen to the radio? 18 Do you have access to Internet? 19 Where and how often you use it in English? 20 Does anybody in your family know or speak English? 21 Do you reply or communicate in English with your family? 22 How often do you communicate in English with your family? 23 What language do you use at work/ in study? 24 Do you have any classes/ courses to attend? 25 How do you communicate with your colleagues/ classmates? 26 Do you often have a drink/ lunch with your colleagues/ classmates? 27 Do your colleagues/ classmates use English to communicate with you? 28 What do you feel when you have to talk to them in English?

Table 3.6 Follow-up interview questions

Questions about changes and individual interviews	**Prompts**
What have you been doing since I last met you?	Did you start working? Did you resign/change your job? Did you have a new family member? Did you have visitors that stay at your house for a long time? Did you travel anywhere? Did you attend any courses/ training? How do you feel about your progress in English since I last met you? Has there been anything that helped you a lot? Is there anything that has stopped you from making more progress?
Has talking to me about VLS changed the way you think about learning vocabulary? Or anything else?	If yes, ask for explanation. Did you start changing anything because of the study?
Last time we talked about living in Coventry. Can you tell me about an ordinary day here in Coventry. How many new words you might encounter in a day? What do you tend to do when you encounter new words?	Can you tell me a day that you spend here? What English do you use here? Do you read English newspaper? If you go on a train or a bus, do you take the free newspapers provided? What happens normally? You can't look up all the words? What do you do?
Can you explain more about this?	Refer to transcripts
When you watch TV, do you watch English or Malay movies? Do you open the subtitles?	Do you use social media? What language do you use in social media? What language do you use to post in social media?
Questions about learning diary and VLSQ	**Prompts**
How did you feel about the diary?	Looking at it now, what do you notice? Could you reflect on it? Could you share your experience with me? Did writing the journal do any difference in your vocabulary learning?
When you said you Googled a word, did you do it right after you saw/heard the word or was it after the programme has ended?	How did you know how to spell the words you looked for?
You used Google when you looked up words. Could you explain how you did this, please?	Did you guess them before you looked them up? Did you understand from context or by other ways?

What do you look for? Is it just meaning or other information?	Were you just looking for confirmation when you looked them up? Is there any word that you did not include? Is there any word that you did not understand but you did not look up? What made you interested in looking up the word? Was there any word that you did not bother to look up? Explain the process when you Google the words? You read in the box of replies or you click on link/ dictionary websites?
How did you choose what/which websites for you to click?	What is the difference between using Google and Cambridge dictionary? Is there any reason that make you choose Cambridge over other dictionary? Do you key in 'Cambridge Dictionary website' or you type the word in Google search and then choose Cambridge Dictionary website?
My topic is VLS. I wonder… (refer to questionnaire)	Which of these strategies you use here? Did you use it before this? Could you explain why? (refer to every section). Are you aware of your strategy changes in Coventry. Looking back, what now was the most effective for you? Which strategy is the most important for you? Could you explain that?
Additional questions about learning in UK	**Prompts**
Could you tell any difference of learning English here and learning in Malaysia?	Have you been to other countries? Is there any difference between learning here and other countries?
Do you face any problems/ challenges of learning English here?	Could you give examples? Why? Could you compare the problems that you faced in Malaysia and the problem that you face here? How do you deal with the problems?
I'm interested about things we do in practice, sometimes we forget the words that we learn and we have to learn about that words again. What do you think of that?	What do you usually do?
Could you draw me a graph of how you think your vocabulary size has changed for the past few months?	Examples?
What is your motivation to continue learning vocabulary here?	Any person or event that make you motivated to learn new vocabulary here?

Table 3.7 shows the length of the interviewing time for the interviews in Phase 1 and Phase 3. All participants were interviewed for a total of approximately two hours.

Table 3.7 Length of the interviewing time

Participants	Phase 1: Individual interview	Phase 2: Follow-up interview	Hours of interview
Adam	1:17:30	0:55:26	2:12:56
Alisha	1:16:44	0:59:66	2:16:50
Azza	1:16:05	0:57:25	2:13:30
Hanum	1:20:44	0:51:34	2:12:18
Mazlina	1:08:28	0:58:12	2:06:40
Rahmah	1:20:52	1:01:40	2:22:32
Razali	1:22:27	0:58:23	2:20:50
Salwa	1:14:06	0:55:15	2:09:21
Syikin	1:13:55	1:32:45	2:46:40
Zailan	1:05:17	0:50:52	1:56:09

a) Analysing the Interviews

Creswell (2013) suggested three steps of analysing qualitative data which are preparing and organising data, reducing data into themes by the coding process and representing the data. This is an iterative process as researchers move back and forth as needed. Interview data for this study was analysed by adopting the thematic analysis method. Thematic analysis (TA) is a process of data exploration with the intention to create themes which are described as categories or codes (Gibson, 2010).

Individual Interview Analysis

Data analysis began by organising the interview recording. All interviews were recorded using a smartphone; there were no technical difficulties. The recordings were then transferred to my password protected laptop and Dropbox folder. During some interview sessions, the recordings were stopped and resumed on occasions as the participants had to care for their children - these recordings were numbered and combined to ease the transcription process. Effectively, the recordings were transcribed by listening carefully and writing up what people had said. This was laborious and time consuming. The process

was assisted by a tool called Transcribe which enabled me to stop and start the recordings more easily. I did this all myself as I wanted to familiarise myself with the data.

Although some participants switched between Malay and English during the interviews, the transcripts were all in English to ease the process of coding and data analysis. This meant I had to translate some of the interviews. When the participants used English, their words were transcribed as they spoke without changing or altering ungrammatical sentences. However. I excluded language fillers that did not serve any purpose in my study such as *um, ah, er*, and *uh*. When the participants used Malay, I translated the sentences or words into grammatical English sentences to reflect what they had spoken. Once transcriptions were ready, I exported all the files to Atlas.ti which would help in the process of organising the code. Figure 3.1 shows an example of coding using Atlas.ti.

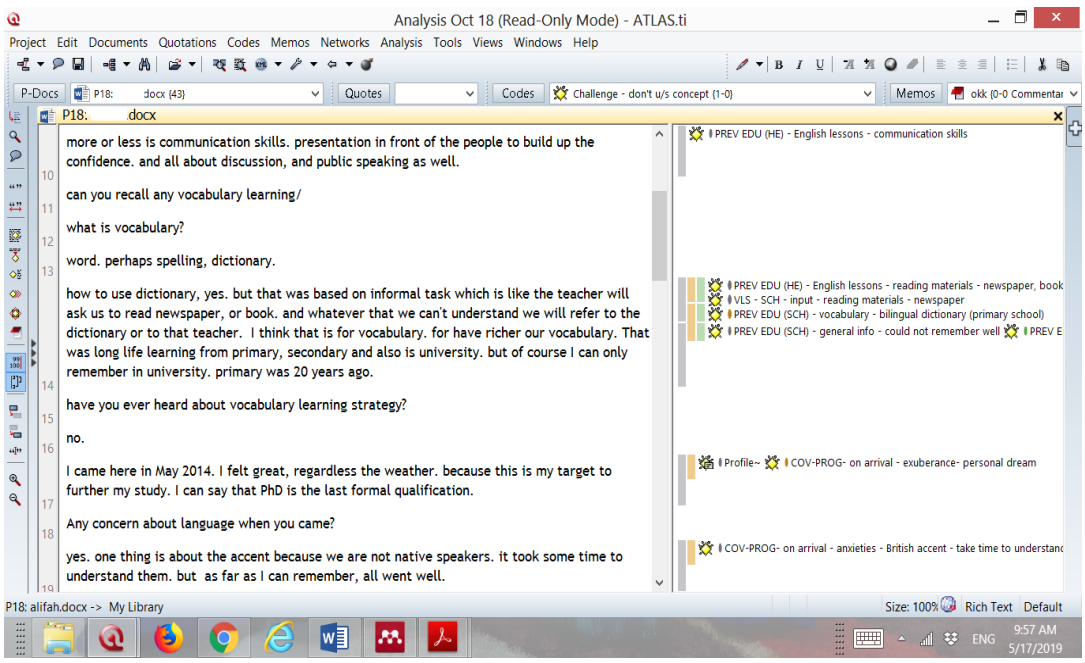


Figure 3.1 A screen capture of coding using Atlas.ti

The coding process started with an open coding, followed by data reduction cycle and finally presentation cycle. I read the transcripts a few times to really get to know the data. It seemed overwhelming and the first step in organising the data was to notice that some of the interview focuses in Malaysia and some in Coventry. This enabled the first categorisation of the data and I created two core ideas of Malaysia and Coventry. I then continued reading the transcripts and created a list of open codes associated with 'unit of

meaning' in the transcripts and resulted in 38 open codes for Malaysia and 23 codes for Coventry (see Appendix G and H).

Coding was not an easy process for me. I was astounded by the size of the data that I had. I was confused and lost in the open coding process as a lot of the data could be grouped under different themes. It took me a long time to code the first three transcripts. When I discussed this with my supervisor, he suggested double-coding to some unit of meaning to get more flexibility. The extracts that were double-coded were mostly the participants' VLS as they could be categorised under different codes such as *Previous workplace* and *VLS*. The core idea of VLS was added later as I continued the coding process (see Table 3.8).

To produce more manageable codes, I started the data reduction cycle and read the open codes repeatedly. I decided to focus on one core idea at a time. For the core idea of Malaysia, I combined several open codes and ended up with 9 themes. The core idea of Coventry generated 13 themes and VLS, 5 themes. This resulted in a total of 27 themes (see Table 3.8) which was more manageable. The coding process was completed by using the framework (Table 3.8) and applying it to all the transcripts.

Table 3.8 Aggregated open codes as themes for Phase 1 interview analysis

Core ideas	Malaysia	Coventry	Vocabulary Learning Strategies (added idea)
Themes	• Childhood • Technology • Life • Family • Previous education (School) • Previous education (HE) • Previous workplace • Learning in Malaysia	• Vocabulary • Life • Use of technology • Language used • Progress • General language learning • Study • Workplace • Opinion • Orientation to language • Informal interaction • Family • Learning in UK	• Previous school • Previous HE • Previous workplace • Malaysia (overall) • Now

Follow-up Interview Coding

The analysis for follow-up interviews was similar. Recordings were transcribed and were then exported to Atlas.ti. As explained in the previous section, the follow-up interviews focused on clarifying responses from the first interview; explaining progress between interviews; and discussing the learning diary. As regards the coding process, some of the interviews were coded using the previous framework (Table 3.8) as a lot of the time, participants were elaborating on what they had talked about before. Of course new themes came up and I added additional themes to the core idea of Coventry and VLS. I also added a new 'core idea' of the learning diary.

Table 3.9 Core ideas and themes for Phase 3 interviews

Core ideas	**Coventry**	**VLS**	**Learning Diary**
Additional themes	• Use of technology • Informal interaction • Motivation • General language learning • Challenge (UK)	• Now	• Words • Opinion • Cons • VLS

	• Learning graph • Progress • Living • Workplace		

Overall, the coding process was a mix of top-down and bottom-up processes. It was bottom-up in Phase 1 as I created the themes emerged through a process of open coding of unit of meaning (Hammond and Wellington, 2013). This enabled a framework which could be used later, top-down. The framework was amended in Phase 2 with additional themes.

Coding is a subjective process. However, I took transcript samples and checked with my peers who had expertise in the same area as to whether they agreed with my coding. In most cases, they did. When we disagreed, we explained what lay behind our thinking and we could reach further agreement. In a more systematic way, I took samples of interviews and moderated them with my supervisor. Again, we reached high level of consistency. In the cases in which we disagreed, by discussing them, we could better understand how the codes should be applied.

Coding allows for aggregating of transcripts around similar excerpts and experiences. Using computer software, I was able to aggregate excerpts from all the interviews in respect to particular codes. I was later able to turn these aggregated excerpts into a narrative. I created one data file for both interviews reflecting the fact that the second interviews had covered a fair amount of grounds to the first interviews. However, in the aggregated excerpts, it was clear who said what and in what round of interviews it was said.

Initially, I worked from the original subthemes (see Appendix G and H) but when I tried to order my participants' stories around these codes, the structure proved to be unwieldy. In order to present a coherent and readable narrative, I conflated different subthemes around large ideas. An example of how I did this was presented in Table 3.10. The theme of 'progress' is reported in sections 'reflection on moving' and 'progress in language learning'. The subthemes for section 'reflection on moving' included excitement, exuberance, worries, anxieties, difficulties, and concerns. However, I conflated the subthemes into two main areas to provide a more comprehensible narration. The

subthemes of excitement and exuberance were in good part overlapping and I have reported them into the subsection of 'excitement' while worries, anxieties, difficulties and concerns were reported into the subsection of 'worries'. The reporting for section 'progress in language' included subthemes of less confidence, confidence, smooth transition and vocabulary learning progress. These subthemes were reported into the subsections of 'confidence with English: now'; 'gaps in language confidence'; 'confidence in English: after 12 months'; and 'vocabulary learning progress'. An example of this conflation is given in Table 3.10.

Table 3.10 Reporting of findings

Original subthemes from 'progress'	**Section headers**	**Subsection headers**	**Further subsection headers**
• Excitement • Exuberance	Reflection on moving	• Excitement	
• Worries • Anxieties • Difficulties • Concerns		• Worries	Language worries
• Less confidence • Confidence • Smooth transition • Vocabulary learning progress	Progress in language learning	• Confidence with English: Now • Gaps in language confidence • Confidence in English: After 12 months • Vocabulary learning progress	

3.6.3 Vocabulary learning strategies questionnaire (VLSQ)

A questionnaire contains questions or statements which are answered by selecting the choices given, or writing the answers (Dornyei, 2007). A questionnaire is suitable when the data sought is fairly straightforward, brief and standardised. Questionnaires can be open, closed or a mixture of open and closed questions. An open-questionnaire allows respondents to write their responses and clarify their answer in their own words. A closed-questionnaire provides answers that respondents can choose from and respondents cannot elaborate on their answers.

The very advantage of using a questionnaire is that researchers can reach a large number of people without having to meet the respondents face-to-face. It can be easily administered by using email or any other online platform such as Google Form. Questionnaires can also reduce bias as all respondents answer the same set of questions and if the questionnaire is anonymous, it is more likely that the respondents will give trustworthy answers. However, there are some issues in using a questionnaire. First, there is a possibility of getting a low response rate as the respondents might not see filling it in as important to them. Second, there is no rule about the number of questions asked in a questionnaire. This usually depends on the nature and purpose of the research. However, too many questions may lead to questionnaire fatigue and this will affect the respondents' enthusiasm and response (Denscombe, 2014).

The VLSQ used in this study was a mixture of an open and closed-questionnaire. The closed questions were used to get a picture of the participants' VLS use and the open-ended questions were asked to gain more understanding on the participants' choice of strategy. The questionnaire was given to my participants after the interview and in this sense, they represented a captive sample. All of them completed the questionnaire. In a technical sense, response rate was 100%. A problem in filling the questionnaire was participants' fatigue as they had already carried out an interview with me. The participants took around 35 - 45 minutes to answer the questionnaire. However, responses were consistent with each other and participants were given the opportunity to stop and come back to it. The questionnaire itself was in English but I translated the questions where I needed to for the participants.

The VLSQ itself was adapted from a questionnaire written by Alyami (2011) which was originally adapted from Marin (2005). Marin's questionnaire was content-validated by an expert, Scholfield, who confirmed that it was satisfactory (Marin, 2005). As a follow-up to his study, Marin conducted a reliability test which resulted in a Cronbach Alpha of .94 showing high internal consistency (p.c.). Alyami (2011) made minor changes by changing, adding or omitting items based on his preliminary study. As I cross-checked the questionnaire with the VLS developed by Schmitt (1997), I realised that some sub-categories of VLS developed by Schmitt were not included in Alyami's questionnaire. As accepted by Takač (2008: 67), Schmitt's VLS is "currently the most comprehensive typology of vocabulary learning strategies". Therefore, I adapted Alyami's questionnaire

by including sub-categories from Schmitt's. The items that I added or amended are listed in Table 3.11.

Table 3.11 Changes made to the VLSQ

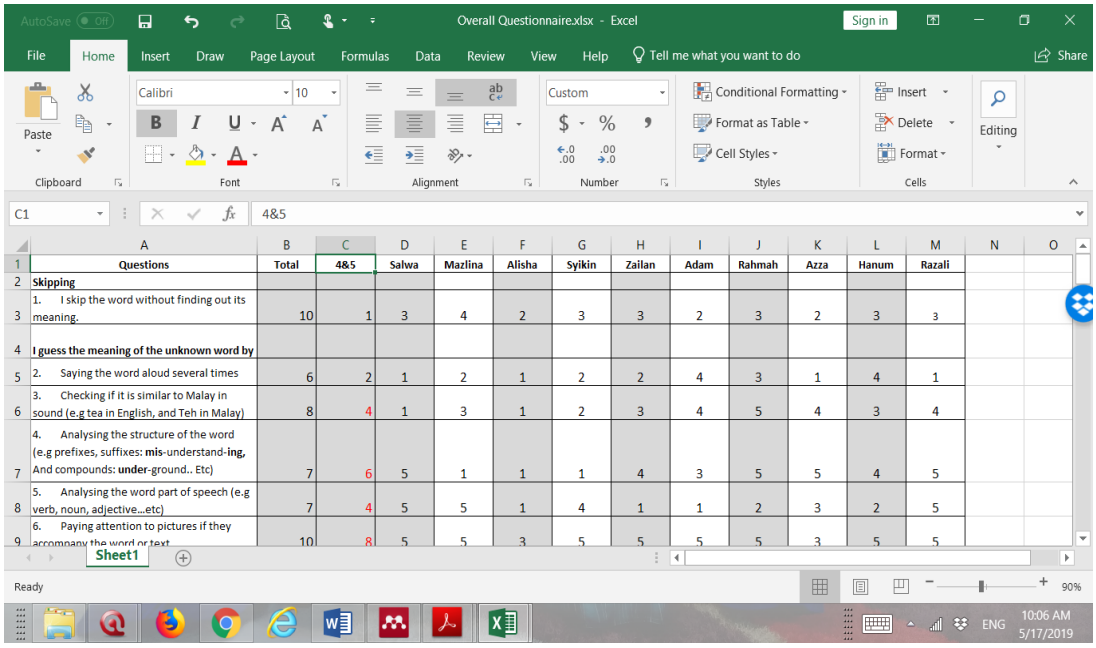
Item No.	**Original items**	**Added/ amended items**
3	Checking if it is similar to Arabic in sound (e.g Chock in English, and Shook in Arabic, 'thorn'. Shy in English and shyi in Arabic, 'tea')	checking if it is similar to Malay in sound (e.g tea in English, and Teh in Malay)
11	Its equivalent Arabic meaning.	Its equivalent Malay meaning.
18	In a paper English- Arabic Dictionary.	In a paper English- Malay Dictionary.
22	None	On a mobile application Dictionary.
31	I write down their Arabic meaning(s).	I write down the English word and its Malay meaning(s).
39	None	I draw pictures that represent their meaning.
40	None	I use mind maps to illustrate the word meaning.
43	None	I use a special book to keep my records.
44	None	I use a notebook application on my device to keep my records (e.g. laptop, smartphone, tab etc). Please specify …….
53	None	I write down new words in an application on my smartphone. (Please specify …….)
66	Say the word and its Arabic translation.	Say the word and its Malay translation.
73	I associate the new word with a word in Arabic similar in sound. (e.g chock/ shook = thorn, fine/ fine = tissue)	I associate the new word with a word in Malay similar in sound. (e.g book/ buku, charge/ caj)

The questionnaire was divided into two sections. Section A covered participants' demographic details and Section B covered VLS. Section B was further divided into: guessing; asking others; dictionary; vocabulary note-taking; ways of organising notes; vocabulary retention/ memorisation; and associations. The participants were required to

describe the frequency of strategy use using a 5-point Likert Scale – never, rarely, sometimes, often and always. There was a column provided for each item to give an opportunity for the participants to clarify or comment on their answers. After each section, there was an open-ended question asking the participants to add any strategy they used that was not listed in the section.

When I decided to use a VLSQ, I wanted to get a clear overview of the number and frequency of use of strategies within the sample. I also hoped that in filling in the questionnaire and explaining the different strategies, this might provoke more discussion about strategies. In fact, they did. I was able to collect further data and coded using the schema and some of that data were reported in the next chapter.

For the VLSQ quantitative analysis, I wanted to calculate how many people used each strategy and out of the number that did used the strategy, who used it often or always. My aim here was to understand not only the most frequently used strategies but which strategies seemed to be more important than others. For example, all participants might use a single strategy but do so only rarely. Eight participants might use another strategy but do that nearly always. So, it is not simply the number of people using the strategies I wanted to know, but which strategies seemed to be more central. In order to do this, the responses were entered manually onto Microsoft Excel spreadsheet. Responses were rated as - *never* = 1; *rarely = 2; sometimes = 3; always = 4* and *often = 5*. Figure 3.2 shows the example of this analysis.



	Questions	Total	4&5	Salwa	Mazlina	Alisha	Syikin	Zailan	Adam	Rahmah	Azza	Hanum	Razali
2	**Skipping**												
3	1. I skip the word without finding out its meaning.	10	1	3	4	2	3	3	2	3	2	3	3
4	**I guess the meaning of the unknown word by**												
5	2. Saying the word aloud several times	6	2	1	2	1	2	2	4	3	1	4	1
6	3. Checking if it is similar to Malay in sound (e.g tea in English, and Teh in Malay)	8	4	1	3	1	2	3	4	5	4	3	4
7	4. Analysing the structure of the word (e.g prefixes, suffixes: **mis**-understand-**ing**, And compounds: **under**-ground.. Etc)	7	6	5	1	1	1	4	3	5	5	4	5
8	5. Analysing the word part of speech (e.g verb, noun, adjective...etc)	7	4	5	5	1	4	1	1	2	3	2	5
9	6. Paying attention to pictures if they accompany the word or text	10	8	5	5	3	5	5	5	5	3	5	5

Figure 3.2 Sample screen capture of VLSQ analysis

3.6.4 Learning diary

The rationale for using a learning diary was to capture the participants' vocabulary learning in their daily life. According to Bailey (1990: 215), a diary is "a first-person account of a language learning or teaching experience, documented through a regular, candid entries in a personal journal and then analysed for recurring patterns or salient events". For data collection, the participants were asked to record any new words that they met and/or learned for a month and the actions they took when they met the new words. It could be when they were working, watching TV programmes, driving or reading newspapers. Diaries gave me the opportunity to look at vocabulary learning patterns that I would not be able to get via interviews. The learning diary also enabled me to examine the participants' preferences in terms of words that they chose to look up and the strategies that they normally used (see Rao and Liu, 2011). The way the diary was recorded also enabled me to closely examine the frequency of learning new vocabulary for each participant. An issue with diaries is that they may encourage learners to become more aware of their learning experiences and processes (Plana, 2011) and in that sense, keeping a diary can change learners' behaviour. This happened at times in my own research (see Chapter 4).

It was emphasised that there was no right or wrong answers for the learning diary. As explained earlier, they were given two options for recording in the learning diary. They

could submit via email or via WhatsApp. Only one participant chose email and the others chose WhatsApp. Reminders were sent every other day.

The learning diary was analysed by dividing the data into *encounters* and *actions taken*. *Encounters* covered the context or place in which the participants said they had encountered a new word. *Actions taken* were their response on meeting the word. Each participants' entry for *encounters* was recorded. I read all the entries and categorised them into 35 initial categories. I then merged categories that captured similar ideas into 11 categories. Table 3.12 shows two columns. The initial 35 categories are on the left and the 11 categories are on the right. Some of these categories clearly overlapped. For example, news was also covered by physical reading and online reading, but it was such an important part of the participants' experience and was captured in separate places as well. The *actions taken* recorded by the participants were grouped into 10 categories matching more or less the words of the participants themselves. Table 3.13 shows the categories for actions taken.

Table 3.12 Initial and collated categories for learning diary - encounters

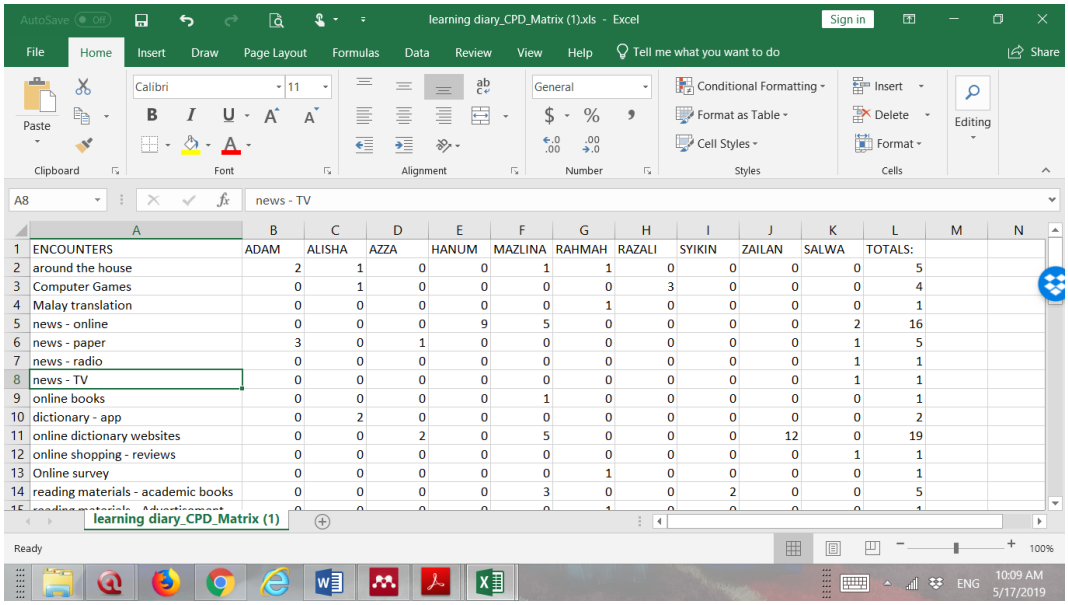
Initial categories for *encounters*		**Collated categories for *encounters***
• Around the house • Computer games • Malay translation • News - online • News - paper • News - radio • News - TV • Reading materials - academic books • Reading materials - advertisement • Reading materials - book • Reading materials - comic • Reading materials - journal articles • Reading materials - lecture notes • Reading materials - magazines	• Reading materials - storybooks • Social media • Subtitles • Text messages • TV programmes • TV programmes - documentary • TV programmes - film • TV programmes - news YouTube • Websites • Websites - forum • Workplace - customers • Workplace - memo • Colleagues conversation • Online books • Dictionary – mobile application	• Physical reading materials – academic books, advertisement, physical book, comic, journal articles, lecturer notes, magazines, novel, pamphlet, religious, storybook • Watching TV programmes – documentary, film • Using Social media • Surfing the Internet – forums, general websites • Online reading– books, dictionary websites, reviews, survey • Getting news – online, paper, radio, TV • Watching YouTube

Initial categories for *encounters*		Collated categories for *encounters*
• Reading materials - novel • Reading materials - pamphlet • Reading materials – religion	• Online dictionary websites • Online shopping - reviews • Online survey	• In the workplace – customers, memo, colleagues • Around the house • Playing computer games • Reading text messages

Table 3.13 Categories for learning diary – actions taken

Actions taken
• Search using generic Google search engine • Look up using mobile dictionary application • Ask others • Guess • Write the new word then Google later • Guess then Google later • Ask others then Google later • Look up using built-in dictionary on word processor • Use contextual clues then check online dictionary later • Recall meaning

The frequency of *encounters* and *actions taken* were recorded and calculated using Microsoft Excel (see Figure 3.3) and a detailed analysis of data is presented in Chapter 4. This enabled me to say in which context was it most likely that participants encountered new words and a simple numeric count of the kind of strategies that they used.



	A	B	C	D	E	F	G	H	I	J	K	L
1	ENCOUNTERS	ADAM	ALISHA	AZZA	HANUM	MAZLINA	RAHMAH	RAZALI	SYIKIN	ZAILAN	SALWA	TOTALS:
2	around the house	2	1	0	0	1	1	0	0	0	0	5
3	Computer Games	0	1	0	0	0	0	3	0	0	0	4
4	Malay translation	0	0	0	0	0	1	0	0	0	0	1
5	news - online	0	0	0	9	5	0	0	0	0	2	16
6	news - paper	3	0	1	0	0	0	0	0	0	1	5
7	news - radio	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	1	1
8	news - TV	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	1	1
9	online books	0	0	0	0	1	0	0	0	0	0	1
10	dictionary - app	0	2	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	2
11	online dictionary websites	0	0	2	0	5	0	0	0	12	0	19
12	online shopping - reviews	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	1	1
13	Online survey	0	0	0	0	0	1	0	0	0	0	1
14	reading materials - academic books	0	0	0	0	3	0	0	2	0	0	5

Figure 3.3 Sample screen capture of learning diary analysis using Microsoft Excel

3.7 Research Ethics

Ethical issues were taken seriously at all stages until the research was completed. Prior to the data collection, I explained the research purpose, research procedure and duration of the research to the participants. After they had given their verbal consent, I brought a written consent form (see Appendix A) explaining the participation in a more detailed way. Participants were given an opportunity to ask questions before they signed the consent form. They were also reminded that their participation was optional, and they could withdraw at any point and their data would be discarded. The participants were assured that their details would not be shared with anyone and their names would be replaced with pseudonyms including during supervision meetings.

I also asked their permission to record the interview sessions. All recordings were transcribed personally, without involving any third parties. The data collection files for all research methods were named based on pseudonyms and were kept in a password protected computer. The interview transcripts, learning diaries and questionnaires were only presented to my supervisor for the purpose of data analysis. I established a good rapport with the participants to ease the interview sessions and also to ease communication throughout the data collection period. Additionally, prior to the learning diary phase, the participants were informed that their writing would be used for research purposes only. They were assured that there was no right or wrong answer to the questions I was asking. I only wanted to hear about their experiences.

Overall, I believed the participants were trustworthy in the way they spoke to me about their experiences. I felt we had not touched on deeply personal matters. They were not distressed or unhappy during this research. However, I had a couple of dilemmas. First, the extent of the data collection made me worried that I was making too many demands on their time. I checked this with them, and they seemed happy to continue but that was something I was worried about during the research itself. Of course, I could have reduced the length of the interviews and carried out more interviews, but this may have created further problems. All I can say is that I checked throughout about people's willingness to continue and no one told me that they wanted me to leave. In some cases, I was worried about being intrusive, for example interviewing people in their houses when there were children or spouses present in the house. This does raise confidentiality issues for the family concerned. It felt intrusive and I felt happier interviewing people outside the house. In my reporting, I have tried to give voice to these participants' experiences and dealt fairly and respectfully with what they have told me. I am aware that like a lot of research, it would not be difficult to identify the university in which this research was undertaken. And it would not be impossible for people to identify the participants from the way I described them, although this would not be obvious. There is no answer to this. This happens in nearly all PhD research. To deal with it, I have decided not to make this thesis public and available for a further two years. In fact, from the time when these people carried out research to when it is publicly accessible would be three to four years. The possibilities of identification are much reduced.

3.8 Chapter Summary

This chapter has described the ontological and epistemological assumptions behind the study. A mixed methods research design was adopted and this study had elements of exploratory, descriptive and explanatory case study. Qualitative and quantitative data were collected in three phases over a period of 21 months for both pilot and full studies. Qualitative data were analysed using open coding and quantitative data were analysed with descriptive statistics i.e. percentages and frequencies. Themes were aggregated to allow a more comprehensible narrative of the findings and quantitative data supported the findings when appropriate.

We now move on to the findings.

CHAPTER 4 FINDINGS

This chapter explains the analysis and findings of this study. It describes data from Vocabulary Levels Tests (VLTs), interviews, Vocabulary Learning Strategies Questionnaire (VLSQ), and the learning diary. The chapter is organised into seven main sections drawn upon qualitative and quantitative data. This chapter starts with the analysis of the participants' lives and language use, followed by the language opportunity and language limitation in Coventry. The following sections present the VLT results, the analysis of Vocabulary Learning Strategies (VLS) in Malaysia and Coventry, the findings from the learning diary. It is worth noting that the findings of this research study are mainly qualitative but when appropriate, quantitative data from the learning diary and the VLSQ are included. These data are embedded in the analysis.

4.1 Coventry: Language and Life in Coventry

This section draws on the data from both Phase 1 and Phase 2 interviews to present a picture of life as lived in Coventry and the progress the participants felt they made in language. It is arranged around reflection on moving and progress in language.

4.1.1 Reflection on moving

This section explores the participants' reflection on moving to the UK.

a) Excitement

Overall, the participants were excited about coming to England. Surprisingly to English people, they were excited about the seasonal weather. For example, they had not experienced snow before as Malaysia is a tropical country, experiencing humid and hot climate throughout the year. The participants thought that the cost of living would be manageable, and they would have opportunity to travel to other European countries. Those who had children were optimistic about giving their children the opportunity of going to a local school. For many of the participants, this was their first time moving overseas. Hanum, for example, said,

> This will be our first time to move from our country to another country. It's a new experience. To be far from our family and relatives. It will be... I thought I'll be homesick. But at the same time it is something that made us feel excited to venture new life at a new country. - Hanum

Mazlina also shared this general excitement about living somewhere new.

> Excited because coming to the UK is something new, I haven't been to overseas before. So going abroad with my family is something very big for me. Of course to experience the difference in terms of weather, in terms of culture and everything. That's why I was excited. – Mazlina

Of course, for some, the attraction was to study overseas. For example, Azza shared that it had always been her dream to study in the UK.

> I came here in May 2014. I felt great, regardless the weather. Because this is my target to further my study. I can say that PhD is the last formal qualification. - Azza

b) Worries

Despite the participants' excitement, they also had worries. Taken together, these worries were quite understandable in the context of people uprooting themselves and their families to another country even for a restricted time. However, they were not existential worries but questions of everyday adaption. Razali was particularly worried compared to the rest of the sample. He and his wife decided to live in the UK for three to four years. Razali associated his worries with his unpleasant experiences when he lived in Russia with his family. He still remembered feeling insecure and facing racism when he went outside his home.

> Because even though I've been outside Malaysia, I still feel... I don't know...the thing is, no offense for that Russia, it was full of racism there. It was not easy to go outside not being target. This was back then. I think 10 years back. Things changed now. There were a lot of racism there. A lot of Malaysian students are get beat up there. As long as you are not white, it's a problem. So, for us...that's why I had that mentality came here. I still have phobia thinking that ... I guess the Caucasian...the mentality, feeling that...new country and you are not part of that country. You are just someone new, it feels like... It might be a racist feeling. Feeling that being scared to go outside. - Razali

Razali also shared his worries about having to make decisions as a family leader. When he was in Russia, his dad took care of his family. But in the UK, as a husband, it was his responsibility to look after his wife.

> I was a bit scared because back when I first moved to Russia, I was moving with my whole family and my dad was the Alpha Dog and the ones that were leading us. Since moving to the UK with just my wife, I had to be the Alpha Dog and that was a bit scary for me…When we moved to Russia, I know if something happen, there's always someone that I can go to. That's my dad…When I moved here, I know I'll the man in-charged. If anything happens, I have to make the decision which scares me a bit… That's what I mean when I said I had to be the alpha dog. I mean...to that to this new place. That's what I mean. I'm worry about the safety of my family. About my safety as well. Because back then. My dad had that responsibility. For him, he gave us something to be safe where ever we go. We had our own driver, security take us everywhere. But I can't provide that. I guess I get scared when I first move here feeling that insecure. – Razali

Language worries

No other participants had worries on the same scale as Razali. However, six participants explicitly raised the issue about using English in the UK. The worries focused on communication with people with various English accents, understanding spoken language, being understood and on socio-pragmatic competencies. For example, Mazlina shared her worries about whether she could understand the 'thick British accent'.

> I was nervous in terms of whether I could understand or not the native speaker speaks because as far as British accent is concerned, some of them might speak thick accent that I might not understand it. – Mazlina

Realising that she was not a fluent English speaker, Rahmah was worried about her speaking skills and being laughed at for her language use. However, she became more confident when she realised that poorly spoken English was not an issue.

> I was worried about using broken English. But when I get here, broken English is normal. In Malaysia, we usually laugh at people who don't speak proper English. But here, it is a normal thing. Some people use different pronunciation but it is regarded as normal. When they act normal, I feel more confident conversing with them. – Rahmah

When the participants first arrived, some of the participants' language worries still remained and became more distinctive. Mazlina was afraid of making mistakes that would make it difficult for people to understand her.

> Because I'm not the native speaker. As a second language speaker in English. I don't have very good grasp of the language. So I'm afraid I might make mistakes. You know. Some just glitch or any other mistake that I might make. So I'm afraid they couldn't understand what I'm saying. Grammatical mistakes as well as vocabulary. I might use different vocabulary because I don't have enough vocabulary. – Mazlina

In addition, Mazlina talked about her difficulties in understanding the Scottish accent based on her experience of having a Scottish classmate.

> Different part of the countries. Because I noticed that for the Scottish they might have thicker accent that I'm sure I don't understand when they speak to me. Because I heard some of my friends in my PhD class, his name was Sam if I'm not mistaken, I had really long time to digest what he was talking about. – Mazlina

Other participants also expressed the same worries as Mazlina. For example, Rahmah was worried about understanding people, especially those who spoke too fast.

> It is because I know that I am not good enough in listening. I am afraid that I will misunderstand what other people say. At first, I do not feel confident. Sometimes local people say too fast, I didn't get what they are say. When I came here, I was worried on how to speak with people when I can't really understand what they are saying. - Rahmah

Syikin associated her language worries in the UK with her language exposure in Malaysia. She explained that because she was exposed more to American English, she was worried about whether people in the UK would understand her pronunciation which was slightly different from the British accent and whether she could understand them.

> In terms of my English skills, I was not worried about speaking in the language as I practised speaking English when I was doing my Pre-University course in Malaysia. However, what was significant was that I was worried whether I could understand the British accent or not. I gained more exposure to American media while I was in Malaysia, so I am comfortable with their accent. Honestly I rarely

watch British movies or TV series, so I had a slight fear that I won't be able to communicate well in my first few months in the UK. I think it also related to the accent. Sometimes when I pronounce something it is not the same as local people pronounce it. Probably I need to repeat what I'm saying. I'm not comfortable in doing that actually. I am just worried that I say something that they don't understand. – Syikin

4.1.2 Progress in language learning

In spite of worries, all participants felt confident in some areas of English and Alisha, Zailan, Razali, Salwa and Mazlina were noticeably more confident than the others. Alisha used English during her study and at her workplace, Zailan worked for an international company, Razali used English with his family, while Salwa and Mazlina taught English at schools (see section 3.4.3). Their experience in using English gave them the confidence to believe that they could take on the language demands of living in an English-speaking country. This section explores the participants' progress in language learning as regards their confidence and lack of confidence during their sojourn and at different times.

a) Confidence with English: 'now'

'Now' refers to the time the first interview was carried out. The gap between the first interview and the participants' arrival in the UK varied for each participant. The participants were first interviewed between 10 to 24 months after their arrival. During the first interview, I asked the participants to compare their emotional states on arrival to what they felt 'now'. In general, the participants had become more confident about their language use and had fewer worries and concerns. The reasons for this confidence lay in the non-judgmental attitudes of others to the use of English, their developing language strategies and their exposure to the language.

Non-judgmental attitude

Some participants shared their experiences of talking to family members, colleagues and generally other English speakers who ignored their mistakes when speaking which in turn boosted their confidence. For example, Azza explained that she felt confident talking to her children because they did not judge her English. She also felt confident about herself and focused on meaning when communicating.

> Because I talk every day and even I have three children who speak English fluently with British accent which is good. Because they are still small. They don't judge my English. I think it'll be like I can manage and control my emotion. No matter how, I don't compare myself to other people. As long as I can tell and the communication reach to them and they understand what I'm gonna talk. I don't worry about confident or whatever it is. – Azza

Mazlina talked about her positive experience of talking to native speakers who did not judge her language skills. This made her more confident in speaking.

> I believe the native speakers are not judgmental on my speaking skills thus help me converse with them without worrying any mistakes made...When I talked to my supervisor, I realised I made mistakes but he didn't show any expression. It seemed like I didn't make any mistake. So that's why I just speak what I want. – Mazlina

Mazlina spoke at length about her perception of non-judgemental native speakers.

> Since I'm a TESL student, I used to judge people because I tried to analyse every single sentence they speak. I have the knowledge. And also I tried to practise it at the same time. Ok, that doesn't sound right, he should add -s. Things like that. So, that's why I'm very particular. So when I speak to native speakers, I don't think they're aware of mistake, of course they are aware of a mistake but they don't have that kind of judgmental as compared to non-native speakers. I would like to give example in Bahasa (*Malay*) for instance there is a foreigner who speak in Bahasa (*Malay*), I won't be judgmental to them because as for me as long as they are able to convey the message is good enough. I don't give a crap about grammar or whatever. - Mazlina

Salwa also valued the non-judgmental attitude of others. Nonetheless, she felt more confident to speak to non-native speakers (NNS).

> When people don't judge you, you will feel more confident. Basically people have one mentality, you need to speak like NS if you want to speak English. But actually it is okay to not sound like NS. Because English is not our mother tongue. When I speak with NS, I'm concerned with the socio-pragmatics skills. Because our culture is different. We use informal language with our neighbour. But NS have

> specific way of greeting people. I'm afraid to say things inappropriate to their culture, not language-wise… When we say 'good morning' (*formal*), people just say 'hi you're alright?' When we see NNS speakers in Malaysia, they use formal expression unlike NS of Malay. Like '*apa khabar*' (how are you?) which is too formal. – Salwa

Alisha also shared her experience about the people she talked to. She said that the people she talked to were helpful and did not look down to her whenever she could not understand them.

> Sometimes I can't understand the British accent. Because they speak too fast. I don't know. Maybe because I rarely meet other people. So I have to ask them to repeat. The people here are helpful. They don't belittle me if I don't understand them. – Alisha

Having supportive and understanding colleagues helped Hanum to become more confident at her workplace.

> They are aware that I'm just moved to UK. And English is not my first language. They are very supportive. They never say they can't understand me. It makes me confident. – Hanum

Developing Communication Strategies

Some participants used 'tricks' to help them speak more confidently, without knowing what they did was called communication strategies. Rahmah and Syikin reported that they felt more confident when they had the chance to plan what they wanted to say. Rahmah said,

> I feel more confident when I know and truly understand what I want to talk about. Also, I feel more confident when I took some time to construct the flow of sentence that I would like to speak out before I do. For example in private messages or when I make a phone call to someone...For example when I want to rent a house, I'll prepare the questions. - Rahmah

Syikin felt that she was more confident when she knew what she wanted to talk about and when she had time to construct sentences on her mind before saying it out. However, she also saw that as her weakness.

> I feel more confident when I know and truly understand what I want to talk about. Also, I feel more confident when I when I took some time to construct the flow of sentence that I would like to speak out before I do. But sometimes, I do feel that this can also be a point when I feel less confident in my ability to speak English because I have to think first before speaking – Syikin

Hanum used repetition and clarification strategies when she could not understand her customers.

> Because we are the front line of contact centre for all Ikea in UK and Ireland. So we do receive call from Irish customers and Scottish customers. Their accent when they converse in English. Sometimes I don't understand each word that they are saying. So I had to ask them to repeat again. So I'll do like open questions and closed questions. 'Is it what you are inquiring about? If it is so, I'll ask them again. They speak fast. Sometimes I have to ask them to repeat again. When they said it again, they said it slower. – Hanum

Language Exposure

Living in an English speaking country, all the participants were exposed to the English language on a daily basis. Even though the level of exposure differed from one participant to another, all of them benefitted from the exposure they had at home, at a workplace or at study and became more confident to communicate. Working in a call centre, Hanum became more confident when she started talking to customers, even though she felt shy at the beginning.

> At the beginning I feel shy and intimidated because I am afraid that I will be speaking broken English and that I will be judged for it, but after a while, I have enhanced my confidence and I am now comfortable to have a conversation with my colleagues… most of the people that I converse with are of course my colleagues. Most are local. Most of them are born and bred in UK. So the frequency will be every day that I work. I work 5 days a week. At the beginning, they would say I'm really quiet and reserved person. But actually I'm not. Once I get comfortable to converse with them, they said I can be someone talkative as well. – Hanum

When communicating, Salwa focused on meaning rather than grammar.

> Everybody uses different English. It's okay. No matter how you sound, it's fine. As long as you convey your message correctly. The way you sound is not important. The message is more important. The accent is not important. People understand you and you understand people. That's enough. When I speak with them, I feel confident because we speak similar broken English, same level. I feel more confidence when they pronounce words wrongly. – Salwa

Adam mentioned that he became more confident by using English at his workplace. He said that 80% of the time, he used English.

b) Gaps in Language Confidence

In spite of their increased language confidence, some of the participants spoke about gaps or times when they felt less confident. Generally, the participants expressed their concerns about language accents, the people they talked to and the context in which they used the language. For example, Syikin was not confident when she talked to 'the British' because she thought that she had to change the way she spoke to them.

> I think I tend to change the way I speak English (tone and pace) when I'm around native British English speakers as I am concerned about whether they understand me or not if I speak using the Malaysian English or as we call it the *Manglish*. – Syikin

Similarly, Hanum did not feel confident when talking to people speaking in a 'thick' Irish or Scottish accent. Rahmah expressed concerns about the British 'intonation' when speaking.

> I feel more confident for example, my instructor Su. She speaks softly and use common word. I always find it difficult to understand the locals' intonation. Some of them use something like singing intonation when speaking. I can't understand it. There was one time, I did not understand but I just said yes. I was embarrassed to ask again. I do not know what to say to neighbours because we have different culture. I might say something wrong. – Rahmah

The participants shared some contexts that made them unconfident. Mazlina, for instance, did not feel confident when she had to present in front of a large crowd. She felt that the large crowd might be judging her language and that made her uncomfortable.

Razali also felt not confident having to speak in front of a large crowd. Though he did not worry about being judged about his language skills, as he was more concerned about his ability to deliver a speech.

> I feel confident to speak the language all the time, except if I have to do public speaking. It's not because I'm not confident on the language, I am just not good at doing public speaking. It's not about the language itself. It's just about public speaking itself. – Razali

In addition, Azza and Rahmah were not confident in talking when they did not know what to say. Rahmah explained that she avoided unknown phone calls because she did not know what the caller wanted to talk about, and that made her nervous. She often asked her husband to answer the call on her behalf. Azza shared a similar opinion and felt less confident when she did not have any content to talk about.

> When I don't know what I want to tell about. So I can't make any sentence. No. It's the content. I don't have the content. If I have content I can talk for 2 hours, non-stop. -Azza

Being a housewife with young children, Alisha associated her lack of confidence to the limited exposure she had. Most of the time, she bought groceries online. Thus, she had fewer encounters with other people and that made her not confident.

> Since I'm here, my communication is limited. I buy grocery online. So when I have to handle emergency at school, I'm worried on how to communicate because of the lack of exposure. In terms making GP appointment, I'm OK with that. When I had problems with my sim card, my husband handled that for me. I did not know how to do it. I did not know who to contact. I'm still naive in that terms. I feel less confident in that situation. – Alisha

Other than the context, some participants did not feel confident to speak with certain people. Adam felt embarrassed to speak in English if there were any Malaysians around him, especially his wife.

> I'm not confident especially if my wife is next to me. I feel ok if I talk to non-Malaysians who speak English. Not 100% but 80%. I won't talk in English with Malaysians. I use Malay… I feel embarrass to use English in front of them. It is

ok if it is only me talking to other people. I am not confident when they *(the Malaysians)* are around. – Adam

Syikin felt less confident when she had to talk to people she barely knew.

For an example, I have group projects, we can actually choose who we want as our groupmates. But then sometimes we don't have enough members. So some people will be allocated in our group. So usually I feel very worried whether I can work with that person or not. One month ago, there was 1 person who was not really close to them. I can feel that I was more comfortable with my friends who I personally chose to be in my team. But I felt that it was a bit, there's a barrier between me and the random person. It was group assignment. – Syikin

c) Confidence in English: After 12 Months

During the Phase 3 interviews, the participants were asked about any changes they noticed in terms of their language learning. All participants except Razali felt they had made positive progress in their language skills. As a proficient and confident user of English since the beginning of his sojourn, Razali felt his language skills did not change or progress as he had always been very strong in speaking English. Other participants commented that they became more confident by using English in communication. The participants reflected on their language learning progress and shared their thoughts. For example, Alisha said she had become more confident, but due to the limited opportunity in face-to-face communication, she still felt embarrassed when conversing with other people.

I'm more confident now. But in terms of meeting people, it is still limited. If my son can't go to school, I'll just call the office. the communication pattern is still the same. Through phone calls. I don't meet other people very much. When I send my son to school, sometimes I have a chat with other people. say 'hello'. I feel embarrassed. I talk to the teacher if I want to ask questions. I met the teacher during parents' evening but it was a formal meeting. - Alisha

Hanum stated that she was getting better at handling her customers' complaints and became less dependent on her team leader.

My confidence level keeps on improving since the previous interview. As time goes by, I learn to solve like tackle the customers make sure that I can handle the

> customers. As the time progress, I transfer less call to my team leader. I manage to solve, speak to the customers, calm the customers. That makes me feel like I'm improving and more confident dealing with the customers even if they are angry or rude or anything like that. – Hanum

Mazlina talked about how her experiences had changed the way she prepared for presentations and made her more confident.

> The way I thought in terms of grammar. Oh, gosh I made grammar mistake but recently I have presentation, I just be myself. I did not feel pressure how they might think the way I talk. Even I made grammar mistakes. I could not be bothered by it. I think I started to love talking in front of an audience. Because I starting to gain more confidence in that. Now I don't care. The last presentation that I had, I did not make any preparation I just go ahead. I did not do as I used to do before. Before this, I always have script. I had to memorise it. It's very difficult. Once I missed 1 word, it's jumbled up. All over the place. I did not think I could convey my thoughts very well. But now all I need to do is just to understand the context, the structure and then tell the people just the way I understand it. Use my own words. That's why I could not be bothered by grammar anymore. – Mazlina

Adam believed that he was getting better at understanding what people were saying and that he knew more vocabulary.

d) Vocabulary learning progress

In the second interview, the participants were asked to draw a simple line graph to represent their vocabulary learning progress against time. There were two main types of line graph drawn as shown in Figure 4.1. Graph A represents the majority view that their language ability had developed consistently but not dramatically over time. Progress was regular but not outstanding. As Alisha said, 'I progressed but not too fast'. However, Mazlina perceived her learning progress slightly differently from the others. Progress was, again consistent but not spectacular, but then peak several plateaus before started again (Graph B).

> Sometimes it could stop. Because this happens when I go somewhere. Or when I put a halt in life. It is continuous, but that phase is slow. – Mazlina

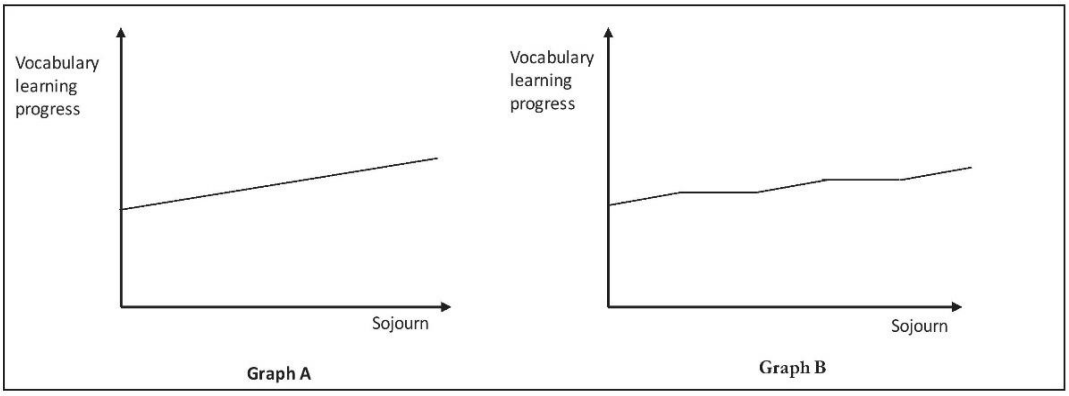


Figure 4.1 Vocabulary learning progress

4.2 Opportunities and Limitations

This section explains the opportunities for, and limitations on, informal and formal language use in the participants' daily lives in the UK. These findings overlap slightly with the section on language exposure (see section 4.1.2) and encountering new words (see section 4.5.1) but this section is based on the more extensive data of that was collected in the second round of interviews.

4.2.1 Opportunities

The participants were categorised into three groups: students, working spouses and non-working spouses. At times, I referred to these participants as student-participants, working-participants and parent-participants to show their different roles and status. Living in an English-speaking country had given them many opportunities to practise English. At times, the opportunity rose because of the reason why they were here. For example, only students had to present in seminars. But at other times, the opportunities were common, for example travelling to other European countries.

a) School

Seven participants who had children attending a local school (see section 3.4.3) had the opportunity to use English with their children's teachers and other parents. They had the opportunity to talk to the teachers at parents' evening to discuss their children's well-being and progress. In addition, they had to talk to teachers or other school staff to deal with issues, such as absence and sickness. Rahmah shared a story about getting a phone call from her children's school.

> My children school will call me first before they call my husband. Recently my daughters were ill, so there were a few times that they called. They even called to inform me if there is any accident at school. Bump her head, etc. So now I speak frequently to the school staff. The school uses auto gate. If I have to go in, I've to introduce myself through the intercom. I need to explain why I come. I'm forced to use English. – Rahmah

The parent-participants also had the opportunity to chat with other parents when they took or collected their children. They could also join school activities. For example, Mazlina said,

> Both of my daughters they are in XX primary school. They always have school activities that involve us as parents. I always join. I try not to miss opportunities like that. When I'm involved with the activities, very often I bump into other parents. We had conversations. You can also speak to the teachers whenever you have any doubts. They would be more than happy to help you. – Mazlina

As non-British citizens, the parent-participants lived in the same neighbourhood area with other non-Malaysian parents; sometimes they came across each other and had a short conversation. Rahmah said,

> If I meet parents that I know, I'll converse with them. Of course in English. Some of the parents I knew them when I attended a course in the library. - Rahmah

The parent-participants had little understanding and experience regarding the school system or the subjects their children were learning. Rahmah and Hanum took the initiative to help their children by attending free family courses for English and Numeracy at a public library so they could support their children at home. These courses were conducted once a week for 10 weeks. By attending these courses, they could speak with more people and make more friends.

b) Study

To state the obvious, the four participants who were studying in a university encountered many opportunities to practise their English and to be exposed in English, both formally and informally. As an example, Syikin attended many lectures and had countless group discussion and presentation. She also had to write a dissertation in her final year of study.

This exposure to English developed her language skills. Syikin shared how she used the opportunity to learn new words in lectures.

> I do not have any challenge specifically in English. But in my course, sometimes I will encounter unknown words. But the way I handle this is I Google on the spot. Sometimes when I go to a lecture, the lecture notes are given at the beginning of the lecture. So if there's any words that I do not understand, I Google there and then so that I'll know what the lecturer teaches. But if I don't understand what the lecturer's speaking, I'll still Google on the spot too. But usually the lecturers will use easy words in lectures. My lecturers are not native speaker of English. So their explanation tend to be simple. But if they use new terms, I need to know the meaning too. Other than that, maybe I don't understand the concept the lecturer is taking about. If a lecturer speaks too much, I might lose attention and can't process what he is talking about. If I don't understand, I'll check the notes after class. Most of the time, I'm able to understand it. - Syikin

Syikin also talked about group discussions that she had with her classmates.

> In terms of group discussion, I'll have discussion if I have problem set for seminar. The problem sets are given prior to the seminar. I need to discuss with my classmates. It is expected that the students answer the problem set. – Syikin

Similarly, Mazlina talked about using English with her colleagues as an opportunity to practise English, and also because she did not have any other option.

> Can I count my encounter with my colleagues as an opportunities? Yes. I think I've got lots of opportunities because I'm studying here. Everything is in English, whether you like it or not, you are forced indirectly to speak in English. – Mazlina

Of course, not all of these opportunities were associated with formal study. For example, Syikin joined a charity society, self-defence club and other language courses. As a money-raising activity, Syikin explained about her hitch-hike experience and how she had to chat with the drivers along the journey.

> The purpose of that charity is to raise funds for a charity called Newlife. Newlife Charity raises fund for and supports special needs children. So when we hitch-

> hiked, we spread awareness about this charity. But we did not explain in details to the drivers. We also chatted about everything else. – Syikin

Other three student-participants who were postgraduates had a slightly different opportunity to Syikin's. As PhD students, Azza, Salwa and Mazlina spent their time reading articles, attending supervisions and presenting in conferences. Salwa, for example, spent most of her time studying in the library to write her thesis. Even though she rarely spoke to other people during her study time, she had the opportunity to extend her English by reading lots of articles.

> I was in thesis final writing phase…to be honest, I rarely speak to people because I always sit in the library to do my work, the words that I encountered was just from reading. So it does not matter where I live, it does not affect my vocabulary. But approximately around 5 or 6 hours because I'm in my writing phase, I read a lot of journals. – Salwa

c) Workplace

Working-participants could be divided into two groups. The first group, Hanum and Zailan, worked at a company and the second group, i.e. Rahmah, ran small businesses from home. Another working-participant, Adam, was a unique case in which he worked at several companies and ran small businesses from home too. Hanum, Zailan and Adam were expected to communicate in English with their colleagues and their customers. While Hanum and Adam communicated verbally most of the time, Zailan communicated both verbally, via Skype, and in writing, through email and online forums. Zailan shared what he usually did during working hours.

> All the emails, from my customers, I have some rules for my emails. If there's any from my boss, my case, maybe from unimportant stuff, I have settings for that. First things I check is from my boss. Maybe he need to get help for something, he need me to do something. - Zailan

Rahmah and Adam ran small food businesses and worked as a personal shopper too. Both of them occasionally attended events such as food festivals or food markets and their customers were from different nationalities. Often, they had to explain the ingredients of the food they made. As a personal shopper, they often checked for discounts and special offers online. They also made frequent trips to designer outlets to

get the best price. Rahmah and Adam's work as a personal shopper led them to talk with the outlet staff about the discounts available. Adam said,

> I usually ask the salesperson about today's promotion. For example the price of watches. The cheapest and the most expensive watches. I ask in English. I take orders and the details so I take care of the purchases. I go to Bicester *(designer outlet)* once a week or once in a fortnight. - Adam

d) Travel

All participants had the opportunity to travel during their sojourn in the UK. They planned the journey using Google Maps and created an itinerary. They also read various tourism websites in English to search for interesting places to visit. Hanum shared what she did for her recent family trip to other European countries.

> I used Google Map to plan my journey, the distance from one location to the other and also travel duration. Based on the map, I looked for nearby hotel or cheaper hotel outside the cities I plan to go. – Hanum

The participants also used English websites such as Booking.com and AirBnB to look for affordable accommodation. Hanum explained in detail on how to use the AirBnB websites and how she interacted with the house owners.

> Airbnb website, type in Grindelwald, look at the price, put your price range. You browse and choose the one you like. Put in the number of people. You can look at the photo of the rooms. You can choose hostel as well. You can choose private room but cook in the shared kitchen. Maybe shared toilet. Depends on the one you choose… but for Airbnb, I'll just text the owner on the ETA. - Hanum

Some participants drove their own or rented car when travelling, while others used public transportation. For example, most of the time, Mazlina used trains or buses when she visited other European countries. This gave her the opportunity to use English with the public transport staff to get information.

Travelling to France, Syikin had an advantage as she could speak French. She said,

> When I was in French, I told the people I met that I speak a little bit of French. They used simple French words with me. Sometimes I asked them whether they can speak English. It's okay if they can't. Usually I asked about directions. – Syikin

e) Health

All the participants used the health services provided by the National Health Services (NHS) in dealing with regular illnesses that they or their children experienced during their stay. They had to call the General Practitioner (GP) or dental clinics to make or reschedule appointments. In addition, the participants also had to explain their illnesses to the doctor, the dentist or the pharmacist. There were also times when some participants had to call the emergency numbers when they had accidents at home. However, four of the participants had non-life-threatening interventions which required more regular appointments compared to the others. This meant more opportunities for Salwa, Razali, Adam and Hanum to use English. Regular appointments meant receiving and understanding appointment letters, explaining health conditions and led to more discussion with the health staff. They also did their own reading on their health condition from online sources, especially on the NHS websites.

f) Media

Living in an English-speaking country gave the participants easier access to media in English. The participants had access to television, radio, the World Wide Web and social media during their sojourn.

TV and radio

All participants had access to English TV programmes and radio regardless of whether they had television or radio at home, as these media were accessible via the Internet. Eight participants who had their own car listened to the news and songs on the radio whenever they were driving. The other two participants who did not own a car listened to radio using their smartphones and laptops. Zailan, however, listened to only online Malay radio stations when he was working. Hanum mentioned that she only listened to songs for leisure.

> If there's a word that I do not understand, I don't bother to check the meaning. It is just the music that I'm listening to. – Hanum

In contrast with Hanum, Adam took the opportunity to learn pronunciation from songs.

> I usually listen to songs via the radio to practice pronunciation to learn the correct way to say words. - Adam

Most participants used the opportunity of watching TV to learn English. They enabled the subtitles function to learn pronunciation. As explained by Hanum

> When I watch Ian's *(my son)* movie, I'll switch on the subtitles as well. It is something I use to. Sometimes you can't understand the slang (*accent*). You can understand the movie but there are few words that you can't understand. If there's subtitle, I'll use it. If there's none, I just listen to the movie. I only concern with meaning when I watch movie. – Hanum

The participants watched different TV programmes. Some participants liked to watch sports news and the BBC. Parent-participants often let their children watch children's TV programmes, with or without subtitles. Rahmah often referred to the dictionary when her children asked her about word meanings when watching.

> Here I watch my children TV programmes. We don't watch TV on weekdays. On weekends, we take turns to watch TV. Sometimes I watch my own programmes. I choose suitable programmes if I watch with my children. There's no subtitles. When they asked me, I had to try to explain in simple words. Or refer to the dictionary if I don't know the meaning- Rahmah

The World Wide Web (WWW)

The World Wide Web (WWW) was used by the participants for various purposes. All the participants browsed popular websites such as YouTube, Amazon and used many services and products provided by Google. As a non-working spouse, Alisha spent most of her time reading books that she bought from Amazon.

> I buy books only from Amazon. Then I click on the 'Bestsellers" tab, I click on the book and read the synopsis. I'll decide from there...I also Google 'books for women'. - Alisha

Alisha also referred to various websites to look for recipes.

> It is a mix of websites. I always refer to recipes when I cook. If it is Malay dishes, I always refer to this Instagram. She's a food seller but she also gives recipes in Malay. I also watch YouTube. It is called FoodTube channel. Usually in English. But usually I refer to random websites. Any particular websites. – Alisha

As a person who loved cooking, Mazlina always added her own touch after she referred to the online recipes.

> I just cooked carbonara pasta. I just browsing to the websites. Because I use single cream. I wanted to try new recipe. Instead of using milk, I used single cream. I browsed through, that's it. I stopped, and I cooked using my own recipe. I just read through the ingredients, the steps, then I stopped and I do it myself. – Mazlina

Instead of driving around looking for 'To Rent' signs like when he had done in Malaysia, Zailan used the WWW to look for houses to rent.

> We searched on Rightmove (*website*). I think it was our luck that we did not take much time to search for house. We searched and arranged for an appointment. – Zailan

As mentioned earlier, all participants used Google products, especially Google Maps to plan their journey and travel duration. They also relied heavily on Google Maps to search for places they wanted to visit, especially mosques and halal restaurants. As shared by Rahmah,

> When we went to Spain and Portugal, we used Google to look for mosque and halal restaurants. Once we went to a mosque in Cordoba. But it is now a cathedral. Some of the history was written in English but some is not. We eavesdropped other tourist groups. Most of the time we relied on our phone and google. - Rahmah

Apart from that, the participants used Google Translate to help them when travelling to non-English speaking countries. Mazlina shared her experience.

> They are non-English speakers. I had this experience in France where most of the people did not speak English at all. So (*they*) expected us to either speak French or Spanish. But I just speak English and the person I was talking to speak French. It was like duck and chicken talking. What happened luckily both of us (*me and my husband*) had handphone. Our host she translated the word and showed it to us. We used phone. It was hard. - Mazlina

All participants had access to their own email. However, the frequency of their use differed from one another. Participants who were working and studying used email more regularly than those who were not working. As Zailan worked remotely, he used email as the main medium of communication at work. He also used forums for discussing with colleagues.

> I checked my email for cases and then open the application or websites for the cases…If I don't know the answer for the customer question, I need to post it the forum. That forum is like the forum on the websites. You post a question and after a while. Someone who is the expert will reply for that. It is an internal forum among my colleagues. – Zailan

Working as a call centre staff, Hanum did not use email as much as Zailan. Her work email could be accessed only from her workplace and she used it only if she had anything to discuss with her superiors. On the other hand, she used her personal email mostly for promotional product subscriptions.

Participants who were studying, Mazlina, Azza, Salwa and Syikin, used email regularly as it was the main medium of communication within the university. They received numerous invitations for events, conferences, seminars, talks, surveys and departmental news. As shared by Syikin,

> I use email to claim eating credit bonus. I filled up a survey and I got £5 for my eating card. Few weeks ago, I emailed my department to include me, to re-check my degree classification so that I can get a first class degree ... to recheck my record and consider my situations. - Syikin

Social Media

Social media played an important role in the participants' lives in Coventry. All of them had a WhatsApp account and at least one more social media account such as Facebook (FB), Instagram (IG) or Twitter. The participants used WhatsApp to keep in touch with friends and family. However, Rahmah and Adam fully utilised the free unlimited access of these social media for their small businesses. They advertised the items they sold on Facebook and WhatsApp.

> My friend does most of it. Through WhatsApp and FB. She handles the customers and their questions. I take orders and the details so I take care of the

> purchases. I go to Bicester once a week or in a fortnight. All communications are done via social media. No email. WhatsApp and FB. - Adam

Most of the participants used the default language setting, English, for their Facebook account as they were comfortable with English. However, they posted in both Malay and English. The participants read articles or watched videos that caught their eyes. They also used FB to check information on event pages. Some of them liked to read posts from influential and knowledgeable people such as motivators and doctors. Salwa shared her reason in choosing and using Twitter.

> I follow more on twitter nowadays. Because of the word limitations, 130 characters, I follow researchers and academicians. So, when they post on Twitter, the posts are brief and concise. Twitter is regarded as micro-blogging. People blog, but within that 130-character limit only. This is the new trend. - Salwa

The participants used IG for the same reasons as other social media which was to keep in touch with family and friends. However, IG provided a simpler and more creative platform for photos and videos for its users. Interestingly, Alisha had two different IG accounts. She had one account only for family and close friends, while the other was for a wider circle of friends.

Among all participants, only Zailan mentioned the use of Skype and Instant Messaging (IM). He used both social media for communication with his colleagues.

> Apart from the case from customer, my boss has extra task or work that he needs help from us. Normally he communicate through instant messaging (IM) or skype for business, or maybe through email. Or he will call me directly online. We have like planning for team meeting, or team lunch but I could not involve but they still communicate in IM. In IM, we have options to invite all other person to the same window like a conference or something like that. I was involved in the communication. - Zailan

4.2.2 Limitations

At some point in the participants' lives here, they faced situations that could limit their language learning. Some of the limitations they faced were unavoidable such as having to care for pre-school children while their spouse had to study or work. Alisha, for example,

had to care for her toddler son and infant daughter though her son spent three hours daily at a pre-school nursery and lived far from other Malaysian families. Because she did not drive, she rarely met and talked to other people.

> I only go out to go to clinics. I say 'hi' to my neighbours but just limited communication. 'how are you?'… I don't go out with other people here. But in terms of meeting people, it is still limited. If my son can't go to school, I'll just call the office. The communication pattern is still the same. Through phone calls. I don't meet other people very much. When I send my son to school, sometimes I have a chat with other people. Say 'hello'. In terms of challenge or problem, I don't know whether I'm lucky or being left out. Because my life is mostly spent at home. – Alisha

Most of the time, Alisha depended on her husband to bring her and the kids out. However, outings became rarer since she gave birth to her daughter.

> My husband and I brought our kids to the playground when we first arrived. Before I gave birth to my second child. We only go out on weekends with my husband. But it becomes rarely nowadays. – Alisha

Alisha used to blog before she got married. Nonetheless, her commitment as a wife and mother led her to stop blogging for a few years. She did not use the Internet that much either as she said she was not 'Internet savvy'.

Some participants depended on their spouse to run errands. Rahmah, Zailan, Alisha, Adam and Hanum admitted that most of the time, their spouse would handle matters related to the rent and bills. As said by Zailan, he and his wife searched for the house together. But when it came to dealing with the landlords, his wife would do it.

> Yes. We searched on Rightmove. I think it was our luck that we did not take much time to search for house. We searched and arranged for an appointment. And this house has the right price for us, less than the previous one, and the location is nearer with school. My wife frequently contacted agents and landlords. - Zailan

Alisha also shared this similar experience with Zailan and she said her husband took care of the bills, as well as planning their vacations.

> When I travelled with my parents-in-law, my husband planned all the details, hotel booking. I just went along. – Alisha

Working according to Malaysian working hours, Zailan had limited interaction with other people. He, for example, could not join any sports organised at night by his Malaysian friends because of his odd working hours. Not only that, he had to care for his youngest daughter when his wife went to her office to study.

> Yeah but I'm not really actively communicate with the local. Normally I work 8-9 hours a day. Start from 1am until 10am.or 11 am. I do not sleep. My day starts at late night. Or 9 or 10pm if I'm in early shift. Until 10am in the morning. After I sent my children to school, I continued working until 10am… Because I'm tight with the work hours. I need to apply for vacation or time-off for a longer holiday. – Zailan

Razali had never worked in the UK and this limited his language use outside the house. He chose to spend most of his time at home, doing household chores so that his wife could focus on studying.

> No particular reason actually. I've decided to have a short break of holiday for a few years here while my wife is studying. So I can help out by cooking and cleaning. I'll continue to work when I go back to Malaysia. I'll look for job again or doing a business. - Razali

Hanum had limited use of email. As her husband ran most errands, she only used her email for personal use. Her work at the call centre did not require her to use email regularly. Having a toddler son at home, Hanum said she could not use her laptop or open her email at home as her son would disturb her. She spent most of her day at home because she had to send and collect her oldest daughter from the nursery.

> I then sent Sophie (*eldest daughter*) to school. Sometimes I drive, sometimes we walk to school. And got back home from school after came back from school, I cooked, either wash the clothes, just normal house chores…had my lunch with my son. And I picked Sophie up from school. Got her change. Eat and I'm ready to do to work. And when my husband came home and we swapped the shift. - Hanum

Rahmah associated her lack of language learning motivation with her status as a non-student participant. She said she would have learned more if she was a student.

> If I were a student, I would read every day and I'll get new vocabulary every day. But because I'm not a student, I do not usually read articles. I'm a housewife. So other than taking care of the children, I cook, I surf FB. Because I do not meet (*read*) words every day. Unless I'm a student. Then I'll read engineering language (*text*). – Rahmah

I have now explained the participants' general language and life experiences when they first came to Coventry up until a few years after their arrival. The next four sections will present more specific findings on the participants' vocabulary learning strategies in Malaysia and Coventry.

4.3 Vocabulary Levels Tests Results

Table 4.1 illustrates the Vocabulary Levels Tests (VLTs) results for both Version A and Version B. When I was at the stage of writing reports for this finding, I had difficulties in understanding the score pattern for these tests. As can be seen from the table, the results were unexpected because the marks show a decreasing pattern (marks in red) or stagnant scores (marks in black) across the tests while only nine scores showed an increase (marks in green). Some of the scores were more confusing because some people went up in some tests and went down in others.

Referring to the results in Table 4.1, I expected at least a marginal increase, especially for those who were in academic study because they were more likely to encounter more specialised vocabulary and a wider range of words. Those who were in academic study were Salwa, Mazlina, Azza and Syikin. Salwa, for instance, had stagnant scores for VLT Level 1k, 2k, and 3k. She went down at Level 5k but went up at Level 10k. Meanwhile, Mazlina, had a decrease in all tests except at Level 2k. Azza went down in all tests with a huge decrease at Level 10k. Syikin had a mix of score pattern in which her scores were stagnant at Level 2k and 10k. She had a slight increase at Level 1k and a slight increase at Level 5k and 10k.

Although the comparison of test score almost appeared random at times, it is interesting that all participants scored above 60% up to Level 3k except Adam. I expected Adam to

show some improvements in Version B. However, this did not happen. I could see that Adam had difficulties in communicating in English and this had affected his employment prospects.

The test illustrated that most of my sample were competent users of the English language. Level 2,000 reflects the vocabulary required for basic everyday oral communication (Schonell, Meddleton, Shaw, Routh, Popham, Gill, Mackrell, and Stephens, 1956 cited in Schmitt *et al.,* 2001). Nonetheless, Nation and Waring (1997) consider a vocabulary size of 2,000 to 3,000 as sufficient for language use and are immediate priority for language learners. This view is supported by Schmitt *et al.* (2001) who identified Level 3k as the threshold for language learners to "begin read authentic texts and provide additional material for spoken discourse" (p56). For learners to be able to infer the meaning of authentic texts, they need the knowledge of 5k word level (ibid). Based on the literature, it is safe to say that language learners need the knowledge of 3,000 most frequent words to be functional in basic communication.

Adam, Alisha, Razali, Zailan, Hanum and Rahmah were not studying academically themselves (see section 3.4.3). I would have expected them to show some slight improvement, although not as much as those who were studying and needing to use English most of the time. However, the tests showed none of them had made a consistent improvement. For example, Alisha had a huge drop of 30% at Level 5k. Again, this points to the unreliability of the whole procedure.

One problem in measuring the vocabulary size is that most participants had a much larger vocabulary size than I predicted. Over most levels, they had reached a ceiling. It was very difficult for them to show any improvement. One comment is that an increase or decrease of one or two marks cannot make quite a large impact on the score (3-7%) (Schmitt, p.c.). Small differences are within margin of error.

Table 4.1 Vocabulary Levels Tests (VLT) result

	Version A 1k (marks x 2.5)	**Version B 1k (marks x 2.5)**	**Version A 2k (%)**	**Version B 2k (%)**	**Version A 3k (%)**	**Version B 3k (%)**	**Version A 5k (%)**	**Version B 5k (%)**	**Version A 10k (%)**	**Version B 10k (%)**
Adam	75	77.5	50	30	36.7	43.3	16.7	13.3	23.3	13.3
Alisha	82.5	72.5	93.3	93.3	96.7	90	96.7	66.7	76.7	26.7
*Azza	87.5	62.5	100	100	96.7	93.3	90	76.7	86.7	26.7
Hanum	92.5	90	96.7	100	100	96.7	100	100	100	70
*Mazlina	92.5	87.5	100	100	100	96.7	100	96.7	86.7	76.7
Rahmah	82.5	95	93.3	93.3	83.3	73.3	76.7	50	26.7	66.7
Razali	85	95	100	100	100	93.3	96.7	93.3	93.3	63.3
*Salwa	95	95	100	100	96.7	96.7	93.3	80	46.7	63.3
*Syikin	82.5	87.5	100	100	100	93.3	100	93.3	46.7	46.7
Zailan	92.5	92.5	100	100	96.7	96.7	93.3	86.7	50	73.3

*student participants

Fortunately, I had the chance to attend the British Associations of Applied Linguistics (BAAL) Vocabulary Special Interest Group Conference 2018 in University College London. At the conference, I managed to have a brief discussion with the writer of these tests, Norbert Schmitt. I explained the problem I had with the data and also how the tests were administered.

Based on our discussion on 9th July 2018, Schmitt pointed out that there might be several reasons behind the VLT results. Firstly, he asserted that even though both VLT Version A and Version B were validated (see Schmitt *et al.*, 2001), they were validated for different groups of students, not for individual students. Therefore, it is unknown whether the scores of VLT are valid to be used for individual students. Secondly, Schmitt stated that the test was meant to be conducted in a controlled environment where all participants take the test at the same time, without any access to other resources. In my case, some of my participants requested that the tests were given via email before the first interview. Schmitt felt that the fact as I was not by the participants' side when they answered the tests, there may have been a possibility that the participants referred to resources before putting an answer. This could lead the participants to score higher in VLT Version A, and could be the reason for the decreasing score pattern for Version B. Also, Schmitt considered small negative gains by one or two marks as normal. As can be seen from Table 4.1, some participants scored small negative gains for VLT Version B. Nonetheless, I must admit that further discussion on the participants' scores is not useful for my thesis because the results have little face validity. Hence, I will not explain the VLT results further in this chapter and the discussion chapter, but I will reflect on the test administration and how I should do things differently in the concluding chapter.

4.4 Vocabulary Learning Strategies (VLS) Used by the Participants in Malaysia

This section presents the findings of the vocabulary learning strategies (VLS) used by the participants in Malaysia. The aim of this section was to look at the pattern of the strategies according to the participants' experiences. It also enabled me to examine the VLS shifts from the participants' home country to the United Kingdom. The strategies used in Malaysia by the participants can be divided into three phases: at the school level, at the Higher Education level and in the workplace.

4.4.1 Phase One: Strategies used at the school level

The participants experienced different schooling systems. Most of them studied in the Malay-medium schools in Malaysia in which they learned English as a subject (see Chapter 1). Two participants, Razali and Syikin, had the opportunity to experience schools overseas. Razali went to an English-medium secondary school in Russia for six years while Syikin studied in a primary school in the UK for approximately a year. The participants shared their experiences in learning VLS, using dictionaries and how they learned vocabulary with the help of other people around them.

The data showed that the participants used different strategies in learning vocabulary during their school years. This was a little unexpected because the participants mentioned that they had not heard about the VLS before, yet it did seem that once I had explained to them what VLS were and had given examples, they were able to identify things they did as VLS. From the participants' responses, it can be seen that their teachers did not teach VLS explicitly but rather embedded VLS inside language lessons. As Razali put it,

> Never heard of it *(VLS)* before, but if I have to make a guess, I'm pretty sure it has something to do with learning vocabulary in English and the way the vocabulary is being taught. - Razali

Another interviewee, Mazlina, when asked about VLS in school, said,

> I think vocabulary was not taught directly. If they taught me directly, I don't think I would remember that as well. I think it's something that should be acquired indirectly. Because if you say 'this is apple, A for apple'. It's like drill. I don't think it's gonna work all the time. - Mazlina

Talking about the implicit vocabulary learning, Mazlina shared her experiences. Her teacher exposed the pupils to new vocabulary every day, but she did not say directly that they needed to learn the vocabulary.

> Let me show you in an illustration (*she drew a board with a small column at the side*). First thing that the teacher wrote was day and date on the board. Then she will write down column for new vocabulary each day. I think she just let us learned by ourselves. She did not say you have to memorise it. She just exposed the new words to us. She will just leave it there. – Mazlina

Data from the interviews showed most participants learned vocabulary via a bilingual Malay-English dictionary. Their teachers taught them how to use a dictionary and encouraged them to refer mainly to the dictionary when they wanted to know the meaning of words. Although this sounded quite old-fashioned, the participants could see value in it. For example, Salwa said,

> Most of the time, in primary school, teachers stressed on the use of dictionary. Most teachers relied almost 100% on dictionary. It taught me independent learning… ESL learners need dictionary because sometimes you study at home and there's no one guides you so dictionary is essential. – Salwa

Interestingly, one participant, Mazlina, reported that she did not remember being taught how to use dictionary explicitly, but she was able to learn by watching people. She used the dictionary as a support for learning, but she still seemed confused about how it was organised, and she looked puzzled when asked whether she knew the dictionary was arranged alphabetically. This sounds really surprising because she worked as an English lecturer which means she was a proficient English user. Nonetheless, the knowledge of the alphabetical order was deemed unimportant because she used Google nowadays.

All participants, except Mazlina, had their own dictionary at some point of their schooling years. As Hanum said,

> Because during my school time, there was no Internet access. So we use the actual dictionary because it was the only way. – Hanum

Some of the participants used a monolingual English dictionary. Alisha reported that she spoke in English with her late father, and being brought up mainly in an English-speaking environment, she never had a bilingual dictionary. Her father supported her English learning by buying her a monolingual English dictionary.

> I had my own dictionary. I did not own a bilingual dictionary. It was an English-English dictionary. I remember it was a red dictionary. My father bought it for me. - Alisha

Razali was also exposed to English at a young age by his grandfather who lived together with his family. Going to an international school in Russia, he remembered that he

referred to his monolingual dictionary to look for synonyms. His English teacher stressed the importance of using a variety of English words in writings.

For Rahmah, her use of dictionary changed when she was in secondary school. She started to use a monolingual English dictionary. As her goal was to do well in English examinations, she consciously memorised vocabulary in order to get higher scores in her tests. One strategy she used was to learn synonyms. Rahmah's use of the dictionary and memorisation strategies, intertwined with one another and showed her capacity for independent learning.

> Starting from secondary school, I started to use English- English dictionary. In secondary school, if I don't understand any word, I have to find it myself. I looked for vocabulary and memorised it. For example, instead of saying very cold or coolest, I learn the word freezing. I use bombastic words to get more score. – Rahmah

Rahmah's determination to memorise vocabulary led her to keep a notebook where she wrote the vocabulary that she learned. Her father bought her a book and she kept it not only for vocabulary, but also for spelling.

Other than Rahmah, Razali reported the use of memorisation strategies. Razali recalled his experience in a Chinese-medium kindergarten where he memorised basic English words such as animals and the alphabet. Even though he did not clearly say how the lesson was done, I would assume it could be a drilling method where children are shown a series of pictures repeatedly.

When asked whether the participants got help from other people for vocabulary learning in school, most of them mentioned their teachers. Teachers played a dual role in the participants' vocabulary learning. The first being the teachers explicitly taught new words and meaning to the participants. The second was the teachers' role as a reference or facilitator for the participants' vocabulary learning. Interestingly, when the participants asked their teachers, they asked in Malay. The use of Malay in English lessons indicated that the participants had lost an opportunity to communicate in English.

Syikin was able to make a distinction between her vocabulary learning experience in the UK and Malaysia. In Malaysia, Syikin said she often asked the teacher because her classmates did not speak English. In contrast, when she was in a British primary school, she learned vocabulary from her classmates because they were English speakers. Interestingly, Syikin was able to relate her success as a vocabulary learner to the fact that she had been in the English-speaking environment.

> When I was in the in UK, I just started to learn English. But I think the environment was different. Because I had friends and we all spoke English in class. I did learn a few vocabularies where I had to copy some words a few times in class. But then I think how I learn English when I was young in the UK was through my friends. When I went back to Malaysia, I noticed that learning English was a bit different. We kind of learned through reading. We just read a lot of texts, try to understand. When we don't know meaning of words, we asked the teacher and they would explain. But there's not much students speaking in English with the teacher. When we asked the teacher we asked in Malay. It was two-way interaction but it was not in English. So I think when I learn English in Malaysia it was more on paper. - Syikin

In addition, Hanum mentioned that she had her own study group with her friends. They studied together in preparation for their exam. Hanum did not mentioned specifically about learning English with her study group, but I would assume she did because English was one of the subjects tested in exam in school.

Razali had a slightly different learning experience compared to other participants. He was not taught VLS explicitly, but he was able to remember his vocabulary learning in Russia clearly. He was taught and encouraged to use synonyms in his writing, so he had different words in his essays. His teacher also asked him to correct sentences using the newly learned vocabulary. An interesting experience he shared was that his teacher encouraged him to use words that contained at least seven letters in writing.

> They (*the teachers*) will encourage you to not use the same words again when writing essays, and also to make sure to use words that have more than seven letters in it. – Razali

Razali remembered he was taught to ignore any words that he did not understand and focused on the meaning of the whole sentence. Unknowingly, what Razali did was skipping and guessing strategies. He was taught to use contextual clues to understand a sentence without the need to understand every single word in a particular sentence.

> This was something that we were taught in Russia…sometimes just because one word that you do not understand, you can just ignore that one word and the whole sentence still makes sense. – Razali

Among all participants, Razali was the only person who was explicitly taught about VLS and was able to benefit from the strategies in ways that other participants were not. The fact that Razali was able to vividly recall his learning experience in Russia, which was more than 10 years ago, meant that those experiences were close and meaningful to him.

4.4.2 Phase Two: Strategies used at the higher education level

When the participants started studying at HE, the English courses they took, English for Academic Purposes (EAP), focused on applying the language knowledge they learned during school years in communication. The modules had less emphasis on learning vocabulary formally.

Instead, the focus of the content was about improving the participants' academic skills such as writing reports and doing presentations. As Azza explained, the focus was communication skills.

> More or less is communication skills. Presentation in front of the people to build up the confidence. And all about discussion, and public speaking as well. –Azza

Hanum also had a similar experience in which she had weekly presentations, and the purpose was to improve the students' presentation skills and to build up their confidence.

> So during university we learned in English. All in English. Lots of presentations. We also had one coursework. What we did was presenting topic every week. That increase our ability to present in front of a crowd. - Hanum

The participants had become more independent in vocabulary learning, and they had more opportunities to use informal social strategies where they practised using the language with lecturers and friends. These strategies gave the participants the opportunity

to use the English language with other people in more natural and authentic situations. Three of the participants attended English-medium universities and they had further opportunities to use language out of classroom settings. Syikin was one of them and she attended a private university in which all lessons were conducted in English. She said that she had more opportunity to use English in HE.

> When I went to college and university, I started to realise that I'm using it in my daily life. – Syikin

In addition, two of them, Salwa and Mazlina had a degree in Teaching English as a Second Language (TESL). Most of the lectures during their study were done in English and they were expected to communicate in English with their lecturers. Therefore, they had more opportunities to use English both in and out of the classroom. Salwa was very conscious about her vocabulary learning and she stated that,

> When we were in primary school, the use is limited in classroom only. In HE, you use it with your friends and the community. The usage is widening, and the vocabulary varies. I practised more as I grew older.- Salwa

On a different note, Zailan could not remember if he had any explicit vocabulary teaching at HE. However, he mentioned that it could be indirectly taught in the lessons.

> I don't remember. Sorry. Maybe through material, presentation or assignments. – Zailan

Although vocabulary was not taught explicitly in the EAP modules, all participants demonstrated independent learning. For example, they continued using dictionaries to learn vocabulary by themselves, although on a different medium. All participants started their learning in HE in early 2000's. By that time, the Internet was already blooming in Malaysia. People began to use the Internet browser such as Yahoo! and Google to find information. The widespread use of the internet affected how the participants learned vocabulary. They started to use the internet to look for word meaning and in particular, they keyed in unfamiliar words in the search engine and looked what came out of the search results or more formally, they would use specialist dictionary websites.

Adam was the only participant who mentioned the use of the book dictionary in HE. He had a specialist dictionary for terminologies in business studies that he referred to. When

he was in HE, the medium of instructions was Malay, but the textbooks used for his core subjects were mostly in English. Rahmah had a different story because she studied for her Master's degree in the UK. All her reports and assignments were written in English. She shared that all her colleagues wrote the assignments in Malay then used Google Translate to translate the assignments into English. In contrast, she wrote in English and used Google search engine to check whether her sentences were grammatical and whether she used the correct vocabulary.

4.4.3 Phase Three: Strategies used in the workplace

After higher education, nine out of ten participants moved into the workplace. The participants' language learning continued in their workplace for nearly everyone, but the demands differed depending on where they worked. The participants who worked in private companies faced higher demands for English use than those who worked in government institutions. In the workplace, the participants' vocabulary learning shifted from learning from textbook to learning in context. The shift was shown by the use of the Internet and guessing in which the participants focused more on meaning and less on accuracy. In order to cope with the fast-paced work environment, the Internet was used to get quick access to information. Meanwhile, guessing also played a large role because it acted as an attempt of saving face in the workplace.

Four of the participants, Razali, Zailan, Alisha, and Hanum, worked in private companies in which they used English on a daily basis. Official documents such as emails, letters and memos were written in English. It was also a norm for these four participants to communicate in English and Malay with their customers, colleagues and superiors.

Working as a frontline staff at different international companies, Razali's job required him to communicate with his customers on an everyday basis. As he spoke English most of the time, he commented that he did not need to refer to Google because he could understand most of the words used in his job.

> Not to say I'm smart. It's just that the words that they used, that I already know. The words that they meant or the sentence, I already understood. So pretty much I don't have to use Google at that time. – Razali

Working at an international company, Zailan had clients worldwide. He mainly communicated with his clients via email and Skype phone calls. In his office, he was surrounded by colleagues from all over the world too. Having clients and colleagues mostly from overseas, Zailan used mainly English in his workplace.

The participants tended to use practising strategies without realising this was the name given. Practice did not focus solely on vocabulary learning but English language learning in general. The participants practised the language in written and spoken form such as email communication and phone conversation. Hanum, for instance, communicated mainly via email with her superiors and clients. Interestingly, Malay was mainly used when speaking among colleagues, but emails had to be written in English, paying attention to form.

> It (*the email*) was the medium of communication with my clients and my boss. I wanted to make sure that my email is according to the etiquettes. The manners, the format according to formal email writing. I wanted to make sure the language was correct. When I was in Malaysia, I was surrounded with clients. They (*the clients*) spoke English. My colleagues used Malay. The formality of emails is English as well even though the recipient is Malay. We used English. -Hanum

Talking about the issues of using Malay with colleagues, Hanum explained further that the company she worked at organised a weekly meeting to help the staff build their confidence in using English.

> We communicated in Malay. Most of them, they are not confident enough to speak in English. Once a week, we had a meeting where everyone had to speak in English just to tell us what they've been doing that day or last weekend. Just to make them confident is using English. 90% of the time we conversed in Malay. Except for engineering jargons. Some of the jargon are well understood in English. –Hanum

Alisha, like others working in private companies, frequently used English with her bosses who tended to be Malaysians but ethnically Chinese, but used a mix of Malay and English with younger colleagues. She explained that some younger Malay colleagues from more cosmopolitan big cities backgrounds often spoke English while less cosmopolitan Malays always spoke Malay.

Alisha explained that she also worked as a librarian. By librarian, she meant an extended work of writing summaries of books, magazines and newspaper articles and published them on the library websites.

> I was responsible to do research. I needed to read articles, summarised the articles and published it in websites. I also needed to read magazines like Time, Harvard, newspaper articles and put it in the (*company*) websites. All the materials were in English and I wrote in English too. – Alisha

Other participants had similar experiences in using Malay with colleagues too. Mazlina said she used Malay with her ethnically Malay colleagues but used English with her ethnically non-Malay colleagues (i.e Indian and Chinese), but found this weird as these non-Malay colleagues could speak Malay.

> That's the weird thing. Although I see myself as an English teacher, an English instructor, my colleagues who teach in English as well, they also speak Malay. I think we Malay tend to speak Malay more compared to English. When I speak to non-Malay colleagues, they speak in English. I think race (*ethnic*) might be a factor. I speak Malay with my Malay friends. But we should not have that kind of perception "It's silly to speak English". At this point we should not have that kind of perception. It's just that talking in Malay makes you feel more comfortable with others. I think so. –Mazlina

Rahmah commented that she used Google Translate when she started working. Rahmah worked as an engineering lecturer in a public university. She communicated mainly in Malay with her colleagues. Nonetheless, she had international students in some of her lectures and she had to use English in teaching. Using Google Translate helped her in finding the correct words to explain to her students.

> When I worked, all the notes and materials were in English. But the teaching itself, I used Malay and English. Except if there were non-Malaysian students. It had to be fully in English. Engineering has more calculations than theories. So the words we use are precise words. We do not use lengthy explanation. So we do not use many words compared to other fields. It is more to engineering jargons. Compared to when I read novels. The English words are from a different group. Engineering is more to technical words. – Rahmah

All participants except Adam used English at least some of the time in their workplace. Adam worked as a living skills teacher. He only used Malay in his primary workplace mainly because most of his colleagues and students spoke Malay. However, his part-time business, which was selling clothes, required him to use English when he attended meetings with international suppliers.

> I taught using Malay at school. They understand Malay. I used Malay 100% at my workplace. But in business meetings I used English with suppliers and international clients. I did not have a choice. I had to use English to discuss with them. –Adam

This section has discussed the VLS used by the participants during their study at school, HE and when they were working. The participants' VLS became less diverse as the time went by. It can be seen that the participants became less dependent on dictionary and other people, and used more technological tools to help them learning vocabulary. The next section presents the findings on the VLS used by the participants in Coventry.

4.5 Vocabulary Learning Strategies (VLS) Used by the Participants in Coventry

This section deals with the vocabulary learning strategies (VLS) used by the participants during their sojourn in Coventry. Initially, I separated the VLS data collected during the Phase 1 interviews, Phase 2 interviews, the learning diary and the questionnaire. However, there was a great deal of overlap about the VLS in the interviews and the other instruments. Because of the overlap, I decided to present the VLS data together. When applicable, I included tables to show the results from the questionnaire and learning diary as the results were evident and consistent with the interviews. The VLS were grouped into four sections: encountering new words, deciding what to do with new words, retaining new words and using new words.

4.5.1 Encountering new words

Table 4.2 shows the frequency of encounters for each participant for 30 days. The average new words encountered in a week shows a large range with a minimum of two new words a week to a maximum of ten new words a week. Mazlina and Zailan encountered a total of more than 30 new words showing that at times, they met and recorded more than one word in a day. Mazlina had the highest encounters of 41 new words in a month and Razali

had the lowest encounters of nine words. It might be that Mazlina encountered that many words because she was doing a PhD and she read a lot of articles for study. As regards Razali, even though I did not expect him to encounter such a low number of words, it was understandable because he was a proficient user of English and might already know most of the words that he encountered. Overall, the total encounters for student participants was unexpected given that they had more formal opportunities and exposure to English, but it might be that they simply had less time to complete the diary.

Table 4.2 Frequency of word encountered for each participant- data from learning diary

Participants	**Total words encountered in a month**	**Average word encountered in a week**
*Mazlina	41	10.25
*Syikin	35	8.75
Rahmah	30	7.5
Zailan	23	5.75
*Salwa	22	5.5
Adam	21	5.25
Hanum	16	4
Alisha	12	3
*Azza	10	2.5
Razali	9	2.25
Total	**219**	**54.8**

*student participants

Table 4.3 shows the points and places where the participants met new and unfamiliar words as recorded in their learning diaries. As discussed in the Methodology, the learning diaries were not a comprehensive guide of where the participants met new words and how they acted when they met new words. However, the diaries gave a snapshot as to the kinds of context that they encountered. As seen in the table, the major context were encounters with printed materials and digital media: physical reading materials, 33.8%, TV programmes, 21%, surfing the Internet, 10%, social media, 9.6%, news, 9.6%, and online reading materials, 5.9%. Although physical texts still seemed really important, approximately 60% of the encounters were in digital formats.

The encounters can also be seen in terms of intentionality and serendipity. I defined intentional as where people have gone out of their way to access a text such as picking up a book, switching on a TV programme or reading product reviews. Serendipitous encounters were ones which occurred in normal day to day activities, for example, around the house or in the workplace. However, some encounters were not clear and could be seen as a mix of intentional and serendipitous such as game playing and TV programmes. For example, one could intentionally play a computer game but then encounter words one was not expecting.

Table 4.3 Encountering new words: data from learning diary

Item	**Encounters**	**Frequency of encounters**	**Percentage of frequency (%)**
1	Physical reading materials – academic books, advertisement, physical book, comic, journal articles, lecturer notes, magazines, novel, pamphlet, religious, storybook	74	33.8
2	Watching TV programmes – documentary, movies, subtitles	46	21
3	Surfing the Internet – forums, general websites	22	10
4	Getting news – online, paper, radio, TV	21	9.6
5	Using social media	21	9.6
6	Reading online – books, dictionary websites, reviews, survey	13	5.9
7	In the workplace – customers, memo, colleagues	8	3.7
8	Around the house	5	2.3
9	Watching YouTube	5	2.3
10	Playing Computer games	4	1.8
	Total	**219**	**100**

Table 4.4 Encountering new words: data from VLSQ

Item	Questions	Number of participants mentioning using it (n=10)	Number of participants mentioning using it 'often' and 'always' (n=10)
84	I look for opportunities to encounter new words in English (reading magazines, watching TV, using internet…etc)	9	9

Item 84 from VLSQ (see Table 4.4) covered encounters with new words and showed nine participants said that they looked for opportunities to learn new vocabulary, again showing something quite intentional about their strategies. This theme was picked up in further interview questions. As explained earlier, the participants encountered language in all sorts of expected and unexpected situations as a part of their daily lives. When I asked them specifically about vocabulary as part of that general picture, they spoke much more about receptive skills - reading and watching. They said they learned from reading different English materials, both online and offline, and also from watching English programmes. For example, Zailan used English subtitles to help him understand the words said by the actors and to learn pronunciation.

> Magazines. Mostly online. Online newspapers. Maybe during work, product documentation. Technical product. Comic, manga, news. Some webpage. Normally I read sport section like EuroSport. Sport news. Everyday… like action movies, TV series. Mostly action comedy. Yes. Always. English. Sometime I cannot catch up with the language because they speak very fast and some of the words. Even though I understand the words but maybe the way they speak, it's hard to understand. But with subtitles, it's easier. To assist me in understanding their pronunciation. – Zailan.

Syikin used the opportunity to learn about pronunciation and sentence structure when watching TV. As she explained,

> I think there's two different instance when I learn English. When I'm watching TV, one instance when I watch something in English and it has Malay subtitles, I can listen to what they say and how it is pronounced and how the sentence is constructed. And then there's another instance when I watch something and another language for example, Japanese and the subtitle is in English. Sometimes they may use words that I don't know. Later when I have time I will search for the meaning. - Syikin

Alisha opted for watching online videos and documentaries to learn vocabulary. It was convenient to her as she spent most of her time at home.

> Through reading, watching videos about documentaries etc, I think that is a "comfortable" technique to learn the vocabulary. I like to watch casual documentaries like YouTube. For example, 'staying in Japan', that person will inform about Japan, the train and food in Japan. Not a serious show. The video was very nice. Like travelogue. I watch on the internet. I read magazines, novel, fiction as well. I watch other videos as well ' how to make relationship'. Comfortable means easy access for information. Convenient as well. I don't have to struggle to buy those materials. Even if I have to buy it, I look for cheaper options. – Alisha

In addition, Salwa loved watching soap operas as she could learn about formal and informal language use.

> Here, I learned English from soap opera, on TV. You not only learn formal words, but also informal words. The socio-pragmatics, how they interact in daily life. I like watching soap opera because they use informal language which we rarely found in dictionary. For example, 'don't be daft'. What is daft? But we looked at an urban dictionary, we can find it. Next to the daft, it stated British. Informally, British use this word. That's what I said, they use different languages. - Salwa

Other than watching TV programmes, the participants encountered new words when they read various reading materials, online and offline. Zailan, for instance, read English materials for leisure and for work on a daily basis. At his workplace, Adam encountered words from the noticeboard.

Mazlina made a conscious effort in trying to expand her vocabulary.

> I try my best to look for new words. I really do. Because I, right now, I try to read as many articles as I can especially in English. Something about the UK, The Daily Mail, The Sun, The Star, whatever, I work hard to understand. Not only the word per se but the whole content and the structure. I try to analyse it. – Mazlina

Razali also liked to read comics. However, he said that the words used in comics were 'easy words' and he did not learn much from it.

> I like comics. Normally they don't use difficult words. They just use informal language. I guess you don't learn much from reading comics. Back to the future comics. Mostly English comics. – Razali

Although Rahmah did not mention anything about reading books by herself, she mentioned about encountering new words when she helped her children with reading.

> Most of the words, I found from my children's storybooks. Books that they get from school or car boot sale. When they asked me to read, they asked meaning of words. – Rahmah

Hanum used her free time between answering customer calls to browse the Internet and chose what to read based on her interests.

> I don't read news everyday. Only if anything catches my eyes. Because my PC at my workplace, the homepage is always a news page 'msn.com'. It includes everything. Lifestyle news. Everything. I just choose whichever article I want to read based on the pictures or titles. The news that capture my eyes varied. it could be about the celebrity, the weather, politics. I just click whichever that I want to read and I want to know. I usually browse to kill the time. – Hanum

As a gamer, Razali learned vocabulary mostly when playing games. The games he played required him to work out how to move to the next level. Thus, he felt compelled to understand the hints by looking for word meanings.

> Most of the games that I play are role-playing games where you need to solve some puzzles. There'll be things, help to understand English better as well. You need to understand the sentence or hint that they give you in order for you to

> solve that puzzle. So I guess by playing games. And the information that they give you. The clues might have the words that you don't understand. – Razali

The participants who were studying, Salwa, Mazlina, Syikin and Azza, had regular encounters with English. As explained in the previous section (see section 4.2.1), these students used English during lectures, discussions with classmates, lecturers and supervisors and in writing their dissertations. For example, Azza spent most of her time reading journal articles.

> I think the current situation is to be the most contribution is my journal. It is important for me to write my thesis. By reading journal article, English websites, especially scientific websites, especially that is related to my study. Read the journal and understand the scientific vocabulary. - Azza

All participants had at least one social media account during their sojourn in Coventry. Having access to Facebook, Twitter and Instagram exposed the participants to, at least reading posts written in English, if not writing posts in English themselves. For example, Zailan said

> I like to read other people's post. I follow other people not only from Malaysia. From UK, USA. So of course they use English.

4.5.2 Deciding what to do with new words.

When the participants met a new word, they had a choice whether to skip the word or act on finding the meaning.

a) Skipping Strategies

By using the skipping strategy, it meant that the participants ignored the words depending on how they perceived the importance of learning or using the words. The participants would also use the skipping strategy when they had no choice or no sources to access the meaning.

Table 4.5 The use of the skipping strategies: data from VLSQ

Item	Questions	Number of participants mentioning using it (n=10)	Number of participants mentioning using it 'often' and 'always' (n=10)
1	I skip the word without finding out its meaning.	10	1

Table 4.5 shows that all participants used skipping strategy at some point in their learning. Nine of them defined their used of strategy as 'rarely' and 'sometimes', and only one participant said that she 'often' used the skipping strategy. There were two types of skipping strategy. The first one was skipping without the intention to look for the meaning at all and the second was skipping with the intention to look for the meaning later. The participants explained why they skipped a word. Some of them said it was better for them to focus on words that they understood compared to dwelling on unknown words. For instance, Zailan chose to skip words that he did not know much about and used words that he felt confident with. As a fluent speaker of English, Razali said he did not look for word meanings as he could follow everything quite well.

> Yes. I wouldn't bother to look for answers when watching TV or social media. - Razali

The participants could grasp the meaning of sentences or texts even when there was a word or two that they did not know. As we see later, they could guess. Time also played a role in vocabulary learning. Some participants skipped a word when they had no time to look for its meaning. For example, Mazlina said,

> I skip a word when there is no time. I just do my pleasure reading. If I have extra time and I wanted to do my own writing, I might take something seriously. So that's why I Google for meaning. not only for my academic, but for my Instagram posts writing. - Mazlina

Another reason why they would skip a word was when they did not have access to tools to find the meaning of words. For example, Hanum said she would skip a word if she did

not have her phone with her. However, if she thought the words were important to be understood, she would write it down and check the meaning later.

> If there's no phone at that time, I'll just ignore it. Or if I really want to know the meaning, I'll just write it down. – Hanum

b) Acting on New Words

As we have seen, sometimes the participants skipped them but at other times, they tried to do something with the words. This section discusses the strategies used when the participants chose to act on the new words. Acting on new words consists of four strategies; guessing, asking others, using technology and using a dictionary.

Guessing strategies

All participants used a guessing strategy when they met new words as can be seen from Table 4.6. However, the reasons and the way they used the strategy varied. Item No. 2, 3, 4 and 5 showed some participants, though unconsciously, analysed the grammatical competencies of a word. This included analysing spelling and pronunciation at the letter, syllable and word levels, to figure out meaning. Items No. 6, 7, 8, 9 and 10 showed all participants, at times, used contextual clues to help them in guessing.

Table 4.6 The use of guessing strategies: data from VLSQ

Item	**Questions**	**Number of participants mentioning using it (n=10)**	**Number of participants mentioning using it 'often' and 'always' (n=10)**
6	Paying attention to pictures if they accompany the word or text.	10	8
7	Reading the sentence or paragraph again.	10	9
8	Continuing reading until the meaning of the unknown word might be unlocked.	10	7
9	Using what I understood of the whole text or situation where the word appeared.	10	6

Item	Questions	Number of participants mentioning using it (n=10)	Number of participants mentioning using it 'often' and 'always' (n=10)
10	Using my background knowledge related to the text or situation where the word appeared.	10	9
3	Checking if it is similar to Malay in sound (e.g tea in English, and Teh in Malay)	8	4
4	Analysing the structure of the word (e.g prefixes, suffixes: **mis**-understand-**ing,** And compounds: **under**-ground.. Etc)	7	6
5	Analysing the word part of speech (e.g verb, noun, adjective…etc)	7	4
2	Saying the word aloud several times	6	2

Table 4.6 illustrates that the participants used contextual clues more than grammatical competencies. Zailan, for example, would watch videos on YouTube and try to guess the meanings of new words for programmes, ones that did not have any subtitles even when YouTube had an automatic subtitle function. He would guess meanings when there was nobody he could ask or when he did not have his phone with him. When watching movies, Syikin would guess meanings of words from the context as she used paralanguage clues such as facial expression, intonation and music. However, she did not always use guessing strategies. For example, when she watched on her laptop, she would sometimes stop the movies to find meaning of words that seemed to be important in understanding the plot. In addition, Syikin used guessing strategies when she read *manga,* Japanese comic books, with English text.

> I read the Japanese manga online. Usually when I meet a new word, I'll try to recall if I know the meaning. But when I read this word (*pointed to the journal*), when I looked at where I found that word, Japanese manga, I remember the context where I've found the word. That manga is about rearing animals. So I know this word is related to rearing animals. I think there were words that I ignored and did

not bother to look up. I think that was because I can infer the meaning of the words based on the entire paragraph. - Syikin

It was a little different with Alisha as she was more conscientious about understanding new words and dealt with them systematically. She would underline unknown words in printed texts, try to guess the meaning from the sentence itself and if she could not guess, she would look for its meaning later when she had time. She also said that she would continue reading if she could not understand the context in order to challenge herself.

> For example, this one 'fanatic concoction'. I try to understand first from the sentence itself. When I have time, I'll find out the meaning via Google… The books that I read, sometimes I do not understand the context. Not the words, but the context. - Alisha

Meanwhile, Razali, Mazlina and Zailan, tried to understand the context in which the unknown words were used. For example, Razali said,

> I did use it (*guessing*). Sometimes guess the word by understanding the sentence. I did not guess the meaning of the word but I guess the meaning of the sentence. – Razali

When watching TV, Rahmah tried to guess meaning based on the storyline.

> Sometimes I guessed the meaning first when my children asked. Because if it is from a video, I can guess based on the storyline. – Rahmah

Salwa had to guess word meaning when conversing with other people but compared to others, she was more aware that her guess might not be right.

> (*Guessing*) Sometimes. Depends on the situation. Especially when I talk informally. I don't have chance to Google. I just assume. Especially when I talk to Scottish or Welsh. You can't understand them. – Salwa

Salwa did not favour the use of the guessing strategy. She was in the opinion of using credible sources like the dictionary to get the correct meaning of words.

> Most of the time, we can't guess all the time, we need solid source. We need to use exact word in certain context. We cannot use one word in all contexts. So you need dictionary, still. Cannot depend on this one (*guessing*). Asking people,

> people do not know… But we don't usually know everything in the given list of words. So, if you have wide vocabulary, guessing is a good strategy. If limited, you cannot simply guess. "So I think this word related to..." it depends on your proficiency. - Salwa

Other than guessing based on paralanguage clues and storyline, all participants referred to available images to help them guessed. For example, Adam tried to look for images that he could use as a 'clue' to guess the meaning of words he read. It was not only words that the participants guessed but also the word pronunciation. However, most of the participants did not talk about this. It was Mazlina, who had a background in TESL, who mentioned this. She used her knowledge of phonetics to guess word pronunciations.

During the second interview, I wanted to see how the participants dealt with unknown words when reading. Thus, I gave them an extract from 'Winnie the Pooh and the Honey Tree' story. The extract was modified by jumbling up the spelling for some words (see Appendix I). Some words became nonsense words to eliminate the possibility of the participants knowing the meaning. The participants were asked to think aloud when reading. All participants demonstrated that they analysed the text by associating the unknown words with their language knowledge. They also related the spelling of the nonsense words to their knowledge on English word spelling. Instead of trying to understand each word individually, the participants tried to understand the context or the whole story. As said by Alisha,

> When I read this, I know some of the words do not exist because of the spellings. Because it is really common. You do not have words that is spelt 'und', 'cilke', when I read this, it is not something readable, I just leave. I don't even attempt to read because I know it's not English. This might be 'loud' because of the word buzzing. Some words have incorrect spelling. This sentence, I don't even understand this. I don't think it is a sentence. If I'm guessing the sentence, I'll say 'someone', 'free', 'wind'. 'Now', 'walking', himself'. But it does not even make a sentence to me. I try to make sense of the sentence but it still does not make any sense. - Alisha

Mazlina analysed the spelling further and tried to rearrange the letters to make sense.

> I think there's a jumbled-up words somewhere. I think so because some of the words don't make sense. I read the nonsense words but I try to make sense of the words by removing some alphabets but still if it does not make sense, I just skip it. A little bit. It's something. It's an action about robin try to climb a tree and showing direction of the buzzing sound. The story is about the whole process. Basically, it is about that thing but not important. The story. – Mazlina

Syikin tried to make sense of the text by thinking of possible storylines.

> Are these English, not German? These words are so long. It does not look like English. But when I looked at this ' dos', this is like old English like Shakespeare's time. And words like his time, all -, I don't understand this text. But perhaps about buzz sounds and maybe this thing is trying to find source of where the sound comes from. I guess based on the whole paragraph. In the end, the sound comes from someone who is trying to sleep. Because of the words 'bed' 'bed'. - Syikin

However, there were also participants who gave up in trying to guess because they could not understand the whole story. For example, Zailan said,

> Is this really a word? *un, sma*... what is like? Because I've never seen or read these words before. (Laughing) *wol go* (continued reading loudly) some are really correct word. This does not seem to be correct words. Or even a word. I don't know. I cannot guess because the whole statements does not seem the correct statement. It does not seem like normal English. Even if I read it from the beginning till the end, I cannot understand. - Zailan

Meanwhile, Adam did not explain much on his thoughts when he was reading the extract. He said,

> *(I)* continue reading all the sentences to try to understand. I think it puts something on the tree and it is making something. – Adam

This exercise showed me that the participants used their prior knowledge and contextual clues in trying to understand unfamiliar words. None of them asked to check unknown or nonsense words in the dictionary even though they could if they had wanted to. It was apparent that the participants could distinguish real words and nonsense words, and thus

relied on their ability to guess based on the words that they understood, compared to trying to look for meaning for each of the unfamiliar words.

Asking Other People for Help

All participants explained that, at times, when they did not understand or were unsure about a word, they asked the people around them. Requests for help covered anything from a simple definition to a clarification of pronunciation as can be seen in Table 4.7. Sometimes the requests for help was asking more from a helper. For example, commenting on the grammatical category of a word. While the survey gave details about the types of requests the participants asked for, data from the interviews gave more insights about who the participants asked and the situations that made them ask other people. Not only that, the types of requests depended on who was around the participants and the situation that they were in. At times, as seen later, the helpers were Malay speakers and at other times, they were native English speakers or non-native English speakers.

Table 4.7 Types of requests put to others: data from VLSQ

Item	**Questions**	**Number of participants mentioning using it (n=10)**	**Number of participants mentioning using it 'often' and 'always' (n=10)**
11	Its equivalent Malay meaning.	10	8
12	Its definition in English.	9	4
13	Its pronunciation.	8	7
14	For an example sentence.	8	5
17	Its popularity or frequency.	7	4
15	Its grammatical category.	6	2
16	Its synonym or antonym in English.	2	4

Data from the interviews showed that other than asking for the help listed in Table 4.7, they also asked for spelling. For example, Azza asked people about pronunciation and spelling, and her request depended on whether the people around her were Malay speakers.

> I ask that person to say it again or spell it. Spell it. The correct sound from them. That's when I can get new vocabulary. I'll ask my Malay colleagues about Malay

> meaning. If English, normally it will be English people. The pronunciation, I ask my officemates *(non-native English speakers).* – Azza

Salwa preferred to ask meanings from non-native English speakers (NNS) compared to native English speakers (NS). To her, asking help from NNS would be less embarrassing because they might have a similar English level.

> Because our English level might be the same. Yes. Because it will be less embarrassing. I usually encounter NS along with my husband. If I don't understand anything, I'll ask my husband. We ask for different opinion. Maybe what I understand is different from what he understands. – Salwa

When attending to customers over the phone, Hanum had limited communication with her colleagues and she had to depend on her customers instead. She rephrased the customers' queries and asked for clarification.

> I rarely ask my colleagues. Even though I sit next to my colleagues, when I am on my free time, my colleagues might be on phone answering call… I'll ask them to spell the word. When they spell it, I'll get it. Well, this is my first time living in UK, even the address that the customer gives me, I'm not familiar with the address and postcode… If I can't really understand it, I'll rephrase the question and clarify it to the customer. - Hanum

Similarly, Zailan asked his customers to repeat their questions and he rephrased the questions for clarification.

> Yes, of course. Maybe because of the...not all customers are good in English. Maybe the customers have difficulties to speak or writing in English. Sometimes we cannot understand them. Usually we ask them to repeat again the questions and clarify our understanding. – Zailan

When they were not at work, Zailan and Hanum would ask people nearby, especially their spouse.

> I'll ask my wife if she's besides me. Or other person who's next to me. – Zailan

As a housewife who did not have a UK driving licence, Rahmah spent most of her time at home and her husband drove her when she wanted to go out. Spending time mostly

with her husband, Rahmah always asked him if she was unsure about a new word meaning. Having a regular movie night with friends and families, Syikin asked them about word meanings when she watched TV with them.

> If I'm watching with friends or family, I'll ask them. – Syikin

Syikin would also ask other people when she did not have her phone with her.

> If I don't *(have phone),* I will ask what it means. Sometimes when I learn economics modules, so they sometime use words that I don't know. So I try to find out *(ask them)* what it means. - Syikin

Adam preferred to ask his wife about meaning and pronunciation if she was around. He also learned how to explain things in English from his wife. However, when he was at work and he could not understand what was being asked, he asked the other person to demonstrate.

> If there's a word that I don't understand when I watch TV, I always ask my wife. She's my main reference. I always ask her when I come back from work. Sometimes I ask my Malaysian friends. Whoever is near me. I always ask Malaysians. - Adam

At times, Adam also asked people to slow down or repeat their speech when he could not understand.

> When I just arrived, I had problems in applying for job. I did not know how to explain, and people could not understand me. I usually ask my wife on how to say things. Don't say these things…Sometimes if I really I don't understand, I'll ask the native speaker to repeat and show me what they want me to do. - Adam

Not only that, Adam also fully depended on his wife during appointments with doctors.

> If he *(the doctor)* used terms that I did not understand, I straight away asked my wife in front of the doctor. – Adam

Razali spent most of his time alone at home when his wife went to study at her office. When he played games, he needed a fast response to get to the next level. Thus, he asked for help from other gamers to help him with the game.

> Most games like 'to have to talk to other persons to get information. From there, you'll learn something new. At the same time you'll learn... I guess different ways of thinking. – Razali

At times, some participants preferred to use technological tools than asking other people. For example, Mazlina said,

> I had technology so I always refer to technology. For me, it's reliable enough. asking people, it depends on who the person is. but I rarely ask people. I think I just refer to my phone. – Mazlina

Other than asking for help from other people face-to-face, Syikin used WhatsApp and email to get help from other people.

> I don't ask directly, I use email or WhatsApp. Because sometimes that was no other people with me. Sometimes I email my lecturer to ask about questions, ask for clarification. I use WhatsApp to ask my friends about meaning. - Syikin

Using technology

All participants reported that they used different technological tools to find meanings of words. Sometimes they 'googled' it, sometimes they used an online dictionary and sometimes they used subtitles.

The participants used the *Google search engine* to help them access the meanings of an unfamiliar word. The Google products that they used were Google Translate, the standard Google search box and Google Images. The standard Google search box was the most common function used by all participants when looking for meanings. Hanum said she typed in the word and got an immediate result.

> When you Google, you straight away get the meaning without clicking into or entering into the websites. Straight away the results. There's actually a section on top of every search engine. It says that for example 'beautiful'. The most beautiful person' it's just come out. I think so. I just read that definition without confirming it onto online dictionary. – Mazlina

Working at a furniture retailer, Hanum needed to correctly identify parts of furniture. She used Google Images to help her with this.

> Google Images help as well. Sometimes you translate the word but you still do not understand. Or if you can't see the picture of the things, you can't really understand it. So Google Image helps as well. As also catalogue. Ikea website does provide 80% information of each item. It really helps for you to understand each product. – Hanum

Hanum also had to understand the words used for furniture accessories and components. She referred to the company websites and catalogue to get more information, and also used Google Translate.

> I have to dig on more information, through our catalogue and websites to understand fully what they talking about. I also use Google translation *(Google Translate)*. Parts of the furniture. Sort of we have like plinth. At first I did not know what it was. It was a piece of wood that we use to cover underneath a cabinet. Usually kitchen cabinet. – Hanum

As some of them noted, the preferred option was the dictionary; now, it is simply to Google. When asked about the reasons, all participants said it was because they could get immediate results and Google was easily accessible. As explained by Razali, in using the Google search box, he noticed that the functionality had changed.

> Nowadays Google will give you the meaning of that particular word. Before this, I remember it used to be different. When you search for a word, there'll pop up a few links for you to click on it. But nowadays they just give you the meaning. – Razali

The standard Google search would bring up almost random definitions and images of the words. In most cases, that was enough. However, at times, participants wanted more accurate and more reliable definitions, so they went to specialist applications, in particular *online dictionaries* (Item No. 21, Table 4.8). These dictionaries, in nearly all cases, were not translation dictionaries but English dictionaries. However, Adam was an example of someone who used bilingual dictionaries to look for meanings. Adam explained that he had difficulties in understanding the English translation of a word and he preferred to read the Malay translation.

> If I use English - English definition, I would not understand the explanation either. That's why I read the Malay translation. – Adam

Table 4.8 The use of dictionary strategies: data from VLSQ

Item	Questions	Number of participants mentioning using it (n=10)	Number of participants mentioning using it 'often' and 'always' (n=10)
21	On the Internet (e.g online Dictionaries).	10	7
22	On a mobile application Dictionary.	8	4

One reason for choosing specialist dictionary websites was that the participants deemed these as credible and more trustworthy. The participants chose dictionary websites that they believed were reliable. For instance, Mazlina said,

> Merriam Webster, sometimes Oxford. Lots of online dictionary. I can't remember all the name. I look for reliable dictionary. – Mazlina

Syikin, if she did not Google it, used Dictionary.com or the Oxford dictionary.

> But if I don't use Dictionary.com, I'll use Oxford dictionary. I refer to established websites. All the words were found when I was reading. – Syikin

Other participants, like Zailan, mentioned the Cambridge and Oxford online dictionary. Again, he looked at the credibility of the source. In order to get a clearer definition of a word, sometimes participants would look within the dictionary, at thesaurus websites and look at synonyms and antonyms. For example, Hanum sometimes chose to go to the thesaurus websites because it was seen as trustworthy, and it would list words in groups of synonyms and related concepts.

Apart from using general and specialist dictionary websites, the participants also installed dictionary application (app) on their smartphones or IPad (Item No. 22). Often these were the same dictionaries as they accessed from their laptops. However, in some instances, it was easier to access a mobile device than to access a laptop and that would be one reason for using it. Having it as an app meant that they could call up the dictionary

much more quickly. There were one or two features of the app that were not seen on the web version, such as recent word search and favourite words. For some dictionary apps, the word-of-the-day function would pop up on the mobile phone screen.

During the first interview, Rahmah did not know the existence of dictionary apps. I showed her the available apps she could choose from. During the second interview, she told me she had installed a dictionary app on her phone and saw that the app helped her in explaining the meaning of words when asked by her children.

> They (*my children*) don't understand if I explain in Malay. So, I checked the dictionary and explain in English. I used Google. Last time you told me that I can download dictionary app on my phone. So I downloaded an app. At the same time, I learn new words as well. – Rahmah

Having using the app since the first interview, Rahmah said she preferred to use the dictionary app compared to Google because she said it was more 'trustworthy'.

> The one that I Googled, I typed in the search box. Sometimes nonsense results came out. Sometimes the results list things like 'the meaning of', or (*from*) Wikipedia or (*from*) any other websites. I usually choose trustworthy websites. But I trust my dictionary app more. It is Oxford dictionary app. – Rahmah

Like Rahmah, the other three participants, Adam, Salwa and Azza preferred to use the mobile dictionary app to look for meanings. For example, Adam preferred to use a bilingual dictionary app when looking for meaning as this was more convenient to him compared to using Google.

Besides using Google and its products, two participants mentioned using the embedded functions on their laptop. For example, Salwa used the built-in dictionary on her MacBook to learn about a new word.

> Dictionary apps. On MacBook. When I read a journal, I can click on the word I highlighted and it will link the word to the built-in the dictionary. I don't have to re-type the word. Just click on the word. Technology really helps you to increase your productivity. – Salwa

In addition, Zailan was the only participant who mentioned the use of the synonym function in Microsoft Word.

> Sometimes use synonym function in Microsoft Word. just type and right click and get the synonym. We'll see words that we are more familiar with and have the same meaning with that word. - Zailan

Zailan mentioned that he used the synonym function when working with written documents.

> If the words are like... email also have that function, most of the application have that function.so if the word is read through email or documentation, it is easier to right click and see the synonyms. But like in a conversation, I'll just Google it. – Zailan

The use of the dictionary went a long way beyond just looking at meanings of words. The participants were interested in other information such as parts of speech, synonyms and antonyms (see Table 4.9).

Table 4.9 The information sought from dictionary: data from VLSQ

Item	**Questions**	**Number of participants mentioning using it (n=10)**	**Number of participants mentioning using it 'often' and 'always' (n=10)**
23	Its meaning (s).	10	9
25	Its part of speech. (e.g verb, adjective, noun, etc)	10	4
26	Example sentences.	10	7
27	Its synonym or antonym.	10	5
24	Its spelling.	9	7
29	Its stem.	8	5
28	Its phonetic symbols or transcription.	7	5

They also referred to the dictionary to learn how words were spelt. For example, as Razali learned both British and American English when he attended schools in different

countries, and at times, he was confused about spelling. He then checked the dictionary to look for American and British English spelling.

Some participants also looked for how words are used in sentences. For example, Adam tried to understand the word usage.

> So I know where to use the sentence. Why this sentence use 'do', why this one does not use 'do' for example. I ask for how to use the words. - Adam

Other than the use of Google and its functions, all participants used the English *subtitle function,* usually in watching films or TV programmes, to enable them to see how the words were spelt and how it fitted in a sentence. This was important because if the participants just listened to the spoken dialogue, they might not be able to catch the words and its spelling. The subtitles helped them with understanding the spelling, pronunciation and generally helped in identifying the words. For example, Mazlina used the subtitle function to help her understand the dialogue said by the actors.

> I referred to the subtitles *(for spelling)*. I always open the subtitles if it is available. If not, I just watch it like that. Because I'm used to read the subtitles. Sometimes I could not understand what the person was saying because they talk too fast. Sometimes they just mumble the words. Especially the native speakers, as a non-native speaker, it's hard for me to catch, to get to guess the words. That's why I have to *(use the subtitle)*. For better understanding of the context. – Mazlina

Azza used subtitles to learn about the structure of the words and how the sentences were built. In addition, Adam used subtitles to learn about pronunciation by matching what was being said by the actors to the subtitles. Hanum and Zailan, like many others, often used the subtitle function when watching TV to learn spelling.

> We always open the subtitles for English movies/ TV series. We like to know the spelling of the words. So for words that we don't understand, eventually you'll understand the meaning when you watch the whole movie … I turn on the subtitles so I looked at the spelling from it. And then I googled it. – Hanum

c) Retaining New Words

This is the section where the participants made a conscious effort to store the new words learned in their long-term memory. This phase consists of memorisation and association strategies.

Memorisation strategies

The participants memorised new words. Sometimes, all they sought to memorise was the words itself because they did not have access to resources at that time to check the meaning. Others, at times, memorised the words and their meaning. At other times still, they memorised the words, their meanings and something about their form. When memorising, all participants used repetition strategies. These strategies meant repeatedly writing, listening to or saying the word or knowledge about the word aloud, or in one's head. This can be seen from Item No. 61 to 64 in Table 4.10. The information repeated, including but not limited to the word itself, were meaning in L1 or L2, pronunciation and spelling (See Item No. 65 to 69).

Table 4.10 The use memorisation and repetition strategies: data from VLSQ

Item	**Questions**	**Number of participants mentioning using it (n=10)**	**Number of participants mentioning using it 'often' and 'always' (n=10)**
62	I repeat the word silently several times.	8	6
65	Only repeat the English word with nothing else.	8	6
64	I listen to the word several times.	7	5
69	Repeat the spelling of the word several times, letter by letter.	7	2
61	I say the word aloud several times.	6	6
63	I write the word several times.	6	3
67	Repeat example sentences several times.	6	2
66	Say the word and its Malay translation.	5	3
68	Repeat the word and its English definition.	5	2

When watching, Syikin, Alisha and Zailan looked at the subtitles and tried to memorise the way new words were spelt. They would check the meaning later. Adam, again, memorised the way the new words were spelt when he encountered new words at work, so that he could ask his wife when he got home. Razali tried to memorise the spelling by writing it a few times.

> When I like to do when I learn new word that I do not know, I'll write it down. Few times. Because then in the future, when I see that English word, when I look something wrong with it, I remember how I was supposed to spell it. I don't know how to explain this. Yes. In the future if the spelling is wrong, but still looks like a word, I know it's wrong. That's the point of writing it. – Razali

Syikin tried to listen to unknown words again when she was watching movies.

> If I can stop the (*movie*) or pause, like watching on my computer, I'll pause and rewind and look at that word again. Then I'll search online. But if I can't stop the programme, I'll just let it be. – Syikin

Sometimes, Hanum would go back to her notebook and tried to memorise the words she had written.

> So when I have time, I'll flip the book (*her notes*), found the word and memorise it. But I don't do it often. Sometimes. – Hanum

She also tried to repeat the pronunciation to help her familiarise herself with the words.

> I say the word aloud several times. To try the pronunciation of the word. To familiarise my tongue with the word. Just for me to understand the word in written form - Hanum

In contrast to other participants, Mazlina did not memorise new words she learned, but she did repeat them just to familiarise herself.

> I would disagree with that. Because I don't memorise words. That's why when I did the journal (*learning diary*), I could not recall any of the words that I wrote down. I just use it once and for all. And that's it. Sometimes I say the word aloud. I would say to myself. Couple of times. I just want to familiarise myself with the words, not to memorise it. – Mazlina

When Alisha was outside of her home and did not have access to the Internet, she tried to memorise the words that she found (e.g. on billboards or signboards) and looked for the meaning when she got home.

> I try to memorise the words and check when I get home. If there's unknown words on signboard, I'll memorise and check it later. - Alisha

Azza made an effort to memorise the new words in context so that she could use them in communication at some point.

> To learn the whole sentence. To understand how the sentence is built. I want to think about the correct sentence and to memorise it and try to make myself understand the word and use it later in communication. Because I can memorise it in my mind if I do all these things repeatedly. – Azza

Rahmah explained in detail how the effort she put in when she first met a new word could help her in retaining the meaning. By looking up for the new word's meaning when she first met them, she would be able to recall the meaning when she met the new word again at a later time.

> There were words that I did not include in the journal. FYI, for example, if I meet the word 'debris' for the first time, but I did not check the meaning. And then I met that word again for the second time. But because I did not find the meaning when I met it in the first time, I would not remember that I've met the word before. But it would be different if I meet a new word, then I find the meaning. Then I'll remember. When I meet the word again, I'll be familiar with the word. – Rahmah

Association strategies

Association is a strategy in which the participants related new words to a wider context. In many cases, this meant recalling where they encountered new words. The participants also associated new words with their prior knowledge of L1 or L2 (see Table 4.11).

Table 4.11 The use of association strategies: data from VLSQ

Item	Questions	Number of participants mentioning using it (n=10)	Number of participants mentioning using it 'often' and 'always' (n=10)
77	I associate the new word with my personal experience.	10	4
71	I relate the new word to synonyms or antonyms in English. (e.g. Good and bad, specific and particular).	9	5
73	I associate the new word with a word in Malay similar in sound. (e.g book/ buku, charge/ caj)	9	3

All participants talked about association when they learned vocabulary. Razali enjoyed associating his word knowledge with context.

> I pretty much loved it, it's amazing how words can be used in a sentence and how some words that have the same meanings but just can be used differently. – Razali

Syikin, too, associated new word meaning with context. When I asked her about the meaning of a new word, she wrote in the learning diary, she recalled where she found the word and associated the word with the context.

> Usually when I meet a new word, I'll try to recall if I know the meaning. But when I read this word (*pointed to the diary*), when I looked at where I found that word, Japanese manga, I remember the context where I've found the word. That manga is about rearing animals. So I know this word is related to rearing animals. – Syikin

Nine participants used synonyms or antonyms in English when associating meaning. For example, Salwa used synonyms to make associations.

> If I encounter the words, if I don't understand the words, the first thing I did was I looked for synonyms. To find familiar words related to the new words. So it will lessen my cognitive load to memorise the meaning of the word because I know the synonym of the word. So okay, I can relate between the new words and the words that I already know. - Salwa

Like the other eight participants, Mazlina associated English words with Malay to improve her language proficiency.

> Not only English words but I associate in Malay. I say the words and say Malay translation. (*sometimes*). Before this, I never did this. But now I do, because I've realised I need to be well-verse in both languages. I need to be good in both English and Malay. I think, why not practice in Malay as well. Mazlina

Other than associating new words with L1 or L2, all participants associated new words with their personal experience. For example, Hanum tried to relate the words with her experiences.

> I relate the new words to words that usually followed each other, related to when I want to use it in communication. To speak in English. So when I visualise, or when I relate to my personal experience, it makes me confident to use it when I get to that situation. - Hanum

Note-taking strategies

Although note-taking was used, Table 4.12 shows that it was used less than other strategies. By all means, almost all new words were written down. The participants had their own preferences for taking notes by writing in a book, a mobile application, a built-in function on software, writing on paper margins or on rough papers.

Table 4.12 The use of note-taking strategies: data from VLSQ

Item	**Questions**	**Number of participants mentioning using it (n=10)**	**Number of participants mentioning using it 'often' and 'always' (n=10)**
30	I just write down the English word on its own.	4	3
31	I write down the English word and its Malay meaning(s).	4	2
44	I use a notebook application on my device to keep my records (e.g. Laptop, smartphone, tab etc). Please specify …….	3	2
32	I write down its English definition.	3	1

Item	Questions	Number of participants mentioning using it (n=10)	Number of participants mentioning using it 'often' and 'always' (n=10)
43	I use a special book to keep my records.	3	1

Among all participants, Salwa was the only one who regularly took notes. The others only took notes at times and two of them, Alisha and Razali, reported that they never took notes. Salwa used a mobile application called 'Notes' as it was convenient for her.

> Using the Notes apps... because there are times that you have your phone with you. So instead of checking Facebook or Instagram, you better check on words you have learned... I store it *(the words)* in different files. I keep it *(the words)* since 2013. I'll look at these words when I'm free. I store it in different folders, Gmail. There were times where I've learned words years ago... Adjectives, types, example of sentences, synonym or thesaurus. I keep at Google drive. Cloud storage. – Salwa

Salwa even continued taking notes after the Phase 2 (Learning Diary) ended.

> Yes. I still keep on doing it. Yes. I still continue doing it but I did not submit it to you. I used to doing it for myself. So I still continue doing it. But not on daily basis as I did in Phase 2. – Salwa

Zailan, Adam, Rahmah and Azza did not have a special book for note-taking. At times, they scribbled words instantaneously and highlighted or underlined the new words. Sometimes they made a note of the words with the purpose to look for meaning later. For example, Adam said,

> I don't have notebooks. I like to scribble on paper. When I need it, I'll find the paper again. Usually I use it once. I don't keep it. After I understand the word, I'd throw the paper. I take note sometimes only. I just write on papers. - Adam

Like many others, Syikin wrote notes on the margin of her printed notes or journal articles. When she read on her laptop, she used the built-in note function in PDF.

> If I read academic articles, I Google, if it is a PDF document, I use 'add note' function in PDF. If I print the article, I write on the side of the article. I write the meaning or my understanding of the article. I write down important points. I don't have any specific note book. The same goes for vocabulary, I use 'add notes' function or write on the margin. It will be easier for me when I want to read the article again. - Syikin

Mazlina did not take notes anymore since she had lost her old phone.

> Maybe this *(the notes app)* referred to my old handphone. Because all I lost all my details on 'Notes'. So I assume it must be on the old handphone. So I lost everything. Long time ago. I don't do it anymore. – Mazlina

Hanum used a mobile application to keep the words she learned.

> iPhone Notes. Sometimes. But I don't have a special book. Sometimes when I read, I underline the word which I don't understand. So I'll find the word in a dictionary. And I write the meaning on top of the word. I don't really organise my words. – Hanum

d) Using New Words

This section looks at where and how the participants used their knowledge of the new words they had tried to remember in written and verbal communication. This phase is called practising strategies. It goes without saying that living in an English-speaking country, all participants had no choice but to use English on many occasions. This meant that they had the opportunity to use new words in their daily life (see section 4.2.1).

Table 4.13 The use of practising strategies: data from VLSQ

Item	Questions	Number of participants mentioning using it (n=10)	Number of participants mentioning using it 'often' and 'always' (n=10)
82	I use as many new words as possible in speaking or in writing.	10	6

83	I practise saying things in English by myself.	9	5
85	I put English labels on physical objects.	6	5

All participants, as far as they could do, used the new words in their speaking or writing (see Table 4.13). Mazlina, for example, was aware of the need to practise her new vocabulary, not just in academic writing but personal writing.

> I force myself to do writings at least once. Or at least a week I have 2 or 3 times. It does not have to be academic. It can be personal things. Just keep practising. The key is keep on practising. Yes. You don't have to be bothered about the mistake that you make. You keep going. That's my key word. – Mazlina

Mazlina also wrote frequently on social media.

> Not only for my academic, but for my Instagram posts writing. I like to write for my IG post. I like to practice writing on IG. Whenever I have the mood to do writing. On that day, I'll focus on the words that might come out. – Mazlina

Not all participants were able to practise new English words on social media. For example, Zailan said he did not use English words on social media.

> I don't really practise the words because I use Malay in social media – Zailan

Most of the time, the participants practised saying new words when speaking to other people. On some occasions, almost all participants practised saying things in English to themselves. For example, Salwa imagined explaining something in English to herself.

> In some situations, I try to visualise, that I try to explain that situation in English. When I meet something new, do something new or go to new places, I try to explain to myself in English. – Salwa

Azza said the new words she learned to herself as a way of practice.

> I read everyday. If there is any new vocabulary, I practise talking to myself or look for topics that I can chat with my friends of anyone else. I will use the new words so that I can hear, talk, say and remember it. – Azza

Other than practising new words in spoken and written communication, some participants talked about a different way of practising new words. Six participants talked about using English words to label their belongings. For example, Hanum loved to label things and she did it in English.

> I label my herbs and spices. My kids' toys box when I segregate them. I use English. I practise this way because it is more relevant to me to use English than Malay. I usually use words in social media as well. - Hanum

The journey in learning vocabulary, from encountering the new words, to looking up for meaning, to memorising the words and to practising the words, proved to be challenging to the participants. They shared the challenges they faced in learning new words which were difficulties in trying to recall the new words, difficulties in using the new words in appropriate context and lack of motivation. Going back to Mazlina again, she was aware that many of the new words that she had tried to learn, she was not able to recall. Mazlina mentioned her difficulties.

> I'll try my best to use the new words in my writings. I try to include it in my speaking but most of the time I fail to do that I could not remember. The percentage of saying must be very low. – Mazlina

Syikin, too, explained the difficulty of recalling the new words she had learned.

> But I think it is how I later use the new vocabularies in my daily conversations that matter. I find that I tend to forget the meaning of some words if I do not regularly use them in my sentences. – Syikin

Even though Syikin practised saying the new words to herself, it did not mean that she would use them in conversation. She needed to think about the appropriateness when choosing what words to say.

> If I read sentences with interesting structures or unfamiliar words, I will try to read the sentence or the word loudly. But most of the time, I will not use the things (*words*) that I have practised because I prefer to use simple sentences. For example, the phrase 'it's not uncommon that...'. Before this, I always thought what was the meaning of this phrase: is it common or uncommon? I have read that this phrase is used to explain something which does not usually happen. But if it happens, it is not a strange thing because there is a possibility that it happens. I

> have become familiar with this phrase when I read or watch something. But it does not mean that I will use this phrase in writing or speaking because this phrase might confuse people and needs the right context and the right occasions to be used. – Syikin

Some participants had fewer opportunities to practise than others. For example, Rahmah was not studying and did not feel she had the motivation to practise new words.

> Here, I don't have any special objective. There's nothing that makes me (*want*) to practice. Because I'm not studying here. – Rahmah

4.6 Learning Diary

The learning diary was an important instrument in trying to understand the learners' actions when they encountered new and unfamiliar words in their daily lives. As can be seen in Table 4.14, out of 175 actions recorded by the participants, nearly three-quarters of actions were to use Google search engine to look for meanings. Referring to item No.5, 6 and 7, the participants used other strategies which were to write, guess and ask others, if they could not access Google at the time.

Taking item No. 1 with items No. 5, 6 and 7, showed that 78.3% of the time, the participants used Google to check for meaning. This shows the importance of Google in vocabulary learning. The use of mobile dictionary applications (app) came in second with a percentage of 10.9%, but far below the use of Google. Other than the dictionary app, 1.1% of actions covered the used of built-in dictionary. The built-in dictionary showed that when there was no Internet access, the participants still had access to digital resources. On one occasion, a participant tried to use contextual clues to help her guess the new word meaning. However, feeling unconfident, she still checked the online dictionary for confirmation.

Table 4.14 The participants' actions when meeting new words: data from learning diary

Item	Actions taken	Frequency of actions taken	Percentage of actions taken
1	Search using generic Google search engine	127	72.6
2	Look up using mobile dictionary application	19	10.9
3	Ask others	10	5.7
4	Guess	5	2.9
5	Write the new word then Google later	5	2.9
6	Guess then Google later	3	1.7
7	Ask others then Google later	2	1.1
8	Look up using built-in dictionary on word processor	2	1.1
9	Use contextual clues then check online dictionary later	1	0.6
10	Recall meaning	1	0.6
	TOTAL	**175**	**100**

In the second interview, the participants were asked about their experience of keeping a record of their learning in the diary. They were also asked about what made them look up for some words and ignore others. Three participants, Mazlina, Salwa and Alisha, reported that they included all the new words that they had encountered and had tried to learn in the diary. Mazlina was determined to improve her vocabulary.

> I included all. Yes. I think because I just want to add my vocabulary. That's why I was wondering how can I use that word in my writing so that I can improve my English. – Mazlina

Salwa usually ignored some words and for the learning diary, she tried to include all the new words that she wanted to remember.

> During the journal phase, I am aware of jotting down the new vocabulary that I encountered. When I found new word, I want to do something with the word. usually I just ignore it but because of the phase 2, I was aware that that was a new vocabulary that worth finding out. -Salwa

Other participants focused on the words they found interesting and important. Zailan looked for words that he found 'weird', by which he meant unfamiliar. Syikin ignored words that she could infer from the contextual clues.

> I think there were words that I ignored and did not bother to look up. I think that was because I can infer the meaning of the words based on the entire paragraph. So the words in the journal are the words that I cannot infer the meaning. – Syikin

In Phase 2, the participants were asked to write the learning diary for 30 days. Although it was understandable that they did not have entries on some days, I tried to get their explanation for any gaps they had. Syikin went back to Malaysia for a few months during Phase 2 and this affected her entries.

> There was a gap in the journal when I did not submit any words. I think maybe because at that time I read less. I was in Malaysia at that time. Maybe I went out often and read less. – Syikin

As a student, Azza said she was busy with experiments and lab work and could not record all the new words that she found. Adam was busy with his three-shift work and struggled to find time to write in the diary.

The participants were also asked whether they could recall the meaning of words they listed. Only Mazlina and Syikin were able to recall the meaning of some words by recalling the context they found they word from. Mazlina said,

> I will try to recall. But most of the words that I wrote, it's very difficult to recall the meaning because I rarely use them. But like this one 'altruistic', recently I just did something that I wanted to find the meaning to 'selfless'. Altruistic is actually selfless. They are synonyms and have similar meaning. Who is selfless, who is willing to sacrifice to other people. I did something on my word. When I saw 'altruistic' just now, I remember I've used it recently. It did not ring a bell before. – Mazlina

Salwa could not remember the meanings at all.

> I did not remember all these words. When I look at this again, 'oh, ok. Those words were the words that I paid attention to last few months.' So if you ask me the meaning of the words today, I could not remember. – Salwa

These two examples, Salwa and Mazlina, show just how difficult it is to retain new vocabulary. Even after making the effort to write them down and commit them to memory, the meaning goes.

In addition, the participants were asked about their opinion on the use of learning diaries for vocabulary learning. All of them felt that the diary made them more conscious of their own learning. However, all participants said that they wrote the diary for the research purpose only and did not continue writing it after Phase 2 had ended, except for Salwa. Salwa was positive about the learning diary and explained how the diary helped her in learning new words.

> I 'm really happy because I think I learned a lot of new words. Around 20-30 (*words*) in a month. I'm really happy because we actually did not learn consciously. We need to do it explicitly. To realise that we are learning new thing. We need to be able to recognise the words. – Salwa

Syikin said that the learning diary motivated her to look for new word meanings.

> When writing the journal. I felt that I was conscious with new words that I met everyday. And if I found an unknown word, I right away looked for the meaning. But when I did not write this journal, in my normal days, sometimes I ignored words because I had less motivation. – Syikin

Razali felt that the diary made him more aware of learning new vocabulary.

> Yes. It does (*help*) a bit. On the questions that you asked me to do. The journal actually. Basically, by writing the words that I learn every day. Because before this I don't really write it down. I don't really focus on words that I encounter every day. Sometimes I check it sometimes I don't. But by doing this journal, it actually helps me to understand new words. What should I do when I found something new, new words that I do not know. Actually, it is all about the realisation what I do when I do not know the new word. Because before this, sometime I just ignore it. But now, I write it down and check it. – Razali

Similarly, Mazlina also spoke about her awareness of vocabulary learning strategies.

> I'm more aware of my own strategy. Of my own, how can I improve. What kind of other strategies that I could adopt to improve my vocabulary learning. Things like that. - Mazlina

Some participants were not interested in keeping a learning diary. For example, Alisha was not interested to continue writing in the diary after the research.

> I think the journal was interesting but I'm not interested in writing that kind of journal. I only did it once for your research. I don't have time to write journal. – Alisha

The data from these interviews about the learning diary showed that when the participants were asked to record the new or unfamiliar words, they became aware of their actions and aware that new words could be easily forgotten. Overall, they were positive about the diary and wanted to do something about remembering new words, but they could not establish the routine of using the diary.

4.7 The Importance of VLS

After the participants had completed the VLSQ, they were asked about their opinion on the importance of vocabulary learning strategies (VLS). Generally, all participants said that it was important for them to learn VLS. The reason was because VLS would help them expand their vocabulary size and eventually make them a more proficient English user. In addition, by learning VLS, the participants would not feel so anxious. For example, Alisha said that by learning strategies, she would know what to do when she met unknown words. The importance of VLS were explained in terms of context, concept and the teaching of VLS. Knowing VLS helped the participants to choose appropriate strategies that suited the context and the resources they had when they encountered new words. Syikin explained further that using and learning VLS depended on the context of learners' proficiencies and individual preferences.

> It is important for…It is good to know there are many ways of learning vocabulary. It depends on the individual which one they prefer. It is about individual preferences. Early stage, I won't suggest learning to guess. Maybe when students have wide vocabulary they can use this strategy (*guess*). When they do

> something informally, they can use guessing. I think this one can combine skipping and guessing, this is the last resort. – Syikin

Azza talked about the importance of learning the concept of the VLS. She said that it was more important for her to apply the strategies, and it did not really matter if she did not know the correct term for the strategies.

> I don't think these strategies are important because I just do it for myself. But formally, I don't know what is association. But I did the actions. But I don't know the terms. I think these strategies are good. To understand all these and then to practise it. Practise makes perfect. - Azza

All participants said it was important for them to learn the VLS formally in school. For example, Razali viewed the VLS as a transferable skill because once learners knew the strategies in learning vocabulary, they could use the skills to learn other languages. He also mentioned that it was important to teach these strategies to students.

> Very important. It's not just about use that in English. It's the point of the way they taught you. You can use it for different language. Not just in English. So I guess this way of teaching is important. Yes. It will make huge difference. Because then I might not know or do not understand the words. I might probably ... The only option that I have probably skip it or break the word, or might not even ask someone. Because when you were taught something, you tend to use what you learn. I guess it is important. – Razali

Working as a primary school teacher, Salwa's opinion differed slightly from Razali's. From her point of view, she said that the teachers already had many responsibilities including administrative works. Thus, it was impractical for English teachers to teach all the VLS in English lessons.

> I think it will not be practical to teach all strategies because teachers in Malaysia are busy with stuff other than teaching. It is too much for teachers. In our syllabus, vocabulary is mentioned in our curriculum specification. I don't think they have specific lesson for vocabulary. Students need vocabulary skills, but I think it goes beyond school hours. Maybe teachers can use these strategies but teachers can give as a homework or asking people. "okay, when you go back, ask your Mom". It depends on the level of participation of the parents. - Salwa

Nonetheless, Salwa explained further that the teachers, first, needed to teach dictionary skills as the basis of vocabulary learning. She claimed that other skills would come next, naturally.

> Importantly, you need to prepare the student to use dictionary first. When you give them that skill, they will automatically or naturally will apply other strategies, skipping, guessing, asking people, when they don't have access to dictionary. "I need to ask these people, their teacher or friends". - Salwa

Salwa also believed that instead of teaching each strategy, the teachers should leave some room for the students to learn independently.

> Repetition, teachers can give as homework because this is very behaviorism. Behavioristic learning strategy. Technology is constructivism. Teachers prepare students for independent learning. Use technology. The skills need to be taught but there are strategies that need to be taught explicitly, others will be learnt informally. "Okay, I need to know the meaning of certain words", they will… Especially for students who need to write, they can use this strategy. For example, there are phrases use in such essays so they can use repetition for their essay. - Salwa

4.8 Chapter Summary

This chapter presents findings driven primarily from interview data supplemented by learning diary, VLSQ and VLT. Key findings included:

- Moving to Coventry was not traumatic as most participants looked forward to living in the UK. Living in Europe was seen as a privilege to Malaysians, in general, and studying abroad carried reputation and status in Malaysia. Most participants had competent language skills, and some were regular users of English in Malaysia.
- In Coventry, participants experienced language opportunities and limitations in different contexts including school, study, workplace, daily life, media and access to health facilities.
- It is very difficult to measure vocabulary size. However, participants agreed that, in Coventry, their vocabulary learning progressed consistently, although not dramatically.
- In respect to learning vocabulary, participants did use particular strategies consistently, but they did not have full knowledge of the wide range of VLS

available. However, they felt positive about the ideas of VLS and saw them as useful.

- As far as it is possible to divide intentional and serendipitous learning, a lot of vocabulary learning seem to be intentional. Participants intentionally accessed resources such as books, television and social media, which provide opportunities for vocabulary learning.

We now move on to the discussion.

CHAPTER 5 DISCUSSION

This chapter brings together the findings of the study, organised around the research questions leading to the overarching question 'How do Malaysian sojourners learn vocabulary?'

RQ1 What vocabulary learning strategies do Malaysian sojourners use?

RQ2 Where do they encounter new words?

5.1 RQ1 What Vocabulary Learning Strategies do Malaysian Sojourners Use?

In answering this research question, I investigated the strategies in four different contexts: in school; in HE; in the workplace and in Coventry.

What I found was, in school, participants experienced a mix of explicit and implicit vocabulary learning (Nation, 2001). At times, the participants learned vocabulary in language lessons explicitly, but most of the time vocabulary learning was embedded into more general teaching. The teachers came up with strategies such as introducing new words to the participants and offering themselves as a resource to provide word meaning. Their explicit strategies involved the use of dictionary, memorisation strategies and social strategies. The use of the dictionary was explained to students and most of the participants used a bilingual dictionary in the early years of language learning before moving on to a monolingual dictionary in secondary school. The importance of dictionary use was shown in Ahmed's (1989) taxonomy where dictionary use is a macro-strategy. Dictionaries were used in different ways and these purposes were consistent with the strategies listed by Ahmed (1989) and Schmitt (1997). Explicit strategies involved teaching of specific words and also involved the teaching of memorisation strategies such as quizzes and spelling tests. The use of memorisation strategies are also included in VLS taxonomies (see Schmitt, 1997; Marin, 2005; Takač, 2008). Although teachers used explicit strategies, only one of my participants talked about a more varied range of VLS - he was taught to skip, guess and use synonyms. Most of the time, however, vocabulary was seen as something that would be acquired through the normal course of teaching. Participants were expected to pick up new vocabulary as they went along. Some of the

participants talked about social strategies and how they would ask not just teachers, but classmates for help. In Malaysia, the teaching of VLS was underdeveloped. The strategies used by the participants in school were mostly unstructured, as outlined by Sanaoui (1995), because the participants relied on the teachers and language lessons to learn new vocabulary. They did not record the words they learned and relied on the lessons as a means to practise vocabulary.

In Higher Education in Malaysia, the findings show that vocabulary teaching was implicit, and participants had not reported any explicit vocabulary teaching. Vocabulary learning was embedded in language lessons but was not the focus in these lessons. At this stage, the focus was on improving the four language skills: reading; listening; writing and speaking. Many students' presentations and some of the assignments were carried out in English. It was believed that the participants would pick up vocabulary as they used the language in and outside the classroom. The participants also had become less dependent on the use of dictionary and it was more common for them to use guessing strategies. However, there was an exception for one participant as he reported he used bilingual dictionary to help him follow an English textbook.

Additionally, participants had started using an Internet browser to help them in vocabulary learning. This finding was expected as the use of Internet became widespread in Malaysia in late 1990s and there was a national campaign 'One house one computer' that encouraged Malaysians to start using computer. In brief, the strategies used in HE were more structured in the sense that the participants had become more independent in learning, and had more opportunities to practise the language with other people such as classmates and lecturers. The use of social strategies became more important at this stage and can be seen as an effort to improve proficiency (Razak and Babikkoi, 2014). Learners also created their own opportunities for learning vocabulary from using the Internet. They had become less dependent on teachers and were more resourceful in vocabulary learning.

The findings for strategies at the workplace showed that language use depended on the company or institution. In private companies or institutions, English was mostly used in verbal and written communication. These included meetings, emails, memos and interaction with clients, colleagues and superiors. On the other hand, government

companies or institutions used mostly Malay in official documentation and in daily communication with colleagues and superiors. At times, some participants had to deliver lectures in English. The use of technology continued as the participants started to use technological tools such as Google Translate. The introduction of smartphones made it quicker and easier to look up the translation or use of the word in context. This led the participants to become less dependent on social strategies. When they did not understand something during a face-to-face interaction, they preferred to skip or guess as an act of saving face, and perhaps would check the meaning on the Internet later.

In the context of Coventry, the strategies used were very much related to the participants' motivation in learning a new word and the access available. The situations in Coventry included negotiating everyday life and for some, negotiating formal education. Those in formal education had many more structured opportunities for accessing new vocabulary. At times, they had a strong focus on understanding the meaning of new words as it was essential to their learning. At times, participants outside of formal education had a focus, but not to the same degree. Very often in formal learning, a word needed to be understood, even if it was not explicitly taught as that word, could be crucial in someone developing understanding of that subject matter. This was less the case outside of education, although at times was crucial, for example, in dealing with children's illness.

When the participants encountered a new word, they had two options. The first was to skip the word, the second, was to take action. If they chose to take action, the participants then had a further choice to try to retain that new word and later to decide whether they would try to use it in a new context. The participants tended to skip a word when they thought that the word was not important at that time, or they had no access to resources which could be used to look up the word. Those who were more motivated would work at understanding the word and perhaps take further action, while those who were less motivated would skip. Non-student participants were generally less motivated to learn a new word as they did not see a pressing need. However, the skipping strategy was used by all participants at times.

As regards to taking actions, participants used guessing strategies, social strategies and technological tools to help them learn the new word that they encountered. Guessing

strategies were among the most frequently used strategies. This matches the findings from earlier studies (see Schmitt, 1997; Alqahtani, 2005; Marin, 2005; Alyami, 2006).

The participants used guessing strategies on a number of occasions, especially in receptive tasks, and did so in different ways. Strategy use depended on the importance of learning a new word or access to other resources. When participants were watching or reading for leisure, and if there was no urgency or functional need for the word to be understood accurately, they might guess word meaning. Participants also used guessing strategies when they communicated face-to-face because most of the time, they had to keep the conversation going. Additionally, the participants used guessing strategies when they did not have access to technological tools or other people who they felt comfortable to ask. In guessing, the participants would guess by analysing the word (when reading) or using contextual clues such as pictures, storyline and paralanguage clues. As reported in the literature, context often enabled the participants to guess appropriately (Coady and Nation, 1988) and learn vocabulary (Gu and Johnson, 1996).

Other than guessing strategies, the participants also used social strategies. They sought word knowledge from other people but most of the time, they asked for an L1 definition. This echoes the studies conducted by Alqahtani (2005), Alyami (2011), Marin (2005) and Schmitt (1997). The participants sometimes asked for examples, grammatical category, synonyms and antonyms. They asked other people based on their personal preferences, such as knowing the person or feeling confident that the person could give a useful answer. At times, when they had no choice, it was a matter of whoever was available. Some participants only asked people when they had no access to technological tools. Technological tools were often preferred to asking other people.

The technology used by the participants are lexical tools which focus on helping learners obtain meaning of words (see Ma, 2017). The lexical tools used by the participants were open-online resources and E-dictionaries. The open-online resources used were Google search engines and online thesaurus. The E-dictionaries used were web-based dictionaries, dictionary applications on mobile devices, built-in dictionaries on their laptops, Google Translate and Google Images. The participants also used the built-in dictionary function in Microsoft Word which allowed them to access synonyms and antonyms. The participants also used subtitle functions to help them learn pronunciation

and spelling when watching videos. The participants often preferred to use E-dictionaries as these were easily accessible and they believed in the reliability of the E-dictionaries. When they looked up words, they wanted to access the meanings. This is understandable as providing meanings is the main purpose of a dictionary as Alyami (2011) had found. Other than meaning, the participants also referred to dictionary when they wanted to learn about parts of speech, synonyms, antonyms and examples.

Moving onto retaining words, participants used memorisation, association and note-taking strategies. Memorisation strategies were used differently depending on purpose. For example, a new word was memorised to check its meaning at a later time. The participants also tried to memorise word knowledge e.g. meaning, spelling and pronunciation, which are considered as main strategies in vocabulary learning (see Ahmed, 1989; Stoffer, 1995; Schmitt, 1997; Marin, 2005). When the participants memorised a word or any aspect of a word, they tended to employ repetition strategies at the same time as repetition leads to retention (Alyami, 2011). However, memorisation strategies appeared underdeveloped and they were not always used (see section 4.5.2). Findings from the learning diary showed that out of the 175 actions performed by the participants when they encountered a new word, only one involved recalling meaning. Recalling meaning is important as it transfers a new word from short-term to long-term memory (see Baddeley, Eysenck and Anderson, 2009). It might be again that a strategy, in this case recalling, was underdeveloped.

As regards association strategies, these were not commonly used. This finding was similar to Alyami (2011). The act of linking a new word provides an opportunity for deeper and more elaborate learning of a word, and may lead to better memory performance (Laufer and Osimo, 1991). However, association strategies require more cognitive effort and their low use could be because of the effort involved. This, however, suggests that the participants may have lost opportunities to gain better retention of a word. When these strategies were used, the participants associated a new word with their past experiences, synonyms, antonyms and Malay words.

Note-taking strategies were again not commonly used, and this matches Alyami's (2011) findings. Most of the participants would sometimes scribble on the margins of the paper when they found a new word. Most of the time, they wrote a definition alongside the new

word. As an exception, one participant consistently took notes and she kept the notes in folders or in a smartphone application, even in her email and on a cloud storage. The reason for the low use of note-taking could be because this required continuous effort and being systematic. Again, by neglecting strategies, the participants may have lost opportunities for reviewing and memorising the words they had encountered. Another reason for neglecting note-taking was because the participants had many encounters and exposure to the English language in Coventry. Thus, they might assume they would encounter the new word again. Possibly, the lack of using note-taking strategies could be the effect of implicit vocabulary learning that they experienced in their early education years.

Finally, once the participants were able to retain a new word, they had the opportunity to use the word. Using new words was very much related to the participants' awareness, motivation and confidence. Those who were aware and motivated tried to use the new word. These participants practised new words in speaking and writing. In speaking, they spoke in English with their family members and some participants also reported that they practised saying things to themselves too. In addition, they also wrote on social media. Participants who were studying were found to have more opportunities to practise compared to non-student participants. However, no matter what the participants' status was, using new words was not as easy as it seemed. The participants shared their frustration of forgetting the words they had tried to commit to memory. This concern seems to be consistent with 1) the complexity of memorising a word as outlined by Craik and Lockhart's (1972) levels of processing; 2) the effort needed as discussed by Nation's (2001) concept of learning burden; and 3) the level of involvement as suggested by Laufer and Hulstijn (2001).

In brief, vocabulary learning strategies appeared more implicit than explicit. This was true in school, in higher education, in workplace and in Coventry. At times, participants worked on vocabulary. They would use dictionaries, social strategies and they would try to commit to memory. However, overall, the use of strategies was often underdeveloped especially association, memory and note-taking strategies.

5.2 RQ2 Where Do They Encounter New Words?

In answering this question, I will discuss context and frequency of encounters.

As regards context, the learning diary gives a snapshot of the points and places where the participants encountered a new word. These encounters were a mix of what I describe as serendipitous and intentional encounters which reflect Hulstijn's (2001) concept of intentional and incidental vocabulary learning. As reported in the literature, vocabulary learning can never be totally incidental or totally intentional, as the learning has to be a combination of both (Schmitt, 2000). The highest frequency of encounters was from reading materials which supports Krashen's (1989) view that vocabulary is largely acquired via extensive reading. This also echoes the study conducted by Alyami (2011). Almost all encounters involved receptive skills – reading and listening - which showed that exposure to the language was crucial and, quite logically, preceded productive use in writing and speaking. This makes sense as it reflects Craik and Lockhart's (1972) first and second steps of levels of processing, which are recognising physical features of a word (structural processing) and encoding the sound of a word (phonemic processing).

Generally, encounters with new vocabulary were largely but not exclusively technology based. This shows technology has become a significant tool in vocabulary learning (see section 4.5.1) (see also Ma, 2017). Technology is changing the way language is being encountered and being learned. Here, technology was providing more opportunities for participants to encounter new words. Technology based encounters were both incidental and intentional (Ma, 2017) but intentional could easily lead to incidental e.g. looking up a word and then browsing and web surfing. Technology should also be seen as a material resource (see Palfreyman, 2006) which widens the opportunity of getting vocabulary input outside the language classroom.

As regards the frequency of encountering new words, this varied. Student participants had more exposure to English vocabulary as they encountered colleagues, reading materials and lectures. Although second language students often encounter a huge number of new words (Nation and Waring, 1997) this was not always seen as the case when looking at diary entries (see section 4.5.1). Some had recorded few entries and a possible reason for this might be that they were proficient English users and were not

meeting new words. Second, their busy life as a student alongside their family commitment made them forget to record the new words that they encountered.

As regards the non-student participants, it was expected that they would have fewer encounters than student participants. Similarly, non-working participants had limited spoken and written communication with other people, except their family members and close friends. This limitation included face-to-face interactions as they spent most of their time at home. A striking limitation was a housewife who had to take care of her two infant and toddler children. Her responsibilities at home limited her time to read, to access media and to use technology. However, there were some interesting findings in the diary data that is worth discussing. Two of these participants had more encounters compared to the others. This showed that it was possible for non-student and non-working participants to have many encounters even though they spent most of their time at home. It was a matter of the effort they put in and their motivation to learn new vocabulary.

The context and frequency of encounters were largely influenced by the opportunities the participants had. Some opportunities were specific to the participant's status and roles, and some were common opportunities which every participant experienced. Student participants usually had the opportunity to encounter more words in their formal education (Aldawsari, 2016) and in this study, they encountered new words when attending lectures, reading articles, discussing with group mates, communicating with colleagues, lecturers and supervisors. Informally, they had the opportunity to encounter new words when they joined societies. Working participants had slightly different opportunities depending on their employment status. Employed participants encountered new words when communicating with colleagues and customers. Their opportunities came in the form of written, verbal, face-to-face and online communication. Self-employed participants encountered new words with their customers and mostly in written and online communication. A participant who was both employed and ran small side business had more opportunities to encounter new words in both types of employment. Parent participants had encountered new words when they communicated with their children's teachers about their children's well-being. The parent participants also encountered new words when they communicated with other parents.

Common opportunities among the participants were travelling, using health facilities and using media. When travelling, the participants encountered new words when they planned their journey. Planning included browsing the websites to look for tourist attractions, booking accommodation, making enquiries and communicating with people during the travel. As regards using health facilities, participants encountered new words when communicating with health staff, explaining health conditions, making appointments, reading health-related websites, understanding health reports and reading appointment letters. Participants also had the opportunity to encounter new words when they accessed media such as movies, news, songs and subtitles. They used online technology tools for example Google Maps, Google Translate and email. The use of social media, for example WhatsApp, Instagram and Skype, also created opportunities for the participants in encountering new words.

In brief, participants' encounters were affected by the opportunity and limitations they had. At times, these opportunities presented themselves to the participants and at times, they had to look for them (see Sanaoui, 1995). The opportunities were one of the reasons they came to Coventry.

5.3 Overarching Question: How Do Malaysian Sojourners Learn Vocabulary?

Based on the fact that I have answered the first two questions – the strategies and the encounters, I now bring these together and address the overarching question, 'How do Malaysian sojourners learn vocabulary?'

In addressing this question, many researchers have recourse to a model in which key variables are abstracted from their data and the relationship between different variables, factors or actions are shown diagrammatically. Most of these models focus on general language learning (for example Macaro, 2006; Gao, 2010; Gu, 2010). A recent model was developed by Wang (2018). This model factored in context; agencies; and metacognitive, cognitive, social and affective functions when explaining learning in what she called 'a temporal, dynamic, flexible model of strategic learning' (p199). Gu (2003) presented a person-task-context-strategies model in which he suggested that strategy use is a consequence of how context helps or constrains learners. Gao (2010) produced an interactive model focusing on the interaction and connection between agency and

context. These three models give an idea of the complexity of language learning, and they also show the importance of agency and context in the language learning process. Although these models capture various variables and their effect on strategy use, they do not focus explicitly on vocabulary learning process and the use of strategies.

There are a number of studies that have proposed VLS taxonomies by listing the strategies used by learners (for example Ahmed, 1989; Stoffer, 1995; Schmitt, 1997; Marin, 2005). However, to the best of my knowledge, only one study described vocabulary learning as a process (see Brown and Payne, 1994) and another one attempted to conceptualise vocabulary learning into a model (see Ma, 2014). Brown and Payne (1994) described their VLS as a five-stage VLS. Learners will learn more new words as they go further down the stages. Learners' goal will determine how deep they go in the process. This VLS process, however, does not consider opportunities that learners have and context they are in. The other study, Ma (2014), developed a memory-based model which proposed two parallel vocabulary learning processes. The model showed that between each stage, there was a cognitive process involved. Ma's model focused on cognitive function in vocabulary learning and did not capture the bigger picture of vocabulary learning which includes, for example, context and agencies.

All of these language learning and VLS models are useful in understanding language and the vocabulary learning process. However, they do not capture exactly what I want to say based on my data. They do not focus on opportunity and limitation in quite the same way as it has appeared important in my research. Therefore, I produced a new model, the Vocabulary Learning in Context model (VLC) (see Figure 5.1). What is striking about VLC is that it seems transferable across contexts in my study and captures something about vocabulary learning in both Malaysia and Coventry. Regardless where the participants were, they did not become different learners, it was the number of opportunities they had that changed between contexts. This model shows the importance of agency at each stage of learning. In contrast to other models, I link VLS with context and agency and show that "there is an ongoing interaction between context and agency underlying the participants' strategy use" (Gao, 2010: 151).

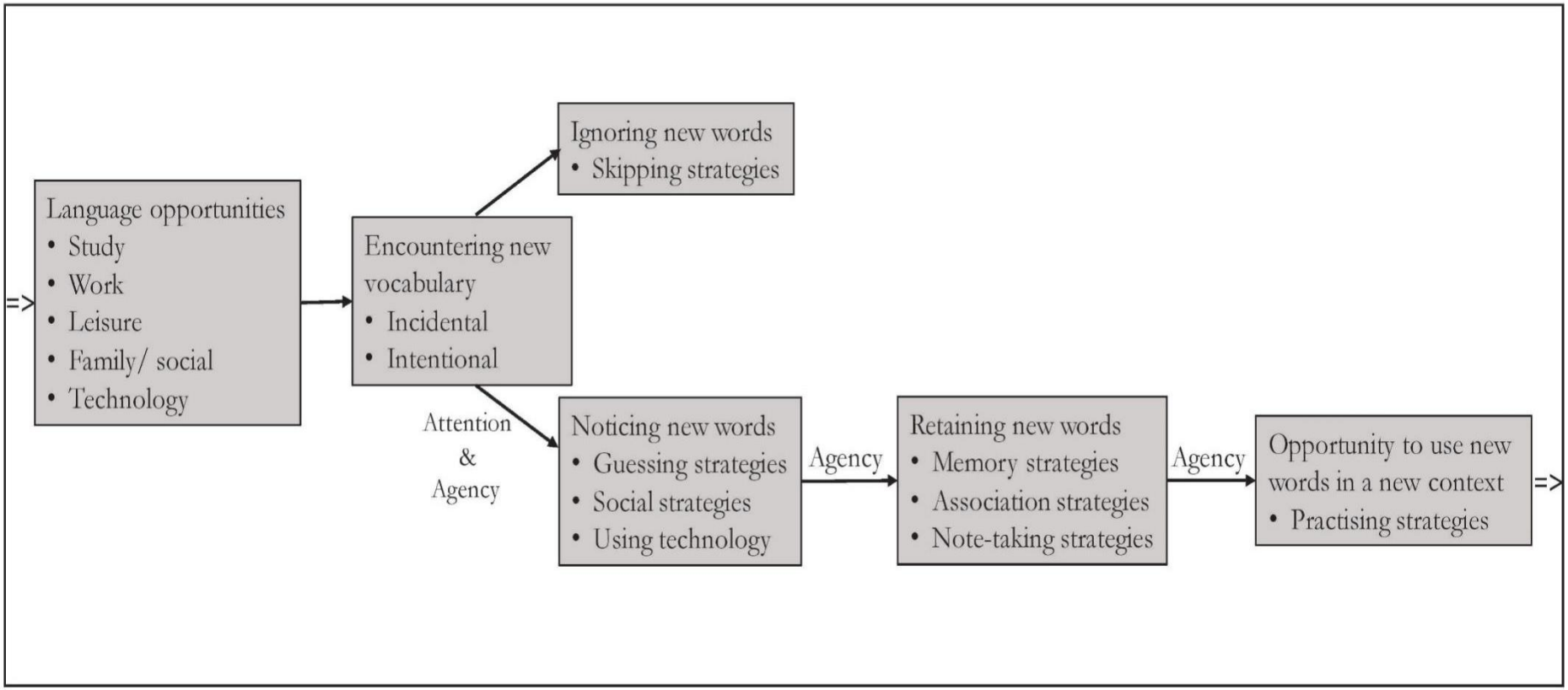


Figure 5.1 Vocabulary Learning in Context (VLC)

Vocabulary Learning in Context (VLC) model shows the process of vocabulary learning. It begins with the language opportunities that learners experience in their study, at work, or during leisure, including the use of technology. These opportunities can be presented to the learners or the learners can go out of their way to find them. Language opportunities enable encounters with new vocabulary, of which could be intentional, incidental or more likely a combination of both. On meeting new vocabulary, learners are faced with a decision of whether to ignore the new word or to act on the new word. Ignoring the word means using skipping strategies. Acting on the new word involves noticing, then guessing strategies, social strategies and/ or technology. If the learners decide to try to retain the new word, they should then use memory strategies, association strategies and/ or note-taking strategies. The final process is finding the opportunity to use the new word in a new context - practising strategies. However, vocabulary learning does not stop. It continues and starts again with other language opportunities (the double headed arrows).

This model can be prescriptive as it allows learners to see what to do to improve their learning strategies and their vocabulary learning. If people want to systematically improve their vocabulary, they should act on new words and use their own agency to try to retain new words and to seek new opportunities to use these words. In practice, the findings of this and other studies (for example Ahmed, 1989; Marin, 2005; Alyami, 2011) suggest that few learners engage in the entire process in vocabulary learning. Vocabulary learning may stop by ignoring or by simply guessing the new words without following up those new words. It was rare in my study that participants would go through the whole process. It might, of course, be quite justifiable in certain contexts to ignore new words. Indeed, this is not surprising given that vocabulary learning is complex and intellectually demanding. It might well be that learners do not have the capacity, the willingness and the motivation to devote themselves to dealing with vocabulary consistently all the time.

In fact, my study deals with a number of people who are clearly successful language learners with large vocabularies, without in most cases it appears having developed a consistent repertoire of VLS. They appear to have done this by noticing words and using a limited number of strategies frequently. Picking up may begin with noticing new words and later they may be recognisable in the future. What appears really important is that learners have had many opportunities to encounter new vocabulary. Perhaps what we see

is the sheer volume of encounters is compensating for the lack of detail for VLS. If learners completely ignore new words and do not notice them, they have lost the chance to learn them. There must be an element of noticing to make vocabulary learning possible.

I am suggesting that as part of their behavioural repertoire, learners should consider this model. Learners should consider the opportunities, limitations, their own agencies and the choices they have as regards VLS. Learners should find the time and space to systematically go about learning and retaining new words, even if this is only 10 minutes a day. In fact, many of the participants in this study recognised there were more opportunities and wanted to get into better study habits so that they would take advantage of these opportunities.

The VLC model begins with encounters, but these are not objectively determined encounters. Of course, sometimes the encounters come to learners' door and they have to respond. But a lot of the encounters require agency. For example, planning a holiday, coming up and talking to teachers and other parents. Learners need to take responsibility to search out language encounters. The findings show that people with superficially similar contexts had different levels and different quality of encounters. So that opportunities and limitations are both structural and intrapersonal which are related to people's confidence and self-assurance. Language learners should make an effort to look for opportunities for multiple encounters, as multiple encounters increase the possibility of having "a more systematic coverage of various aspects of lexical knowledge" (Takač, 2008: 23) and allow learners to build up their lexical knowledge and transfer it to their long-term memory (ibid).

5.4 Chapter Summary

This chapter discusses the findings of this research and presents the answers to the overarching question of 'How do Malaysian sojourners learn vocabulary?', and its two sub-questions. The first question was 'What vocabulary learning strategies do Malaysian sojourners use?' It was found that in Malaysia, participants used a mix of explicit and implicit strategies while in Coventry, their VLS used depended on the contexts they were in. The second question was 'Where do they encounter new words?' and it was found that participants encountered new words in various situations and the encounters could be incidental or intentional. In order to address the overarching question, a Vocabulary

Learning in Context (VLC) model presented to understand vocabulary learning in relation to opportunity, context, and agency.

We now move on to the conclusion.

CHAPTER 6 CONCLUSION

This chapter presents a conclusion to the thesis by restating the organisation of the thesis; summary of key findings; contribution to knowledge; implications of the study; limitation of this study and ends with personal reflection on conducting the study.

6.1 The Organisation of the Thesis

This thesis is divided into six chapters. The summary of each chapter is given below.

Chapter 1 provided an introduction to vocabulary learning and an explanation of the importance of vocabulary. It also briefly defined vocabulary learning strategies and touched on the role of technology in language learning, which turned out to be important in the thesis. This chapter explained the status of English in Malaysia, provided information on the participants who turned out to be advanced in their knowledge of English.

Chapter 2 provided a discussion of literature in two major areas of the study - language learning strategies (LLS) and vocabulary learning strategies (VLS). This chapter discussed the problems in defining strategies and in understanding the factors that influence the use and choice of strategies. It ended with a discussion on VLS taxonomies. These taxonomies proved helpful in the later discussion.

Chapter 3 presented the methodology and methods used in this study. It described the mixed-method stance of this study and the research design. It provided a detailed description of context and a description of the research participants. Methods were explained.

Chapter 4 presented the analysis of findings. The chapter started with an analysis of the participants' language and vocabulary learning in Malaysia. It was then followed by presenting the findings around opportunities and limitations in language learning Coventry. The chapter then presented the findings for Vocabulary Levels Tests (VLT) and the Vocabulary Learning Strategies (VLS). The VLS findings were discussed separately for the strategies used in Malaysia and Coventry. The chapter ended with the

findings from the learning diary and participants' responses on the importance of vocabulary learning.

Chapter 5 addressed the research questions in relation to the data in this study and literature. The research questions are: What Vocabulary Learning Strategies do Malaysian sojourners use? and Where do they encounter new words? This chapter then answered the overarching question of 'How Malaysian sojourners learn vocabulary?' and presented a model of Vocabulary Learning in Context (VLC).

6.2 Summary of Key Findings

The key findings are given in Chapter 5. In summary, I found in respect to RQ1 and RQ2:

RQ1 What Vocabulary Learning Strategies do Malaysian sojourners use?

Malaysian sojourners used a mix of explicit and implicit vocabulary learning strategies throughout their vocabulary learning journey starting from school, HE, workplace and Coventry. The participants' VLS were more or less consistent across their English learning journey. Frequency of use for each strategy very much depended on who or what was available to them and their willingness to learn new words. In school, the participants largely relied on social, dictionary and memorisation strategies. As they moved to HE, the reliance on social and dictionary strategies was reduced as they started using more guessing strategies and technological tools. This showed that the participants had become more resourceful in vocabulary learning. In the workplace, the use of guessing strategies became more common. The participants also started to use more technological tools as these tools became widely available. This availability also meant the reliance on social and memorisation strategies was reduced.

In Coventry, vocabulary learning was influenced by the context the participants were in. Those who were in formal education often needed to understand new words they encountered in order to follow the subject matter. Those who were not in formal education often had more flexibility in vocabulary learning.

RQ2 Where do they encounter new words?

Malaysian sojourners encountered new words in all sort of situations. At times, they intentionally looked to encounter new words such as picking up a book and reading it. At other times, they encountered new words incidentally such as when watching movies. These encounters could also be a mix of intentional and incidental as one could be purposely reading an academic article and finding new words. Often Malaysian sojourners encountered new words when reading physical materials such as magazines and novels. However, a large number of the encounters came from technological based tools such as watching online movies, surfing the Internet and reading online. These encounters showed that technology plays an important role in providing opportunities to encounter new words. The frequency of encounters differed depending on the opportunities the participants had. Some opportunities were specific to participants' status such as being a student, working, and not working. For example, only students had the opportunity to encounter new words in lectures, reading academic articles, and communicating with lecturers. Other opportunities were common and were experienced by all, e.g. travelling, seeking health advice and using media.

6.3 Contribution to Knowledge

This study provided five main contributions to knowledge. The first contribution was the research design itself. This study went against the norm of VLS research which has been largely experimental, quantitative and used questionnaires as the main research method (for example Gu and Johnson, 1996; Zhang and Lu, 2015; Chacón-Beltrán, 2018). This thesis employed a mixed method study with interviews as the main research method. This study also used a learning diary to record participants' VLS which is uncommon in VLS research. Additionally, most studies used a VLS questionnaire as a means to capture VLS use quantitatively (for example Marin, 2005; Lin, 2008; Alyami, 2011), but I took a different approach by using the questionnaire as a means to get a general picture of participants' VLS use.

The second contribution was the focus of the study. Most VLS studies attempted to define the strategies used by various groups of learners and to compare the strategies used against different variables such as age, gender, and, language proficiency (Naiman, Frohlich, Stern and Todesco, 1978; Ahmed, 1989; Marin, 2005; Alyami, 2011; Aldawsari,

2016). This thesis, however, attempted to understand VLS in respect to context and agency, and also took into consideration the participants' previous learning experience as suggested by Gu (2003).

The third contribution was related to the participants' background. Most VLS research focused on students in HE and school (for example Mizumoto and Takeuchi, 2009; Aldawsari, 2016; Alhatmi, 2019) and use of VLS in formal teaching and learning. This study, however, explored the VLS used by participants who were not in formal education and shed some light on the kinds of opportunities and limitations these participants had. In addition, in looking at those in formal education, the focus was not restricted to what was happening in the classroom. In addition, this study is the first VLS study that focused on Malaysian sojourners that lived in an English-speaking country. Other VLS studies focused on Malaysian students in Malaysia only (for example Mustafa, Sain, and Abdul Razak, 2012; Baharudin and Ismail, 2014; Razak and Babikkoi, 2014; Mohd Noor, Nik Yusoff, Md. Yasim, and Kamarudin, 2016)

The fourth contribution was the theoretical contribution. I developed a model of Vocabulary Learning in Context (VLC) based on the data gathered in this study. This model illustrates how context and agency interact with VLS and how they influence opportunities. My model shows that vocabulary learning is indeed a process and the strategies are employed at different stages. This model suggests that learners are more likely to be able to use new words productively as they move further along in the process.

The fifth contribution is related to platforms for vocabulary learning. This study shows that technology plays a significant role as a medium of vocabulary learning. Technology provides what seems infinite opportunities to encounter new words. It also offers unlimited resources for learners to learn new words. Additionally, it also provides platforms for learners to practice using new words. Technology has changed the direction of vocabulary learning by providing 'inexhaustible language resources' (Ma, 2017: 45) and at the same time facilitated L2 vocabulary learning.

6.4 Implications and Recommendations

The implications and recommendations are addressed for L2 learners, L2 teachers, researchers, and those supporting language learning.

This study has shed some light on vocabulary learning for learners by showing that if they are trying to improve their vocabulary, they might want to pay more attention to new words, think about the different strategies they can use to memorise and to internalise those new words. Of course, learners should not be expected to call up a strategy for every new vocabulary they encounter. Some words can be ignored because understanding that word is not necessary, particularly while living in context where English is used a lot. Learners will have many opportunities to encounter new words. However, my argument is, at some point, learners might want to deal with vocabulary learning strategies and vocabulary growth more systematically and analytically. This was recognised by the participants themselves. But an overarching goal is to search out language encounters because it is language encounters that will make learners call up the vocabulary they already know, thus making more of a solid connection in their vocabulary learning repertoire. Even in the context of living abroad, learning encounters need to be searched for. It is easy for some to only talk in their first language and miss out on learning encounters.

This study also suggests that language teachers need to provide opportunities for learners to have multiple encounters with new vocabulary – that is their job as teachers, but they also should think about how they might promote vocabulary learning strategies to their learners. On the whole, the teaching of strategies seems underdeveloped. There are many strategies which teachers might use in the classroom, for example vocabulary games, using dictionaries, note-taking and word association, which could be stressed. Teachers should also try to provide suitable contexts for practising new vocabulary and monitoring vocabulary use.

As regards researchers, obviously, I would be pleased if someone explores the VLC model in another context. But at the least, what other researchers could do is to think through some of the key issues within this model. For example, how opportunities and limitations play out in different settings should be a key focus for new research. Carrying out research in a natural setting seems to be an important goal too. I started at the outset from an idea that those with the largest repertoire vocabulary learning strategies would make the most progress in vocabulary size. I do not have the data to answer this question explicitly but I could see that those who used strategies consistently, very often the same strategies, did

have a large vocabulary size, e.g. Mazlina, Razali, Salwa. I believe there is much more research to do on the efficiency of VLS and their importance.

As regards those supporting learning more informally, these could be people in learners' social circles and professionals that learners meet such as teachers, doctors, and lawyers. These people play a role as they, most probably, will communicate in English with L2 learners. Apart from answering questions, giving explanations or offering expert advice with second language learners, they should also try to check for understanding and make it easy for L2 learners to ask them to clarify key terms.

6.5 Limitations and Recommendations for Future Research

There are some limitations of this study. This study explores the vocabulary learning strategies used by Malaysian sojourners and how the context they were in shaped their strategy used. However, it does not aim to examine other aspects important in vocabulary learning strategies. It does not carry out experimental work and aimed at identifying the efficacy of particular strategies.

This study had a small number of participants, many with very good levels of English proficiency. I could have had more participants and participants from other language backgrounds. However, there was value in focusing solely on one language and one community in which I had good access to. It was simply not possible to get more participants who were willing to give up their time for my study. In the future, I see it would be interesting to work with beginner language learners from different backgrounds.

Overall, I am really happy with data collection. But clearly, I was unhappy about the VLT and I do feel that this is a limitation because I wanted to explore vocabulary size and growth. I value my experience of the tests and it is a strength that I report honestly on the problems that I encountered. However, I would not use the test in the same way again. However, I feel confident that over the course of the year, I saw learners whose vocabulary size, along with language ability, had improved and this is reflected in their self-assessment diagram. It would also be interesting if the learning diary could be written for a longer period, but this would increase demand on participants.

It would have been useful to carry out a full-scale shadowing of people but again, this is for another study. I did not have time to do it. Future research might want to consider shadowing to understand the way learners search out or shy away from opportunities. Shadowing also might shed some light in investigating how often learners use English in a day.

6.6 Personal Reflection

Writing this reflection marks closure to my research. I have embarked on this journey because of personal and professional reasons. Personally, I was frustrated with my ability in using a wide range of vocabulary. I wanted to understand my own vocabulary learning journey. I wanted to know how I could learn vocabulary better and take advantage of the context of living in a target language community. This study has made me realise that I have to consciously look for opportunities to encounter new words. I need to have an intention to learn vocabulary, use any available resources to understand new words, and make an extra and deliberate effort to use the words that I have learned. The key is that I have to practise repeatedly. I need to put aside the feeling of not being confident or being afraid of making mistakes. Vocabulary learning is indeed a learning process and as a learner, making mistakes is normal. What is important is what we learn from our mistakes.

Professionally, I wanted to know how I could help other second language learners, especially Malaysians and my own students, to improve their vocabulary learning. Once, I believed that the only way to learn a second language was to be living in the target language community itself, surrounded by native speakers. This is not true. Wherever we are, we will always have the opportunity to learn a second language. In Malaysia, there are fantastic opportunities in most places to encounter the English language. We have to take advantage of the opportunities and be mindful that we are responsible for shaping our own vocabulary learning. As a teacher, I am aware that I have to provide opportunities for my students to encounter new words and support their learning and provide platforms for them to use these new words. I need to reassure my students that it is not a matter of applying many strategies, but how and how well they use VLS (Lin, 2008).

I found myself enjoying the research process, but it was not without challenges. I started off feeling lost and unclear about my research. The fact that I was the only PhD student

researching vocabulary made me worried. I kept on reading literature, forced myself to present in conferences, put aside my embarrassment and gathered my courage to talk to other PhD students and experts in the field. Time was on my side. The more time I spent on reading and talking to people, the more confident I felt about my research. I started to enjoy my research even more, especially when I was writing the discussion chapter. I felt delighted in seeing all the works I had done for the past four years finally make sense. I was pleased even more when I was able to come up with a model that would be useful to many other people.

As a whole, undertaking this research has been a pleasant experience to me. It made me grow mentally and spiritually. I have learned to be positive when receiving constructive feedback during supervisions and when I presented my work in conferences. I have learned to bring myself back again to study when I felt miserable. I have learned to keep my feet on the ground. I have learned to balance my work and family. Most of the time, I was able to push myself out of my comfort zone and chase my dream by imagining myself wearing a graduation robe, looking at the smiles of my proud parents and listening to the laughter of my relieved husband and children.

"A diamond doesn't start out polished and shining. It once was nothing special, but with enough pressure and time, becomes spectacular. I'm that diamond."

Solange Nicole

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APPENDICES

Appendix A: Consent form

Dear participants,
I am Nur Afiqah Ab Rahman, a PhD in Education candidate in University of Warwick. My research is about investigating vocabulary learning strategies among Malaysians in UK.
Your responses are important in enabling me to obtain understanding on my study. Your responses will be kept confidential and will be used for academic purpose only. Your name is needed on the tests as I might need to clarify your response(s) in the interview in a later phase. If you have any questions or would like further information including the report of this research, please do not hesitate to email me at n.ab-rahman@warwick.ac.uk.

There are three phases of data collection. The phases are explained below:

Phase 1 - Please answer the Vocabulary Levels Test (VLT) and questionnaire. This will take approximately 60 mins.
Phase 2 – Please complete a learning journal recorded via WhatsApp for a month. I will send a reminder once every two days. This will only take approximately 5 minutes for each record made.
Phase 3 – Please answer a Vocabulary Levels Test (VLT) followed by an interview session at the end of four weeks. This session will be audio-recorded and will take approximately 60 minutes.

If you agree to participate, please sign the consent form overleaf.
Thank you for your cooperation.

Nur Afiqah Ab Rahman
PhD Researcher
Centre of Education (CES)
University of Warwick
07592320725 n.ab-rahman@warwick.ac.uk

Consent Form

Investigating the Use of Vocabulary Learning Strategies Among Malaysian Sojourners in UK

Researcher:
Nur Afiqah Bte Ab Rahman
Centre of Education (CES)
University of Warwick
07592320725 n.ab-rahman@warwick.ac.uk

Please read this carefully and sign at the bottom of the page.

1. I confirm that I have read and understand the information sheet for the above study and have had the opportunity to ask questions. ☐

2. I understand that my participation is voluntary and that I am free to withdraw at any time, without giving reason.

3. I agree to take part in the study.

4. I agree to use WhatsApp to record my learning journal for a month. I agree for the researcher to remind me using the application once every two days. My mobile number is _____ .

5. I agree to the interview being audio-recorded.

_____	_____	_____
Name of Participant	Date	Signature

Nur Afiqah Ab Rahman	_____	_____
Name of Researcher	Date	Signature

Appendix B: Vocabulary learning strategy questionnaire

Below are the instructions for the questionnaire. Please read it carefully.

1. This questionnaire consists of three sections which are Section A – Demographic Details, Section B – Language Learning Experience and Section C – Vocabulary Learning Strategies.
2. Please answer all sections with great care. For Section C, please answer based on what you ACTUALLY do, not on what you might or should do.
3. This objective of this questionnaire is to look at your language learning experience, not your language proficiency.

Ice-breaker

I'm going to ask mostly about language experience at home and at work.
After this, we will go through questions on the strategies that you use in your daily life.

Section A – Demographic Details

Please tick (/) in the appropriate box

1. Age

☐	16-20	☐	41-45
☐	21-25	☐	46-50
☐	26-30	☐	51-55
☐	31-35	☐	56-60
☐	36-40	☐	Others: Please specify

2. Gender ☐ Male ☐ Female

3. How long have you lived in UK? 1 year
4. How long do you plan to live in UK? 3 years
5. Purpose(s) of living in UK. (You may tick more than one box)

☐ Studying
☐ Working
☐ Accompanying Spouse
☐ Others. Please specify _____

6. Language(s) spoken and relevant proficiencies.

	Poor	Average	Good
1. Malay			
2English			

Section C - Vocabulary Learning Strategies

Please read all possible choices before you make your decision.
Please tick (/) one of the following choices according to your strategy used.

Never (zero %)
Rarely (around 25%)
Sometimes (around 50%)
Often (around 75%)
Always (around 100%)

	A. Guessing					
	When I meet unknown words which teacher or textbook does not give the meaning of					
	Never 1	**Rarely 2**	**Sometimes 3**	**Often 4**	**Always 5**	**Remarks/ Comment**
1. I skip the word without finding out its meaning.						
I guess the meaning of the unknown word by						
2. Saying the word aloud several times						
3. Checking if it is similar to Malay in sound (e.g tea in English, and Teh in Malay)						
4. Analysing the structure of the word (e.g prefixes, suffixes: **mis**-understand-**ing,** And compounds: **under**-ground.. Etc)						
5. Analysing the word part of speech (e.g verb, noun, adjective…etc)						
6. Paying attention to pictures if they accompany the word or text.						
7. Reading the sentence or						

paragraph again.						
8. Continuing reading until the meaning of the unknown word might be unlocked.						
9. Using what I understood of the whole text or situation where the word appeared.						
10. Using my background knowledge related to the text or situation where the word appeared.						

Other ways, I guess the meaning of unknown word by
……
……
……
……

B. Asking others						
I request help from (colleagues, friend, teacher, relative, language competent or native speaker) by asking						
	Never 1	**Rarely 2**	**Sometimes 3**	**Often 4**	**Always 5**	
11. Its equivalent Malay meaning.						
12. Its definition in English.						
13. Its pronunciation.						
14. For an example sentence.						
15. Its grammatical category.						
16. Its synonym or antonym in English.						
17. Its popularity or frequency.						
Other ways of asking for help.						

C. Dictionary						
Type of Dictionary used. I look up the unknown word:						
	Never 1	**Rarely 2**	**Sometimes**	**Often 4**	**Always**	

			3		**5**	
18. In a paper English-Malay Dictionary.						
19. In a paper English-English Dictionary.						
20. In an electronic Dictionary device.						
21. On the Internet (e.g online Dictionaries).						
22. On a mobile application Dictionary.						
Other dictionary that I use,						
Information sought from Dictionary. I look up the unknown word and check:						
	Never 1	**Rarely 2**	**Sometimes 3**	**Often 4**	**Always 5**	
23. Its meaning (s).						
24. Its spelling.						
25. Its part of speech. (e.g verb, adjective, noun, etc)						
26. Example sentences.						
27. Its synonym or antonym.						
28. Its phonetic symbols or transcription.						
29. Its stem (e.g actress has stem **act**, usage has stem **use**)						
Other information that I look for in a dictionary is						

D. Vocabulary Note-Taking.						***refer to transcription**
If I record new words,						
	Never 1	**Rarely 2**	**Sometimes 3**	**Often 4**	**Always 5**	
30. I just write down the English word on its own.						
31. I write down the English word and its Malay meaning(s).						
32. I write down its English definition.						
33. I write down synonyms and antonyms beside new words.						
34. I write down example sentences using the new word.						
35. I write down the phonetic transcription of the word.						
36. I write down the word's historical origin.						
37. I write down the grammatical category of the word (e.g. Noun, verb, adjective etc)						
38. I write down the word context and situation in which it can be used.						
39. I draw pictures that represent their meaning.						
40. I use mind maps to illustrate the word meaning.						
41. I write the word usage as UK versus USA in terms of spelling (e.g. Analyse -bre, analyse -ame)						
42. I write the contextual reference for the new word (e.g. Unit, film, where I encountered it)						

43. I use a special book to keep my records.						
44. I use a notebook application on my device to keep my records (e.g. Laptop, smartphone, tab etc). Please specify …… …….						
Other information that I record about new words.						

Places where I keep a note of new words						***refer to transcription**
	Never 1	**Rarely 2**	**Sometimes 3**	**Often 4**	**Always 5**	
45. I write down any related information about new word in the margins of the textbook or where it is met.						
46. I write down new words in my English class notebook (e.g. The one I use for my English course or other courses)						
47. I write down new words in a specific vocabulary section in my English notebook.						
48. I write down new words in a separate vocabulary notebook.						
49. I write down new words in my pocket notebook.						
50. I write down new words on cards or loose pieces of paper.						
51. I write down new words on wall charts, posters or small pieces of						

paper I stick somewhere at home.						
52. I write down new words in a file on my laptop/ computer/ tablet/ smartphone.						
53. I write down new words in an application on my smartphone. (Please specify **IPhone Notes**)						
Other places that I keep a note of new words.						

E. Ways of Organization						***refer to transcription**
Ways I organise my notes about new words						
	Never 1	**Rarely 2**	**Sometimes 3**	**Often 4**	**Always 5**	
54. I organise new words by unit or lesson of the textbook.						
55. I organise new words randomly.						
56. I organise new words to their grammatical category (e.g. Noun, verb, etc)						
57. I organise new words according to their meaning related groups (animals, fruits..etc)						
58. I organise new words alphabetically.						
59. I organise new words according to their genre or language use (politics, literary, educational..etc)						
60. I organise words in families with the same stem (e.g. I put together decide, decision,						

decisive, indecisive..etc)						
Other ways of organising my notes about new words.						

F. Vocabulary Retention/ Memorisation						
Ways I do repetition						
	Never 1	**Rarely 2**	**Sometimes 3**	**Often 4**	**Always 5**	
61. I say the word aloud several times.						
62. I repeat the word silently several times.						
63. I write the word several times.						
64. I listen to the word several times.						
Other ways that I repeat new words.						

Information I handle repeatedly: When I do repetition, I						
	Never 1	**Rarely 2**	**Sometimes 3**	**Often 4**	**Always 5**	
65. Only repeat the English word with nothing else.						
66. Say the word and its Malay translation.						
67. Repeat example sentences several times.						
68. Repeat the word and its English definition.						
69. Repeat the spelling of the word several times, letter by letter.						
I repeat word by repeating its						

G. Associations I make to help me retain new words						
	Never 1	**Rarely 2**	**Sometimes 3**	**Often 4**	**Always 5**	
70. I relate the new word to other English words similar in sound or spelling. (e.g. Weak & week).						
71. I relate the new word to synonyms or antonyms in English. (e.g. Good & bad, specific & particular).						
72. I associate new words according to the semantic relationship (e.g. Table & chair) other than synonyms/ antonyms.						
73. I associate the new word with a word in Malay similar in sound. (e.g book/ buku, charge/ caj)						
74. I use a keyword method.						
75. I relate the new words to words that usually follow each other in speech or writing (e.g. Made a mistake, commit a crime).						
76. I visualize the spelling of the word or the meaning of the new words.						
77. I associate the new word with my personal experience.						
78. I associate the new word with the page or place or situation I encountered it.						
79. I associate the new word with a physical action I do or imagine.						
80. I break up the new word according to its syllables or structures (e.g. Prefixes **Un**educated, suffixes educat**or**…etc)						
Other ways of associations that I do to help me retain new words by						

H. Practising or other means of consolidating new words						
	Never 1	**Rarely 2**	**Sometimes 3**	**Often 4**	**Always 5**	

81. I quiz myself or ask other to quiz me on new words (answering vocabulary tests)						
82. I use as many new words as possible in speaking or in writing.						
83. I practise saying things in English by myself.						
84. I look for opportunities to encounter new words in English (reading magazines, watching TV, using internet…etc)						
85. I put English labels on physical objects.						
Other ways that I use to practise the new words.						

Appendix C: Learning diary

Guidelines on learning journal via WhatsApp/ Email

1. You do NOT need to do something SPECIAL for me.
2. There is no right or wrong comment of whatever you do in your learning journal.
3. The purpose of doing this update is research-oriented and will be kept confidential. I just want to know what, if anything, you do.
4. Kindly update me on what you ACTUALLY did, NOT what you think you ought to do to learn new English words.
5. You are allowed to use the features available in WhatsApp/ Email such as audio, video, pictures and emoticons.
6. Please tell me about ONE OR MORE words that you meet every day.
7. I will send a reminder once every two days.

Learning Journal Format

Day 1/2/3/4/5/6…30

Date_____

New words (if any) _____ (Write 'NONE' if you do not meet any new word on that day)

Where was it encountered? _____

What did you do when you meet the word for the first time? _____

Appendix D: Sample of learning diary entries

Day 1: 13/2 Heed = pay attention to Source : novel Example : "These were the rules, if they did not heed them, they got into trouble" Googled for meaning. Day 1: 13/2 Affable = friendly, congenial Antonym - prickly Source : novel Example : "The women are affable." Googled for meaning and antonym. Day 1: 13/2 plethora = a large or excessive amount of something / overabundance Antonym - dearth Source : novel Example : The author offers a plethora of detail that tends to overwhelm the reader. Googled for meaning and antonym. Day 1: 13/2 leeway = freedom Source : novel Googled for meaning Day 1: 13/2 invigorating = making one feel strong Source : journal article Googled for meaning.	Day 2: 14/2 Exile = being barres from one's native country Source : news on telly Googled for meaning Day 2: 14/2 Expediment = hindrance Source : journal article Googled for meaning
Day 4 Calloused (adj.) hardened part of body i.e feet Source : novel I used built-in dictionary apps in macbook to google for meaning	Day 5 Treacherous : unpredictable/hidden danger Source : book summary at amazon website I used built-in dictionary apps in macbook to google for meaning
Day 7 Onus : responsibility Source : journal Google for meaning	Day 9 Duress : threats/violence Source : journal Google for meaning
Day 12	Day 13

Permissive- lenient Online news Googled for meaning.	Turmoil News on telly Googled for meaning.
Day 14 Mayhem -chaos Radio news Googled for meaning.	Day 15 Thrust = gist/intention Journal article Googled for meaning.
Day 17 Haste = hurry Movie Googled for meaning	Day 20 Atrocity = cruel Online news Googled for meaning.
Day 21 Revel = celebrate Newspaper Googled for meaning.	Day 24 Full-fledged = mature Research article Googled for meaning.
Day 25 Petty = narrow-minded TV show Googled for meaning.	Day 29 Delinquent = tending to commit crime (minor crime) Journal article Googled for meaning.
Day 30 Preempt = take action in order to prevent unwanted event Journal article Googled for meaning.	

Appendix E: Vocabulary Levels Test Version A

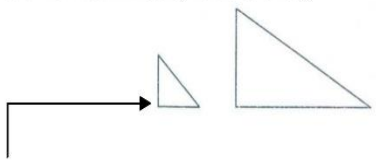
VOCABULARY LEVEL TEST

Name: _____
(The researcher only need your name for the purpose of data analysis. The results will not be shared to any third parties.)

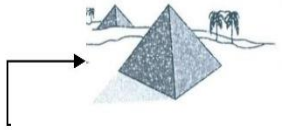
There are two parts of the test: Part A and Part B. Part B consists of five sections, Section A - E.

Part A
Write T if a sentence is true. Write X if it is not true. Write ? if you do not understand the sentence. The first one has been answered for you.

We cut time into minutes, hours and day _T_



This one is little. ___

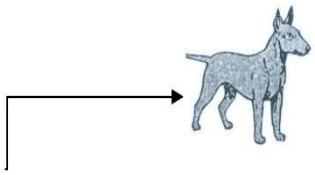


You can find these everywhere. ___

Some children call their mother Mama. ___

Show me the way to do it means 'show me how to do it'. ___

All the world is under water. ___



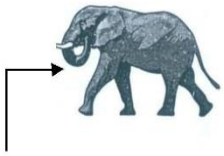
This can keep people away from your house. ___

When something falls, it goes up. ___

1

Most children go to school at night. ___

It is easy for children to remain still. ___



One person can carry this. ___

A scene is a part of a play. ___

People often think of their home, when they are away from it.___

There is a mountain in every city. ___

Each month has the same number of days. ___

A chief is the youngest person in a group. ___

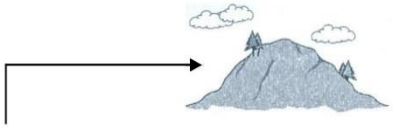
Black is the colour. ___

You can use a pen to make marks on paper. ___

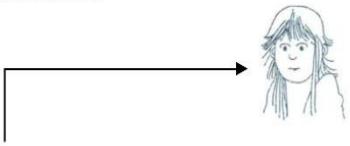
A family always has at least two people. ___

You can go by road from London to York. ___

You can eat silver. ___



This is a hill. ___



This young person is a girl. ___

We can be sure that one day we will die. ___

2

A society is made of people living together. ___

An example can help you understand. ___

Some book have pictures in them. ___

When some people attack other people, they try to hurt them.___

When something is ancient, it is very big. ___

Big ships can sail up a stream. ___

It is good to keep a promise. ___

People often dream when they are sleeping. ___

This is the date – 10 o'clock. ___

When something is impossible, it is easy to do it. ___

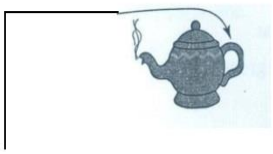
Milk is blue. ___

A square has five sides. ___

Boats are made to travel on land. ___

Cars cannot pass each other on a wide road. ___

When you look at something closely, you can see the details.___



This part is a handle. ___

3

PART B

You must choose the right word to go with each meaning. Write the number of that word next to its meaning.

Here is an **example**.

1	business	
2	clock	_____ part of a house
3	horse	_____ animal with four legs
4	pencil	_____ something used for
5	shoe	writing
6	wall	

You answer it in the following way.

1	business	
2	clock	___*6*__ part of a house
3	horse	___*3*__ animal with four legs
4	pencil	___*4*__ something used for
5	shoe	writing
6	wall	

Some words are in the test to make it more difficult. You do not have to find a meaning for these words. In the example above, these words are business, clock, and shoe.

If you have no idea about the meaning of a word, **DO NOT GUESS**. But if you think you might know the meaning, then you should try to find the answer.

Version 1 SECTION A

1 birth	
2 dust	_____ game
3 operation	_____ winning
4 row	_____ being born
5 sport	
6 victory	

1 choice	
2 crop	_____ heat
3 flesh	_____ meat
4 salary	_____ money paid regularly
for	
5 secret	doing a job
6 temperature	

1 cap	
2 education	_____ teaching and learning
3 journey	_____ numbers to measure
with	
4 parent	_____ going to a far place
5 scale	
6 trick	

1 attack	
2 charm	_____ gold and silver
3 lack	_____ pleasing quality
4 pen	_____ not having something
5 shadow	
6 treasure	

1 cream	
2 factory	_____ part of milk
3 nail	_____ a lot of money
4 pupil	_____ person who is studying
5 sacrifice	
6 wealth	

1 adopt	
2 climb	_____ go up
3 examine	_____ look at closely
4 pour	_____ be on every side
5 satisfy	
6 surround	

1 bake	
2 connect	_____ join together
3 inquire	_____ walk without purpose
4 limit	_____ keep within a certain
size	
5 recognize	
6 wander	

1 burst	
2 concern	_____ break open
3 deliver	_____ make better
4 fold	_____ take something to
someone	
5 improve	
6 urge	

1 original	
2 private	_____ first
3 royal	_____ not public
4 slow	_____ all added together
5 sorry	
6 total	

1 brave	
2 electric	_____ commonly done
3 firm	_____ wanting food
4 hungry	_____ having no fear
5 local	
6 usual	

5

Version 1 SECTION B

1 belt	
2 climate	_____ idea
3 executive	_____ inner surface of your hand
4 notion	_____ strip of leather worn around the waist
5 palm	
6 victim	

1 acid	
2 bishop	_____ cold feeling
3 chill	_____ farm animal
4 ox	_____ organization or framework
5 ridge	
6 structure	

1 bench	
2 charity	_____ long seat
3 jar	_____ help to the poor
4 mate	_____ part of a country
5 mirror	
6 province	

1 boot	
2 device	_____ army officer
3 lieutenant	_____ a kind of stone
4 marble	_____ tube through which blood
5 phrase	flows
6 vein	

1 apartment	
2 candle	_____ a place to live
3 draft	_____ chance of something happening
4 horror	
5 prospect	_____ first rough form of something written
6 timber	

1 betray	
2 dispose	_____ frighten
3 embrace	_____ say publicly
4 injure	_____ hurt seriously
5 proclaim	
6 scare	

1 encounter	
2 illustrate	_____ meet
3 inspire	_____ beg for help
4 plead	_____ close completely
5 seal	
6 shift	

1 assist	
2 bother	_____ help
3 condemn	_____ cut neatly
4 erect	_____ spin around quickly
5 trim	
6 whirl	

1 annual	
2 concealed	_____ wild
3 definite	_____ clear and certain
4 mental	____ happening once a year
5 previous	
6 savage	

1 dim	
2 junior	_____ strange
3 magnificent	_____ wonderful
4 maternal	_____ not clearly lit
5 odd	
6 weary	

Version 1 SECTION C

1 balloon		1 blend	
2 federation	_____ bucket	2 devise	_____ mix together
3 novelty	_____ unusual interesting thing	3 hug	_____ plan or invent
4 pail	_____ rubber bag that is filled	4 lease	_____ hold tightly in your arms
5 veteran	with air	5 plague	
6 ward		6 reject	

1 alcohol		1 abolish	
2 apron	_____ stage of development	2 drip	_____ bring to an end by law
3 hip	_____ state of untidiness or	3 insert	_____ guess about the future
4 lure	dirtiness	4 predict	_____ calm or comfort someone
5 mess	_____ cloth worn in front to	5 soothe	
6 phase	protect your clothes	6 thrive	

1 apparatus		1 bleed	
2 compliment	_____ expression of admiration	2 collapse	_____ come before
3 ledge	_____ set of instruments or	3 precede	_____ fall down suddenly
4 revenue	machinery	4 reject	_____ move with quick steps and
5 scrap	_____ money received by the	5 skip	jumps
6 tile	Government	6 tease	

1 bulb		1 casual	
2 document	_____ female horse	2 desolate	_____ sweet-smelling
3 legion	_____ large group of soldiers or	3 fragrant	_____ only one of its kind
4 mare	people	4 radical	____ good for your health
5 pulse	_____ a paper that provides	5 unique	
6 tub	information	6 wholesome	

1 concrete		1 gloomy	
2 era	_____ circular shape	2 gross	_____ empty
3 fiber	_____ top of a mountain	3 infinite	_____ dark or sad
4 loop	_____ a long period of time	4 limp	_____ without end
5 plank		5 slim	
6 summit		6 vacant	

Version 1 SECTION D

1 antics	
2 batch	_____ foolish behavior
3 connoisseur	_____ a group of things
4 foreboding	_____ person with a good knowledge of art or music
5 haunch	
6 scaffold	

1 auspices	
2 dregs	_____ confused mixture
3 hostage	_____ natural liquid present in the mouth
4 jumble	
5 saliva	_____ worst and most useless parts of anything
6 truce	

1 casualty	
2 flurry	_____ someone killed or injured
3 froth	_____ being away from other people
4 revelry	
5 rut	_____ noisy and happy celebration
6 seclusion	

1 apparition	
2 botany	_____ ghost
3 expulsion	_____ study of plants
4 insolence	_____ small pool of water
5 leash	
6 puddle	

1 arsenal	
2 barracks	_____ happiness
3 deacon	_____ difficult situation
4 felicity	_____ minister in a church
5 predicament	
6 spore	

1 acquiesce	
2 bask	_____ to accept without protest
3 crease	_____ sit or lie enjoying warmth
4 demolish	_____ make a fold on cloth or paper
5 overhaul	
6 rape	

1 blaspheme	
2 endorse	_____ slip or slide
3 nurture	_____ give care and food to
4 skid	_____ speak badly about God
5 squint	
6 straggle	

1 clinch	
2 jot	_____ move very fast
3 mutilate	_____ injure or damage
4 smolder	_____ burn slowly without flame
5 topple	
6 whiz	

1 auxiliary	
2 candid	_____ bad-tempered
3 luscious	_____ full of self-importance
4 morose	_____ helping, adding support
5 pallid	
6 pompous	

1 dubious	
2 impudent	_____ rude
3 languid	_____ very ancient
4 motley	_____ of many different kinds
5 opaque	
6 primeval	

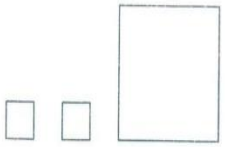
Appendix F: Vocabulary Levels Test Version B

Name: _____

(The researcher only need your name for the purpose of data analysis. The results will not be shared to any third parties.)
There are two parts of the test: Part A and Part B. Part B consists of five sections, Section A - D.

Vocabulary Levels Test – Version 2: Part A
Write T if a sentence is true. Write N if it is not true. Write X if you do not understand the sentence. The first one has been answered for you.

We can stop time. _N_



Two of these are little. ___

You must look, when you want to find the way. ___

When someone asks 'What are you called?', you should say your name. ___

There are many ways to get money. ___

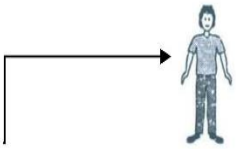
All the world is under water. ___

When you keep asking, you ask once. ___

Sometimes people die when fall off the building. ___

Day follows night and night follows day. ___

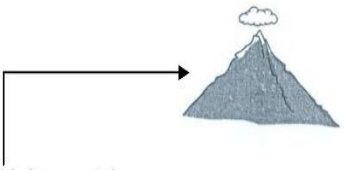
Remain here means 'stay'. ___



This is a person. ___

When there is a change of scene, we see a different place. ___

Often means 'many times'. ___



This is mountain. ___

Each month has a different name. ___

People follow the orders of a chief. ___

Green is a colour. ___

Dirty hands cannot leave marks on glass. ___

You need at least five people to make a group. ___

Cars move on the road. ___

You can eat silver. ___

You can see more when you are on a hill. ___

Your child will be a girl or a boy. ___

When you are sure, you know you are right. ___

Each society has the same rules. ___

Three example of food are: shops, homes, and markets. ___

This is a picture. ___

It is good to attack people. ___

Rome is an ancient city. ___

A stream is a small river. ___

When you promise something, you say you will really do it. ___

Dreams are about things that really happened. ___

When we give the date, we say the day, the month and the year. ___

It is impossible to live for a long time without water. ___

Very young children drink milk. ___

This is a square.  ___

This is a boat. ___

It is a short way from one side to the other side of a wide river. ___

A detail is a small piece of information. ___

A handle is part of our body. ___

PART B

You must choose the right word to go with each meaning. Write the number of that word next to its meaning.

Here is an **example**.

1	business	
2	clock	_____ part of a house
3	horse	_____ animal with four legs
4	pencil	_____ something used for writing
5	shoe	
6	wall	

You answer it in the following way.

1	business	
2	clock	___*6*___ part of a house
3	horse	___*3*___ animal with four legs
4	pencil	___*4*___ something used for writing
5	shoe	
6	wall	

Some words are in the test to make it more difficult. You do not have to find a meaning for these words. In the example above, these words are business, clock, and shoe.

If you have no idea about the meaning of a word, **DO NOT GUESS**. But if you think you might know the meaning, then you should try to find the answer.

Version 2 Section A

1 copy	
2 event	_____ end or highest point
3 motor	_____ this moves a car
4 pity	_____ thing made to be like another
5 profit	
6 tip	

1 accident	
2 debt	_____ loud deep sound
3 fortune	_____ something you must pay
4 pride	_____ having a high opinion of yourself
5 roar	
6 thread	

1 coffee	
2 disease	_____ money for work
3 justice	_____ a piece of clothing
4 skirt	_____ using the law in the right way
5 stage	
6 wage	

1 clerk	
2 frame	_____ a drink
3 noise	_____ office worker
4 respect	_____ unwanted sound
5 theater	
6 wine	

1 dozen	
2 empire	_____ chance
3 gift	_____ twelve
4 opportunity	_____ money paid to the government
5 relief	
6 tax	

1 admire	
2 complain	_____ make wider or longer
3 fix	_____ bring in for the first time
4 hire	_____ have a high opinion of someone
5 introduce	
6 stretch	

1 arrange	
2 develop	_____ grow
3 lean	_____ put in order
4 owe	_____ like more than something else
5 prefer	
6 seize	

1 blame	
2 elect	_____ make
3 jump	_____ choose by voting
4 manufacture	_____ become like water
5 melt	
6 threaten	

1 ancient	
2 curious	_____ not easy
3 difficult	_____ very old
4 entire	_____ related to God
5 holy	
6 social	

1 bitter	
2 independent	_____ beautiful
3 lovely	_____ small
4 merry	_____ liked by many people
5 popular	
6 slight	

Version 2 Section B

1 bull	
2 champion	_____ formal and serious manner
3 dignity	_____ winner of a sporting event
4 hell	_____ building where valuable objects are shown
5 museum	
6 solution	

1 blanket	
2 contest	_____ holiday
3 generation	_____ good quality
4 merit	_____ wool covering used on beds
5 plot	
6 vacation	

1 comment	
2 gown	_____ long formal dress
3 import	_____ goods from a foreign country
4 nerve	
5 pasture	_____ part of the body which carries feeling
6 tradition	

1 administration	
2 angel	_____ group of animals
3 frost	_____ spirit who serves God
4 herd	_____ managing business and affairs
5 fort	
6 pond	

1 atmosphere	
2 counsel	_____ advice
3 factor	_____ a place covered with grass
4 hen	_____ female chicken
5 lawn	
6 muscle	

1 abandon	
2 dwell	_____ live in a place
3 oblige	_____ follow in order to catch
4 pursue	_____ leave something permanently
5 quote	
6 resolve	

1 assemble	
2 attach	_____ look closely
3 peer	_____ stop doing something
4 quit	_____ cry out loudly in fear
5 scream	
6 toss	

1 drift	
2 endure	_____ suffer patiently
3 grasp	_____ join wool threads together
4 knit	_____ hold firmly with your hands
5 register	
6 tumble	

1 brilliant	
2 distinct	_____ thin
3 magic	_____ steady
4 naked	_____ without clothes
5 slender	
6 stable	

1 aware	
2 blank	_____ usual
3 desperate	_____ best or most important
4 normal	_____ knowing what is happening
5 striking	
6 supreme	

Version 2 Section C

1 analysis	
2 curb	_____ eagerness
3 gravel	_____ loan to buy a house
4 mortgage	_____ small stones mixed with sand
5 scar	
6 zeal	

1 cavalry	
2 eve	_____ small hill
3 ham	_____ day or night before a holiday
4 mound	
5 steak	_____ soldiers who fight from horses
6 switch	

1 circus	
2 jungle	_____ musical instrument
3 nomination	_____ seat without a back or arms
4 sermon	
5 stool	_____ speech given by a priest in a church
6 trumpet	

1 artillery	
2 creed	_____ a kind of tree
3 hydrogen	_____ system of belief
4 maple	_____ large gun on wheels
5 pork	
6 streak	

1 chart	
2 forge	_____ map
3 mansion	_____ large beautiful house
4 outfit	_____ place where metals are made and shaped
5 sample	
6 volunteer	

1 contemplate	
2 extract	_____ think about deeply
3 gamble	_____ bring back to health
4 launch	_____ make someone angry
5 provoke	
6 revive	

1 demonstrate	
2 embarrass	_____ have a rest
3 heave	_____ break suddenly into small pieces
4 obscure	
5 relax	_____ make someone feel shy or nervous
6 shatter	

1 correspond	
2 embroider	_____ exchange letters
3 lurk	_____ hide and wait for someone
4 penetrate something	_____ feel angry about
5 prescribe	
6 resent	

1 decent	
2 frail	_____ weak
3 harsh	_____ concerning a city
4 incredible	_____ difficult to believe
5 municipal	
6 specific	

1 adequate	
2 internal	_____ enough
3 mature	_____ fully grown
4 profound	_____ alone away from other things
5 solitary	
6 tragic	

Version 2 Section D

1 alabaster
2 chandelier
3 dogma
4 keg
5 rasp
6 tentacle

_____ small barrel
_____ soft white stone
_____ tool for shaping wood

1 benevolence
2 convoy
3 lien
4 octave
5 stint
6 throttle

_____ kindness
_____ set of musical notes
_____ speed control for an engine

1 bourgeois
2 brocade
3 consonant
4 prelude
5 stupor
6 tier

_____ middle class people
_____ row or level of something
_____ cloth with a pattern or gold or silver threads

1 alcove
2 impetus
3 maggot
4 parole
5 salve
6 vicar

_____ priest
_____ release from prison early
_____ medicine to put on wounds

1 alkali
2 banter
3 coop
4 mosaic
5 stealth
6 viscount

_____ light joking talk
_____ a rank of British nobility
_____ picture made of smallpieces of glass or stone

1 dissipate
2 flaunt
3 impede
4 loot
5 squirm
6 vie

_____ steal
_____ scatter or vanish
_____ twist the body about uncomfortably

1 contaminate
2 cringe
3 immerse
4 peek
5 relay
6 scrawl

_____ write carelessly
_____ move back because of fear
_____ put something under water

1 blurt
2 dabble
3 dent someone's
4 pacify
5 strangle
6 swagger

_____ walk in a proud way
_____ kill by squeezing throat
_____ say suddenly without thinking

1 illicit
2 lewd
3 mammoth
4 slick
5 temporal
6 vindictive

_____ immense
_____ against the law
_____ wanting revenge

1 indolent
2 nocturnal
3 obsolete
4 torrid
5 translucent
6 wily

_____ lazy
_____ no longer used
_____ clever and tricky

Appendix G: The original codes (Malaysia)

Lived overseas	Motivation
English learning	In UK
Motivation	English lessons
Vocabulary	Language used
Radio	Assessment
TV	Methods
Training	Rigourous
Locality	Vocabulary
Language	English lesson
Language used	Participation
Grandparents	Practice
Parents' support	General info
Father	General language learning
Mother	Job scope
Methods	Language used
Immersion	Vocabulary
Rigorous	General info
General information	Negative
Vocabulary	Positive

Appendix H: The original codes (Coventry)

Language in general	Difficulties
Courses	Determination
Running errands	Study
Emotion before arrival	Workplace
Emotion now arrival	VLS – home
Gadgets	VLS – workplace
Language used - communication	VLS – study
Language used - family	Opinion on VLS
Language used- friends	Supervision
Colleagues	Classmates
Superiors	Social media
Spouses	

Appendix I: A jumbled-up excerpt of 'Winnie the Pooh and the Honey Tree'

oerfst, and in the middle of this place was a large oak-tree, and, from the top of the tree, teehr ceam a doul ziunbzg-oisen.

eiinWn-hte-hooP ast dnwo ta eth otfo fo hte etre, tup sih dahe eteebwn his wasp dan nbgea to tknhi. First of all he said to himself: "That buzzing-noise means something. uYo ndo't teg a giuzznb-onsei und thta, jsut ngzbuiz cilke ignbuzz, ohittwu tis gnanemi enomsihgt. If there's a buzzing-noise, dsmeoboy's kanmgi a uzbinzg-niseo, bed bed onyl nasero rfo gkmain a zznbgui-ieson taht I nowk of si eabuecs uoy're a bee.

"Then he thought another long time, and said: "And the only reason for being a bee that I know of is making honey." dAn someone eh gto up, adn said: "And the only reason for making honey is so as I can eat it." So he began to climb the tree.

eH dclbiem nad eh free and eh licebdm, dna as eh wind he gnsa a tiltle nsgo ot mshleif. It walking ikel itsh: nsI't ti nnyuf wHo a himself lseik ohyne? zBuz! uzzB! uzBz! I nrdwoe hwy eh dose? Un, sma then he climbed a little further... and a little further... and then just a little further. By that time he had thought of another song.

It's a dos nfuny thhgotu that, wol go if Bresa erew seBe,They'd build their nests at the bottom of trees. And that being so (if the Bees were Bears), eW hsdolun't aevh ot cblmi up lla heest asrsti.

He was getting rather tired by this time, os htat si yhw he asgn a mlpoiiangnC nSgo. He was nearly there now, and if he just stood on that branch...
Crack!