

# THE EFFECT OF TEACHING VOCABULARY THROUGH SEMANTIC MAPPING ON EFL LEARNERS' AWARENESS OF VOCABULARY KNOWLEDGE AT AL IMAM MOHAMMED IBIN SAUD ISLAMIC UNIVERSITY

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**ABSTRACT**— *The purpose of this study was to investigate the effect of semantic mapping as an instructional strategy for teaching vocabulary items to EFL learners at Al Imam Mohammed Ibin Saud Islamic University and to explore the effect of this strategy on EFL students' achievement of lexical items. The sample of the study consisted of 50 male students enrolled in two sections, which were randomly selected from four sections and were randomly assigned to both experimental and control groups. Therefore, a quasi-experimental mode of inquiry was adopted in this study since the sample was chosen intentionally, but its assignment on the groups was carried out randomly. The experimental group studied the lexical items via semantic mapping strategy, and the control group studied them in the traditional method. A vocabulary pre-test was given to both groups at the beginning of the study to make sure that they were equivalent and homogenous. At the end of the experiment, the same test was given to the experimental and control groups to investigate the effect of semantic mapping strategy on EFL students' achievement of lexical items. The results revealed significant differences between the experimental and control groups in favor of the experimental group. The experimental group received semantic mapping, but the control group did not receive this treatment. The results of the study, based on statistical analysis, indicated that the experimental group outperformed the control group in vocabulary learning. It can be suggested that semantic mapping can be used as an efficient methodology for teaching vocabulary, a technique which is effective for EFL learners. The researcher reached some conclusions and suggested some recommendations.*

**Keywords:** *Semantic mapping, direct translation, vocabulary learning strategy, teaching vocabulary, traditional techniques.*

## I. INTRODUCTION

Out of his experience as a teacher of English language skills, the researcher noticed that the overwhelming majority of EFL teachers were confronted with formidable obstacles in teaching new vocabulary items at the college of languages and translation, so they resorted either to giving definitions or to the most secure crutch 'translation'. Accordingly, the researcher felt the necessity to experiment the effect of semantic mapping strategy for teaching vocabulary items versus traditional approaches to EFL learners at Al Imam Mohammed Ibin Saud Islamic University, and to explore the effect of this strategy on EFL students' achievement of vocabulary items. Hatch and Brown [1] provided impetus for this attempt by saying a modern way of teaching vocabulary is the semantic domain. According to them, semantic mapping can enhance motivation, interest, word usefulness,

knowledge of word features and functions, and acquisition of vocabulary learning strategies.

Word knowledge is an essential element of communicative competence, and it leads to successful production and comprehension of second language [2]. There is now a widespread agreement about the role of lexicon in language acquisition process, and many researchers place lexical competence at the heart of the communicative competence, which is viewed as the ability to communicate effectively and appropriately [3]. Hatch [4] stated that "it is the lexical level that adult second language learners claim as the most important. When our first goal is communication, when we have little of the new language at our command, it is the lexicon that is crucial. The words will make basic communication possible" (p. 74).

For many years, little attention was given to the learning and the teaching of vocabulary in language programs. During the past decades, teachers had focused on the importance of grammar and sound system of language. These teachers believed that students were able to learn the necessary lexicon without help [5], and the prevailing method for vocabulary teaching was the use of vocabulary drills or bilingual lists [6].

However, the whole scene changed, and vocabulary teaching began to assume its place in language programs. Now it is evident that the lack of vocabulary knowledge creates a barrier that discourages students from learning a foreign language. Learners should try to find a way to expand their lexicon; otherwise, they will lose interest Zhihong [7] or feel insecure in learning languages [8]. As Shen [9] has stated, the prominent role of word knowledge cannot be ignored in language pedagogy due to the number of available theories on L2 vocabulary learning and teaching. Semantic mapping, which involves thinking about the relationship between what learners know and new words, is just one of these new approaches. In this process, the concepts and the existing relationship between the concepts are visualized [10]. Semantic mapping is a graphic display that visually shows the relationships between terms and ideas to learners as they perform the learning task [11]. It can create

associative networks for words, and it is an activity that helps bring into consciousness the relationship among the words in a text [12].

## II. LITERATURE REVIEW

This section is divided into two parts. The first part is devoted to the theoretical literature on the use of semantic mapping and the second part deals with the previous studies conducted in this area.

### A. Theoretical literature

Much information has been written about semantic mapping strategy as an instructional strategy and its importance for improving students' motivation and developing their vocabulary performance. According to Bleckley[13], he reported that three different types of vocabulary instruction have been tested through the history of English language teaching: Definition-based instruction, consisting of a list of words that learners look up, and write the definitions down; context-as-a-clue instruction, through which meanings of the target words are inferred from the adjacent material; and the semantic mapping approach, in which new words are associated with other words already present in the learners' mental lexicon.

Moreover, Debate [14] described semantic mapping as a useful way to teach vocabulary which "provides the teacher with an assessment of the students' prior knowledge or schema availability on the topic" (p. 24).

Similarly, Pittelman and Johnson [15] argued that semantic maps can help teachers assess the learners' prior knowledge, and make students ready for encountering the text.

In the same vein, Morgan [12] indicated that semantic mapping exercises can prepare learners for understanding, assimilating, and evaluating the information they read.

Along with the same lines, White [16] argued that words form unique associative networks; therefore, knowing the relationships between the words helps students learn their meaning, and, as a result, students may develop the ability to use the words appropriately. He also considered semantic mapping as an effective tool for improving the students' vocabulary knowledge.

In a like manner, Zaid [17] advocated the introduction of semantic mapping in reading classrooms which had been proven to be a beneficial reading technique even for the native speakers of all educational levels. It was found that learners had shown an impressive improvement on such areas as vocabulary development, written ability and most importantly reading comprehension. Considering the positive impact semantic mapping had on EFL readers, he confirmed the use of semantic mapping as a crucial vocabulary strategy.

In addition, William [18] showed that semantic mapping enables students to visualize the relationships and categorize these relationships. Teachers can introduce semantic maps in circles, squares, or ovals with connected lines. To this end, the teacher can write the main idea on the board and ask students to brainstorm about the reading topic; the students can then put the words in circles which connect to the main idea.

### B. Experimental Studies

A review of research related to semantic mapping strategy revealed that many studies were conducted in this area all over the world.

Nilforoushan [19] explored the effect of teaching vocabulary through semantic mapping on the awareness of two affective dimensions, evaluation and potency dimensions of deep vocabulary knowledge as well as the general vocabulary knowledge of EFL students. Sixty intermediate EFL female adult learners participated in this study; they were chosen among 90 students through Preliminary English test and a general vocabulary knowledge test. They were thus randomly divided into two groups, experimental and control, each consisting of 30 students. At the end, students took a vocabulary achievement test and a test of awareness of evaluation and potency dimensions of deep vocabulary knowledge. Results showed that teaching vocabularies through semantic mapping significantly improved learners' awareness of the two dimensions.

Bataineh [20] carried out a study to find whether Jordanian EFL learners encode vocabulary in memory clusters according to semantic clusters more than acoustic clusters. The sample of the study consisted of 400 male and female second secondary students. The data were collected by using a short-term vocabulary recognition test, a 20-item multiple-choice vocabulary test, and a 359-word cloze passage. The study showed that Jordanian EFL students encode vocabulary in memory clusters according to associations in sound or meaning, but the acoustic clusters were commonly used. Furthermore, significant differences were found between male and female students on semantic clustering in favor of females.

Abdollahzadeh and Amiri [21] investigated the effectiveness of vocabulary instruction via semantic mapping against the established traditional vocabulary teaching techniques in Iran. The sample of the study consisted of two hundred and sixty four intermediate adult Iranian EFL learners from different language institutes in Orumieh took part in the study. They were divided into two equal groups consisting of 9 classes in the control group, and 8 classes in the experimental group. They found out that the experimental

group demonstrated significant superiority over the control group with regard to the scores obtained in the post-test. In other words, employing semantic maps to teach vocabulary items was demonstrated to have a positive effect on the vocabulary learning of adult Iranian EFL learners.

Abu-Hussein [22] conducted a study to find out to what extent EFL teachers in Jordan use the semantically-based strategies in teaching vocabulary in addition to investigating students' use of semantic field. The sample consisted of 24 teachers and 825 students. The data were collected via a three-part questionnaire. The study revealed that Jordanian EFL students could not use the words of the same semantic fields in proper contexts. Moreover, the order of teachers' application of eight strategies was as the following: categorization, guessing, definition, context, semantically based, wordlist, visual aids and translation. Besides, a significant difference was found between male and female students in their use of semantic field words in proper contexts in favor of males. Finally, the interaction between stream and sex had a significant effect on students' use of semantic fields. [8] investigated the effects of semantic mapping without follow up discussion and semantic mapping with follow-up discussion to determine if there was any benefit in instructing developmental college students to use these strategies as ways of improving their comprehension of information in psychology textbooks. The sample consisted of 73 students. The results of the study suggested that semantic mapping with or without follow-up discussion, does not improve the comprehension of text material. However, interview and survey data indicated that participants from both experimental groups found that semantic mapping strategy valuable and believed that it improved their comprehension of the textbook passages.

Ossen [24] investigated the effectiveness of two methods of vocabulary instruction on the vocabulary recognition and comprehension of science textbook material with English and Spanish speaking elementary school students. The subjects of the study were 136 students. They were assigned to one control group and two experimental groups: semantic mapping and context / definition respectively. The results showed that there was a significant difference in the mean scores between the semantic mapping and the control group. Besides, there was a significant difference between the mean scores for the science Achievement Test with the Semantic mapping group scoring significantly higher than the context / definition and control group. The results indicated semantic mapping was a more effective method of instruction in helping students comprehend science textbook material than the context / definition of text-only-method.

Zaghlool [25] explored the effect of a vocabulary instructional program based on semantic strategies on students' achievement of lexical items enrolled in the academic year 2003/2004 in public schools in the city of Zarka. The sample of the study consisted of 163 male and female first secondary scientific students allocated in four intact classes which were chosen randomly. Two male classes constituted a control group and an experimental one and two female classes formed a control group and an experimental one. The findings of the study revealed statistically significant differences in favor of the experimental groups who were taught according to the instructional program based on semantic strategies. Moreover, semantic mapping was superior to other semantic strategies.

Srinaowaratt [26] examined the effects of two methods of vocabulary instruction on vocabulary learning of the eleventh grade Thai EFL students. Schema theory, semantic field theory and semantic network theory provided the theoretical framework for the experimental method of vocabulary instruction which used mainly the semantic mapping technique as the pre reading vocabulary teaching strategy. The traditional method of vocabulary teaching in which students were provided with lists of difficult words in the reading passage was used as the vocabulary strategy in the control group. The subjects of the study were 52 Thai EFL students from two intact classes in a secondary school. The results indicated that the experimental group performed significantly better on the listening comprehension section of the standardized proficiency test. The researcher concluded that the experimental method (semantic mapping) might be used as an alternative method useful for vocabulary instruction for EFL students.

Simpson [27] conducted a study to determine the effectiveness of semantic mapping as an independent note-taking skill especially in the content area of 11<sup>th</sup> grade English. The subjects consisted of 49 students. Results did not indicate a significant difference resulting from the use of semantic mapping although students' attitude and assessment indicated an interest in and a willingness to use the method. The researcher recommended considering semantic mapping as an alternative to traditional linear note-taking because it is equally useful to promote achievement and may be more appealing to students.

The review of related literature on semantic mapping has been conducted on different samples whereas the current study has been conducted on college EFL students. Moreover, there seems to be no experimental studies at all (to the best knowledge of the researcher) on the usage of semantic mapping as a tool conducted among EFL

classrooms in Saudi Arabia. Therefore, this study aimed at filling this gap.

### III. PROBLEM OF THE STUDY

One of the most formidable tasks that face EFL teachers is teaching lexical items. This claim is supported by the findings of many research studies such as Nilforoushan [19], Abdollahzadeh & Amiri [21], Abu Hussein [22], [25], Bataineh [20], [26], and De Fina [23]. Moreover, these studies uncover that EFL teachers depend mostly on fruitless traditional strategies which are mainly wordlists, definitions and translations. For example, Abu Hussein [22] concluded her research by saying that the application of the definition strategy in EFL classrooms does not produce a positive effect on students' usage of the words of the same semantic fields. Semantically-based strategies are almost neglected in EFL classrooms. Accordingly, the present quasi-empirical study sought to cast light on this crucial issue and to participate empirically in solving EFL teachers' dilemma in this area.

#### A. Purpose of the Study

This study intends to investigate the effectiveness of vocabulary instruction via using semantic mapping against the established traditional vocabulary teaching techniques in Saudi Arabia.

#### B. Question of the Study

Is teaching vocabulary to first year EFL learners via semantic mapping strategy more effective than using the traditional vocabulary teaching techniques?

#### C. Hypotheses of the Study

The hypothesis of this study is the following:  
There are no statistically significant differences at (0.05) in the achievement of EFL students on the vocabulary test due to method of instruction (Semantic mapping strategy/the traditional method).

#### D. Significance of the Study

The findings of this study will be useful to EFL teachers who are mostly involved in the dilemma of teaching and learning vocabulary. To the best of the researcher's knowledge, it is the first study in Saudi Arabia which is devoted entirely to teaching lexical items in general and employing semantic mapping strategy in teaching lexis in particular.

#### E. Limitations of the Study

1. The findings of the study were restricted to first year EFL learners in the college of languages and translation at Al Imam Mohammad Ibin Saud Islamic University.
2. The vocabulary achievement test was designed by the researcher to collect data of the study.

### F. Definition of Terms

The following terms are operationally defined to clarify their usage whenever encountered in this study as follows:

**A Strategy:** It is a conscious plan employed to make learning more effective, easier and effortless. " A strategy is potentially a conscious plan for solving what to the individual presents itself as a problem in reaching a particular goal [28]"

**Semantic mapping:** It is a visual strategy which is used for teaching and expanding vocabulary in which students categorize words related to other words. It can also be used in teaching other skills such as reading comprehension and writing because it displays the interrelationships among ideas [29].

**Traditional method:** This definition refers to the traditional techniques employed by Saudian EFL teachers in teaching new lexemes. Those techniques are translation, giving definitions and wordlists.

**Achievement test:** It is a test given at the end of the lesson, unit, course or program of instruction to measure the attainment of the material covered in this period.

**Lexis:** It is the complete set of words used in a language.

**A lexical item:** It is also called a vocabulary item or a lexeme. This term refers to a content word which can be a noun, a verb, an adjective or an adverb.

**EFL:** English as a Foreign Language.

## IV. METHODOLOGY

### A. Research design

The present study should be categorized as a quasi-experimental work as there was no true randomization. According to Morgan [12], the best alternative for an experimental design is a quasi-experimental format. Due to the limitations of the study to conduct a true experiment, a quasi-experimental design was considered as the best alternative accordingly. In this design the researcher used an experimental group and a control group. Both groups took a pre-test to measure their lexical items before conducting the experiment. During the experiment, the experimental group learned the lexical items via semantic mapping and the control group learned the lexical items via traditional methods and techniques. After the experiment, the same lexical test was administered as a posttest to investigate any significant differences in learning the lexical items between the two groups.

### B. Setting and context

This study was conducted in the department of English language, college of languages and translation, Al Imam Mohammad Ibin Saud Islamic University during the first semester of the academic year 2012/2013. The experimental

group studied the lexical items via semantic mapping while the control group studied the lexical items via traditional methods and techniques.

### **C. Sample**

The sample of the study comprised 50 subjects allocated to two sections. The two sections were randomly selected out of four English reading sections available in the English language department at the college of languages and translation during the first semester of the academic year 2012/2013. The two sections were randomly assigned to experimental and control groups. The experimental group consisted of 25 male students, while the control group consisted of 25 male students.

## **V. INSTRUMENTS OF THE STUDY**

The instruments of the study are the achievement vocabulary test prepared by the researcher and the content analysis of the reading texts.

### **A. The Vocabulary Achievement Test**

In order to measure how much learning had taken place in both the experimental and control groups, a test of vocabulary was devised by the researcher. Originally, it consisted of 60 questions testing all the previously learnt target vocabulary items. This test was piloted with a group of 20 students which was excluded from the sample, and later reviewed by two language testing researchers judging the workability, appropriacy, and accuracy of the items. The test was modified according to their suggestions and comments. Thus 10 items which were considered to be non-fit were removed. The final version consisted of 50 test items. The target vocabulary items were tested using a matching, gap-filling, and multiple-choice test format.

### **B. Material of the Study**

The lexical items used in this study were taken from the first eight reading texts of *Reading Power 2* by Jeffries & Mikulecky [30] which were taught in the first semester of the academic year 2012 /2013. The teacher taught the lexical items to the experimental group according to the semantic mapping strategy. Then the researcher designed vocabulary activities for teaching the new lexemes and notes for the teacher providing him with detailed techniques for teaching the vocabulary items found in the reading units.

### **C. Treatment**

During the initial meeting session, the researcher and his instructor administered the pre-test for both the experimental and the control groups. The rationale behind this phase was to make sure that the participants were equivalent and homogenous in terms of vocabulary knowledge. The resulting pre-test consisted of a vocabulary test of 50 items. The learners were expected to give the meaning of the underlined

words with their context. Since this study aimed at exploring the possible effects of vocabulary instruction through semantic mapping on vocabulary learning, it was necessary to select, as target words, those items that were unfamiliar to the learners.

After the pre-test session and deciding on which classes to receive the desired treatment, instructors, who were all experienced English teachers, were briefed through two gatherings on how to use semantic mapping to teach vocabulary, and were equipped with the organizers. Prior to the briefing sessions, the instructors were asked to study sources provided by the researcher about the application of semantic mapping in vocabulary instruction. Then, sample maps were completed during the sessions.

Ten sessions of treatment were held over a five-week period in all classes. The treatment involved a reading passage with commonplace reading instruction practices, including a warm-up, introduction of a reading skill, and reading the text while applying the newly learned skill to answer the comprehension questions that follow each text in the original format of the textbook. In the second half of the class time, however, learners in the control and experimental groups followed different paths. The control group received traditional vocabulary instruction whereas the experimental group participated in semantic elaboration activities. The semantic mapping, which was used for the treatment in the experimental group, were thematic maps, spider maps, problem and solution maps, and fishbone maps. The maps for the first two reading passages were filled by the learners with the teachers' assistance. For the remaining passages, however, they were assigned to the learners to fill in groups of four or five people. The teachers only observed and provided help if needed in this phase. The resulting maps which were checked to ascertain whether they had accommodated all the target lexical items were finally approved by the teachers.

The following time frame was set: a forty-five-minute portion of the standard ninety-minute class time was devoted to usual class activities and covering the textbook; the remaining forty-five minutes were dedicated to grouping vocabulary items using semantic mapping for the experimental group, and traditional vocabulary instruction techniques for the control group (e.g., providing Arabic equivalents, English synonyms and definitions, referring the learners to their dictionaries, etc.). Both groups discussed the reading passages, their content, and vocabulary.

In the experimental group, the teacher announced the topic of the unit by drawing a large rectangle on the board and asked the students to think of words that might be related to

the topic. The teacher listed the words given by the students on the side of the board and then gave them incomplete semantic maps containing the key words of the text, along with their definitions. The teacher then read these key words aloud. The students were then asked to categorize their ideas in the incomplete map that was given to them. When students had difficulty in identifying the categories, the teacher helped them overcome the difficulty by asking some guiding questions. When semantic maps were completed, each pair of the students compared and discussed its semantic map with other students. When the students made a copy of the map from the board, they received the reading passage; as the students received the passage, they were instructed to read the text silently and answer the follow up comprehension questions.

The control group received traditional vocabulary instruction in which all the words that were identified to be unknown or unfamiliar were taught. This approach of teaching vocabulary which is widely applied by language

teachers, does not entail teaching words with explicitly organizing them into a unified semantic field. The teacher provides the learners with definitions of the new words; the object is to provide a gloss for the text.

The control group was also provided with a short passage. Once the topic of the passage was selected, the students were encouraged to ask their questions. Translating the key words of the text, the teacher asked the students to read the text within a specified time limit. After the silent reading, the students were asked to answer the follow-up comprehension questions.

## VI. RESULTS AND ANALYSIS

### A. *Equivalence of the Subjects in the Pretest*

A pretest was used in order to ensure the equivalence among the two groups in their vocabulary performance at the beginning of the experiment. The results of the pretest concerning the mean scores of the two groups are shown in Table 1.

**Table 1**

**The T-Value of the Difference in the Mean Scores Between the Experimental Group and the Control Group on the Pre-Test**

GROUP	N	Mean	S D	T	DF	Sig.
Experimental	25	6.08	1.63	-0.64	48	0.53
Control	25	5.98	1.69			

shows that the mean score of the experimental group was 6.08 with a standard deviation of 1.63, and the mean score of the control group was 5.98 with a standard deviation of 1.69. It also shows that the difference in the mean scores between the experimental group and the control group was not statistically significant ( $t = 0.64$ ,  $p =$

0.53). This indicated that the two groups were equivalent in vocabulary achievement before conducting the experiment. After conducting the experiment, a posttest was administered to the two groups of the study to measure their lexical performance. The results of the analysis of the post-test scores are shown in Table 2 below.

**Table 2**

**The T-Value of the Difference in the Mean Scores Between the Experimental group and the Control Group on the Post-Test**

GROUP	N	Mean	S D	T	DF	Sig.
Experimental	25	8.64	1.16	4.36	48	0.00
Control	25	6.96	1.54			

\* Significant at  $\alpha = 0.05$

shows that the mean score of the experimental group was 8.64 with a standard deviation of 1.16, while the control group's mean score was 6.96 with a standard deviation of 1.54. It also shows that the difference in the mean scores between the experimental group and the control group was statistically significant ( $t = 4.36$ ,  $p = 0.00$ ). Therefore, the hypothesis of the study was accepted.

### B. *Discussion*

The statistical analyses of the research question indicate that utilizing semantic mapping in vocabulary instruction enhances word learning and vocabulary retention for the experimental group. The  $t$  value observed (8.64) was greater

than the critical value of  $t$  for the control group (6.96). This indicates that the experimental group demonstrated significant superiority over the control group with regard to the scores obtained in the post-test. In other words, the results are in favor of employing semantic mapping strategy in teaching words. This means that employing semantic mapping in EFL classes is worthwhile, and more effective than employing the traditional vocabulary teaching techniques.

This finding is in line with previous research findings concerning the effect of semantic mapping in enhancing vocabulary learning (Nilforoushan [19]; Abdollahzadeh &

Amiri [21]; De Fina [23]; Ossen [24]; Zaghlool [25]; & Srinaowaratt [26]. This positive impact of semantic mapping strategy can be attributed to the fact that in semantic mapping the relationships between words are explored, and thus, more ties among them are made in the lexical knowledge network of the learner. Establishing such a semantic network in the cognitive repertoire of the learner can lead to stronger comprehension of texts that use the target words [31].

The feedbacks from both the instructors and the learners confirm the time-costliness of semantic mapping activities. Some learners and even instructors expressed their doubt regarding the worthiness of employing semantic maps to teach vocabulary. They claimed that the traditional methods would take much less time in comparison, and thus, they would have more time to concentrate on texts and reading skills. These views, however, are at least partially rooted in their super-ordination of the reading skill to lexical wealth. Contrary to their feelings, we realize that although semantic mapping is costly in terms of both teachers' and learners' in-class time, it can be very beneficial in that students learn a good deal about new words and the interrelationships of the concepts associated with the words in their long-term memory.

Furthermore, the cooperative teacher who taught the experimental group reported that semantic mapping strategy stimulated students' active participation. Students were highly motivated since the students themselves carried out all of the activities individually, in pairs or in groups. Meanwhile, their teacher played the roles of advisor and facilitator of learning by circulating around encouraging and offering help. Moreover, the cooperative teacher pointed out that semantic mapping had a powerful impact on students who were anxious to complete it because semantic mapping portrayed lexical relations in a new organized fashion and this also helped them to gain better comprehension of the texts.

Nonetheless, the researcher's observation during the treatment phase in the experimental group was that the learners were very interested in the semantic mapping activities. Direct feedback collected from a random group of learners confirmed this observation. This is in line with the comments of [25] in which the participants enjoyed the procedure, and it spurred their interest in words and the relationships among words in the texts.

## VII. CONCLUSIONS

The following conclusions can be drawn from this study:

1. Vocabulary instruction should be given a high priority in teaching English as a foreign language since it is the cornerstone of communication.
2. Vocabulary instruction is a complicated process which requires careful planning by teachers and active participation by students. Thornbury [32] asserts, "Learners need tasks and strategies to help them organize their mental lexicon by building networks of associations – the more the better" (p. 30).
3. Vocabulary should be taught in contexts and integrated with the other language skills. Teaching vocabulary in isolation or via wordlists is fruitless.
4. Co-operative learning plays a crucial role in vocabulary instruction. Thornbury [32] points out Learners often pay more attention to what other learners say than they do to either the course book or their teacher.
5. Translation of the meanings of new vocabulary items is a crutch used by teachers to provide security to their students, but it is useless and harmful for many reasons. In the first place, it does not provide students with the lexical relations among the words. Secondly, it leads to serious interlanguage lexical errors which are difficult to eradicate. Thirdly, it hinders students' thinking through eliminating the guessing strategy. As a result, students will be completely dependent on their teacher. Finally, students are deprived of the essential opportunity of using the new lexical items in authentic oral and written situations.

## VIII. RECOMMENDATIONS

1. Teachers are advised to be committed to teaching new lexical items by preparing additional challenging and motivating vocabulary activities based on semantic mapping strategy.
2. Teachers are advised to be eclectic in teaching new vocabulary by choosing the most appropriate strategy; they should vary their strategies according to the difficulty of the word and the level of the class. They can sometimes combine more than one strategy according to the nature of the new word.
3. Teachers are encouraged to focus on intentional as well as accidental vocabulary learning.
4. It is recommended that teachers avoid translation as much as possible in teaching new lexical items.
5. It is worthwhile to replicate this study in another area in Saudi Arabia and to test the effectiveness of semantic mapping strategy on other EFL learners' levels as well as the students' attitudes towards such a strategy.
6. Carry out further research concerning the effect of semantic mapping on other language skills such as writing and reading skills.

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# أثر تدريس المفردات من خلال خرائط الدلالة على توعية طلبة اللغة الإنجليزية كلغة أجنبية للمعرفة المفرداتية في جامعة الإمام محمد بن سعود الإسلامية

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*المخلص\_ هدفت هذه الدراسة إلى معرفة أثر استراتيجيات خرائط الدلالة كاستراتيجية تعليمية لتدريس مفردات اللغة الإنجليزية لدارسي اللغة الإنجليزية كلغة أجنبية في جامعة الإمام محمد بن سعود الإسلامية و معرفة أثر هذا الاستراتيجية على تحصيل طلبة اللغة الإنجليزية كلغة أجنبية لتلك المفردات اللغوية. تم تطبيق هذه الدراسة في قسم اللغة الإنجليزية، كلية اللغات والترجمة، جامعة الإمام محمد بن سعود الإسلامية خلال الفصل الدراسي الأول من العام الجامعي 2012-2013. تكونت عينة الدراسة من خمسون طالب مسجلين في شعبتين تم اختيارهما عشوائيا من شعب القراءة الاربعة المتوفرة في قسم اللغة الإنجليزية وبالطريقة ذاتها تم تحديدهما كمجموعتين تجريبية وضابطة. درست المجموعة التجريبية مفردات اللغة الإنجليزية باستخدام استراتيجية خرائط الدلالة و درست المجموعة الضابطة مفردات اللغة الإنجليزية بالطريقة التقليدية. استخدم الباحث المنهج شبه التجريبي في هذه الدراسة لأن العينة تم اختيارها بشكل قصدي ولكن اختيار المجموعات تم بالطريقة العشوائية. خضعت المجموعتين التجريبية والضابطة عند بدء الدراسة لامتحان قبلي لقياس مفردات اللغة الإنجليزية للمجموعتين التجريبية والضابطة للتأكد من كونهما متساويتان ومتجانستان. وبعد الانتهاء من التجربة، خضعت المجموعتين التجريبية والضابطة إلى اختبار بعدي لمعرفة اثر استراتيجيات خرائط الدلالة على تحصيل طلبة اللغة الإنجليزية كلغة أجنبية لتلك المفردات اللغوية. وتم إحصاء متوسطات علامات الامتحان القبلي والبعدي باستخدام الاختبار الإحصائي (ت). وقد أظهرت النتائج وجود فروق ذات دلالة إحصائية بين المجموعتين التجريبية والضابطة لصالح المجموعة التجريبية. وقد توصل الباحث إلى مجموعة من الاستنتاجات واقترح مجموعة من التوصيات.*

*الكلمات المفتاحية: خرائط الدلالة، الترجمة المباشرة، استراتيجية تعلم المفردات، تدريس المفردات، الأساليب التقليدية.*