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**Teachers' Perceptions of the Effectiveness of Using Gestures in Teaching New
Vocabulary to Young English Foreign Language Learners:
The Case of First-Year Middle School EFL Teachers, Jijel - Algeria**

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didactics of foreign languages

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Declaration

We hereby declare that the dissertation entitled “Teachers’ Perceptions of the Effectiveness of Using Gestures in Teaching New Vocabulary to Young English Foreign Language Learners” is our own work, and all the sources we have used have been acknowledged by means of references. We also certify that we have not copied or plagiarized the work of other students or researchers, partially or fully. In case any material is not documented, we shall be responsible for the consequences.

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Dedication

«Praise to Allah who has guided us to this; and we would never have been guided if

Allah had not guided us » Surah Al’Araf [7:43].

Praise is to Allah by whose grace good deeds are completed

I wholeheartedly dedicate this work with utmost sincerity to:

“My Beloved Parents”

This dissertation is dedicated to you, my dear parents, as a token of my deepest appreciation for your endless sacrifices, tireless encouragement, and unconditional love.

“My Dearest Brothers”

Thank you for always being there to lift me up and remind me to embrace both the triumphs and setbacks.

My Dearest Aunt “Malika”

Your influence on my academic journey has been immeasurable and I am forever grateful for your support and guidance.

My Besties “Aya” and “Fatima”

I dedicate this dissertation to you, my cherished besties Aya and Fatima, as a tribute to the enduring friendship and the immense joy you have brought into my life.

And

“Myself”

I extend heartfelt gratitude to the diligent self within, whose unwavering efforts have shaped me into the person I am today.

Dedication

I dedicate this work to

*My beloved **Mother “Malika”**.*

- LAMIA -

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Abstract

This study seeks to elucidate the perceptions of middle school EFL teachers regarding the efficacy of incorporating gestures in the instruction of new vocabulary to young English foreign language (EFL) learners in Jijel, Algeria. The primary objective of this study is to deeply analyse and evaluate middle school EFL teachers' viewpoints of the effectiveness of using gestures in teaching new vocabulary. This study hypothesises that middle school EFL teachers hold positive perceptions towards the effectiveness of using gestures in teaching new vocabulary to young EFL learners. As for collecting the data needed, an online questionnaire was administered to 111 middle school EFL teachers in Jijel. The findings shed light on notable trends, highlighting that teachers recognize the value of gestures as a teaching tool and believe in their numerous benefits. The study also reveals that gestures are perceived as more effective than traditional methods, such as word lists, repetition, and translation, in enhancing vocabulary development. Furthermore, the study explores the advantages of using gestures, including improved learning outcomes, increased engagement, and reduced reliance on young EFL learners' native language. However, challenges such as misinterpretation and selecting appropriate gestures for specific concepts are identified. The study's implications are discussed, and suggestions for future research are provided. Altogether, the findings contribute to existing knowledge and offer insights for teachers to enhance their vocabulary instruction and address the specific needs of young EFL learners.

Keywords: Perceptions of middle school EFL teachers, effectiveness of using gestures, vocabulary instruction, young EFL learners

List of Abbreviations, Acronyms, and Symbols

e.g.: For example.

i.e.: In other words.

P.: Page.

Pp.: Pages.

EFL: English as a Foreign Language.

et al.: And others.

Q: Question.

L1: First Language.

L2: Second Language.

VLS: Vocabulary Learning Strategies.

+: And.

&: And.

%: Percentage.

->: Arrow (meaning “It becomes”).

[: Square brackets used for mentioning the words that was added to an original direct quotation.

List of Tables

1. Table 1.1. Four Gestures Classification Schemes	24
2. Table 2.1 Teachers' Educational Degree	47
3. Table 2.2. Teachers' Years of Teaching Experience in EFL for Young EFL Learners	48
4. Table 2.3. Average Number of Young EFL Learners per Class	49
5. Table 2.4. Young EFL Learners' English Vocabulary Proficiency Level	49
6. Table 2.5. Methods Employed by Teachers for Instructing Vocabulary	51
7. Table 2.6. Ways of Evaluation Used by Teachers to Evaluate the Effectiveness of Their English Vocabulary Lessons	52
8. Table 2.7. Gestures' Utilization in Teaching New Lexical Items	54
9. Table 2.8. Frequency of Teachers' Use of Gesture in Their Vocabulary Lessons	54
10. Table 2.9. Types of Gestures Used by Teachers when Instructing New Vocabulary	56
11. Table 2.10. Steps Used for Ensuring Young EFL Learners' Comprehension of the Meaning of the Gestures being Used	58
12. Table 2.11. Frequency of Promoting the Use of Gestures Among Young EFL Learners	59
13. Table 2.12. Potential Benefits of the Use of Gestures in English Vocabulary Learning	61
14. Table 2.13. Potential Challenges that Teachers may Encounter when Using Gestures for English Vocabulary Instruction	63

15. Table 2.14. Teachers’ Feedback on Whether There Has Been any Improvement in Their Young EFL Learners’ Vocabulary Proficiency Due to the Effective Use of Gestures 65

16. Table 2.15. Teachers’ Views Towards the Impact of Gesture Usage on Their Young EFL Learners’ Understanding, Memorizing, and Retrieving of New Lexical Items 66

17. Table 2.16. Comfort Level with Utilizing Gestures for Vocabulary Instruction 67

18. Table 2.17. Teachers’ Feedback on Whether They Have Had any Professional Instruction on the Appropriate Usage of Gestures for Teaching English Vocabulary to Young EFL Learners 68

19. Table 2.18. Teachers’ Feedback on the Effectiveness of Training in Enhancing Their Proficiency in Using Gestures While Instructing Vocabulary 69

20. Table 2.19. Teachers’ Willingness to Receive Training and Enhance Professional Skills in Using Gestures 70

21. Table 2.20. Teachers’ Perceptions Towards the Value of Utilizing Gestures as a Teaching Method for Instructing New Vocabulary to Young EFL Learners 74

22. Table 2.21. Comparison of the Effectiveness of Vocabulary Teaching Methods: Gestures Vs. Word List, Repetition, and Translation 75

Contents

Declaration I

Dedications II

Acknowledgements IV

Abstract V

List of Abbreviations, Acronyms, and Symbols VI

List of Tables VII

List of Content IX

General Introduction

1. Relevant Background Literature 1

2. Statements of the Problem 2

3. Aims of the Study 3

4. Research Questions 3

5. Research Hypothesis 4

6. Research Methodology 4

7. Significance of the Research 4

8. Structure of the Research 5

Chapter One: Vocabulary Teaching and Learning Through Gestures 6

Introduction 6

Section One: Teaching and Learning Vocabulary 7

1.1.1 Definition of Vocabulary 7

1.1.2 Features and Proprieties of Vocabulary	7
1.1.2.1 Lexicology	7
1.1.2.2 Lexicography	11
1.1.3 Types of Vocabulary	11
1.1.3.1 Active Vs. Passive Vocabulary	11
1.1.3.2 Receptive Vs. Productive Vocabulary	13
1.1.4 The Importance of Vocabulary Learning	14
1.1.5 Major Techniques in Teaching Vocabulary	16
1.1.5.1 Visual Techniques	16
1.1.5.2 Verbal Techniques	17
1.1.5.3 Translation	17
1.1.6 Vocabulary Learning Strategies	17
1.1.7 Steps of Learning Vocabulary	20
1.1.8 Vocabulary Learning Assessments	21
1.1.8.1 Informal Vocabulary Learning Assessment	22
1.1.8.2 Formal Vocabulary Learning Assessment	22
Section Two: Teaching and Learning Through Gestures	23
1.2.1 Definition of Gestures	23
1.2.2 Classifications of Gestures	24
1.2.2.1 Effron’s Classification	24

1.2.2.2 Freedman and Hoffman’s Classification	25
1.2.2.3 Ekman and Friesen’s Classification	26
1.2.2.4 McNeill’s Classification	27
1.2.3 The Importance of Gestures in Vocabulary Learning	28
1.2.4 Language Teachers’ Gestures and Their Functions	30
1.2.5 The Role of Gestures in Enhancing Foreign Language Learning	34
1.2.5.1 Gestures and Foreign Language Memorization	34
1.2.5.2 Gestures and Foreign Language Communication	35
1.2.6 Foreign Language Learners’ Gestures and Lexical Retrieval	37
1.2.7 Challenges of Using Gestures in Vocabulary Teaching and Learning	39
Conclusion	41
Chapter Two: Research Methodology and Data Analysis	42
Introduction	42
Section One: Research Design and Data Collection Instrument	42
2.1.1 Research Design	42
2.1.2 Population and Sampling	43
2.1.2.1 Population	43
2.1.2.2 Sampling	43
2.1.3 Aim of the Questionnaire	43
2.1.4 Administration of the Questionnaire	44

2.1.5 Description of the Questionnaire	45
Section Two: Data Analysis and Interpretation	47
2.2.1 Analysis of the Results	47
2.2.2 Discussion of the Main Results	79
Conclusion	84

General Conclusion

1. Putting It Altogether	85
2. Limitations of the Study	86
3. Pedagogical Recommendations	87
4. Suggestions for Further Research	88
List of References	89

Appendix

Résumé

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General Introduction

1. Relevant Background Literature

Prominent researchers in the field have extensively explored the effectiveness of utilizing gestures as a means of teaching vocabulary. Notable contributions in this area include studies by Khanukaeva (2014), Andrä, Mathias, Schwager, Macedonia, and Kriegstein (2020), and Herail (2021), which have yielded invaluable perspectives on the prospective benefits and outcomes connected to this instructional method.

Khanukaeva's (2014, pp. 4 - 89) study aimed to assess the impact of iconic gestures on vocabulary acquisition in second language (L2) learning among young learners. The research focused on the use of gestures by both teachers and learners in a primary school setting in Norway. A mixed methodology, including a three-week experiment, was employed with 42 second-grade learners. The study found that incorporating gestures into vocabulary instruction resulted in improved recall, recognition, and long-term retention compared to using only pictures. The use of gestures enhanced motivation, concentration, engagement, and catered to different learning styles and language abilities. Overall, the study concluded that gestures can be an effective teaching strategy for enhancing vocabulary acquisition and the overall learning experience among second-grade learners.

Moreover, Andrä et al. (2020, pp. 815 - 845) conducted three experiments over five days to assess the effects of incorporating gestures and pictures in foreign language (L2) vocabulary learning for 8-year-old children. German children were trained in English vocabulary. The first two experiments compared gesture-based learning to a baseline condition, while the third experiment compared gesture enrichment to picture enrichment. Tests conducted at different intervals (3 days, 2 months, and 6 months) showed that both gestures and pictures improved children's performance compared to non-enriched learning. These benefits lasted up to 6 months and applied to concrete and abstract words. Despite expectations of greater impact from gestures,

both gestures and pictures had a similar effect on children's L2 learning. The findings suggest that incorporating gestures and pictures in the learning process can have lasting benefits for children's language acquisition.

Finally, Herail (2021, pp. 7-9) conducted an action research in Portugal to assess the impact of teaching with songs and gestures on English proficiency, motivation, and vocabulary retention in a third-grade class of 22 students. The study lasted for three and a half months and employed multiple data collection methods, including observation grids, tests, and questionnaires. Different scenarios were used to introduce vocabulary, involving songs, gestures, or a combination of both. Results showed that using songs and gestures together had positive outcomes, with high test grades and strong oral production of vocabulary. Students also reported in the questionnaires that songs and gestures helped them memorize vocabulary. However, limitations were identified, such as certain vocabulary items being challenging to teach solely through gestures and a lack of sufficient observation grids for comprehensive comparisons between scenarios.

To sum up, the reviewed studies highlight the effectiveness of using gestures as a teaching method for vocabulary acquisition. Incorporating gestures improves recall, recognition, and long-term retention of words while also catering to different learning styles and abilities. Both gestures and pictures have lasting benefits for language acquisition. Combining songs and gestures further enhances English proficiency, motivation, and vocabulary retention.

2. Statement of the problem

The incorporation of gestures in teaching new vocabulary to young EFL learners is an area of study that remains largely unexplored, particularly within the context of middle schools in Jijel, Algeria. While existing research has highlighted the potential benefits of using gestures in vocabulary instruction, there is a significant gap in understanding the perspectives of teachers in this specific educational setting. By delving into the viewpoints of middle school teachers of

English in Jijel, Algeria, this research endeavour seeks to fill the gap in the literature and shed light on the practicality and effectiveness of employing gestures in vocabulary teaching. The outcomes of this study will not only contribute to the existing wealth of knowledge on language teaching methodologies but also provide invaluable insights and recommendations for enhancing vocabulary instruction for young EFL learners in middle schools in Jijel. Ultimately, this research aspires to bridge the gap between theory and practice by establishing a profound comprehension of how gestures can be seamlessly integrated into vocabulary instruction within this distinct context.

3. Aims of the Study

The aims of this study are as follows:

1. To delve into the perceptions held by middle school EFL teachers regarding the utilization of gestures as a potent and efficacious method for imparting new vocabulary to young EFL learners in the province of Jijel, Algeria.
2. To investigate the extent to which gestures enhance retention and recall among young EFL learners.
3. To identify the advantages and challenges of using gestures compared to other instructional methods, such as word lists, repetition, and translation.

4. Research Questions

The questions that shape the very essence of this scholarly investigation are as follows:

1. How do middle school EFL teachers perceive the effectiveness of using gestures in teaching new vocabulary to young EFL learners?
2. To what extent do middle school EFL teachers perceive that gestures improve young EFL learners' retention and recall of newly taught vocabulary?

3. What are the perceived benefits and challenges of using gestures in teaching new vocabulary to young EFL learners?

4. How do middle school EFL teachers assess the effectiveness of using gestures compared to other instructional methods, namely, word lists, repetition, and translation, in teaching vocabulary to young EFL learners?

5. Research Hypothesis

The research hypothesis that this scholarly investigation posits is that middle school EFL teachers perceive the use of gestures as highly effective in teaching new vocabulary to young EFL learners, as they provide visual cues that aid comprehension and retention.

6. Research Methodology

To assess the validity of the research study and test the research hypothesis, a descriptive research methodology with a quantitative approach was employed. The primary aim was to investigate middle school EFL teachers' perceptions of the effectiveness of using gestures for teaching new vocabulary to young EFL learners. The study utilized an online questionnaire, which was administered to 111 middle school teachers of English from the province of Jijel. Carefully designed questions were included in the questionnaire to efficiently gather behavioural and attitudinal data within a limited time frame. The questionnaire served the purpose of evaluating the effectiveness of incorporating gestures in vocabulary instruction and obtaining valuable insights into teachers' perspectives on their teaching methods.

7. Significance of the Study

The study's significance lies in its exploration of the perceptions held by middle school EFL teachers in Jijel, Algeria, regarding the efficacy of utilizing gestures in the instruction of new vocabulary to young EFL learners. Vocabulary acquisition stands as a pivotal aspect of language learning, especially for young EFL learners. Hence, grasping the effectiveness of gestures as a pedagogical tool has the potential to contribute to the development of more efficacious teaching

strategies that foster vocabulary acquisition and retention among young EFL learners. The findings of this study hold the potential to aid teachers not only in Jijel but also worldwide, enabling them to enhance their instructional practices, facilitate more successful vocabulary learning experiences for their students, and address the specific needs and challenges faced by both teachers and learners.

8. Structure of the Study

This study comprises two main chapters: a theoretical chapter and a fieldwork chapter. The initial chapter focuses on the theoretical aspects and is divided into two sections. The first section offers an overview of vocabulary teaching and learning, while the second section delves into the theoretical background and conceptual framework of utilizing gestures for teaching vocabulary. This section investigates the ways in which gestures can enhance learners' understanding, memorization, and recall of new words. The second chapter of the study shifts towards the practical framework, consisting of two sections that discuss the research methodology, data analysis, and results. The first section focuses on the methodology employed to conduct the research, elucidating the chosen approach and procedures implemented. The subsequent section presents the findings derived from the data analysis, providing valuable insights and discoveries. Towards the conclusion of the chapter, the study acknowledges any limitations it may have encountered and provides practical recommendations and suggestions for teachers and future researchers in the field.

Chapter One

Teaching and Learning Vocabulary Through Gestures

Introduction

Vocabulary is an indispensable aspect of language teaching and learning, as it is critical for developing language comprehension and achieving reading success. Hence, selecting the most appropriate and effective teaching techniques is crucial for vocabulary acquisition. In the light of this, many educators have opted to use nonverbal behaviors, such as gestures, as a facilitative technique for teaching new vocabulary.

This chapter aims to offer a comprehension of both vocabulary teaching and learning and the ways in which gestures can improve and enrich vocabulary acquisition. It is, therefore, divided into two main sections: the first section is devoted to vocabulary teaching and learning, while the second section is devoted to examining the implementation of gestures in vocabulary instruction. Respectively, the first section will present standard definitions provided by scholars and dictionaries, highlight key aspects of vocabulary, and list its different types. Additionally, it will discuss techniques used in teaching vocabulary, as well as the different steps and strategies used in learning it. Also, it will underscore the importance of vocabulary in language learning. Finally, it will delve into vocabulary assessment techniques. The second section, on the other hand, will offer a comprehensive elucidation of the term “gestures” along with its significant classifications. Furthermore, it will highlight the vital role of gestures in vocabulary instruction. Moreover, the different teachers’ gestures and their functions will be mentioned. Ultimately, the different challenges that may confront foreign language teachers and learners when using gestures in the process of teaching and learning vocabulary will be discussed.

Section One: Teaching and Learning Vocabulary

1.1.1 Definition of Vocabulary

The definition of the term “vocabulary” has been delineated in various ways by a multitude of scholars and dictionaries. Broadly speaking, “vocabulary or lexis in English are frequently used interchangeably” (Thornbury, 1997, p. 43). “Lexis” is defined as “word” in Greek, whereas the term “vocabulary” is defined as “all the words that a person knows or uses; or all the words in a language; or a list of words with the explanations of their meanings in a book for learning a foreign language” (Bull, Oxford Learner's Pocket Dictionary, 2008, p. 495). Hornby (Oxford Advanced Learner's Dictionary, 1995, p. 1506), similarly, defined vocabulary as a list of words that holds the total number of meaningful words underlying the language system. Ur (1991, p. 60), in the same line as Hornby, stated that vocabulary refers to the words that we instruct in the foreign language, i.e., it refers to comprehensive knowledge regarding the meanings and appropriate application of all the words within a given language. Although vocabulary is often perceived as a mere compilation of words, it is more accurately described as the comprehension of words and their corresponding meanings rather than a mere inventory of words (Raphael, 2009, cited in Messikh & Boulemazoud, 2022, p. 20). Moreover, a vocabulary item can consist of more than one word; vocabulary is “a set of lexemes, including single words, compound words, and idioms” (Longman Dictionary, 2010, as cited in Boubadja & Mebirouk, 2014, p. 5). For instance, cell phone, cooperate, and editor-in-chief are phrases that consist of two or three words but convey a unified meaning. Given these definitions, it can be inferred that vocabulary is a crucial component of any language. Furthermore, it can be seen as a compilation of meaningful words that are fundamental to any given language.

1.1.2 Features and Properties of Vocabulary

1.1.2.1 Lexicology

Lexicology is a discipline of linguistics that analyses words. It is derived from the Greek terms “lexis” (word) and “logos” (learning). It covers a wide range of topics, including word

meaning relationships, word structure and formation, word characteristics and how they combine, concepts used to organize vocabulary into distinct categories, dictionary compilation, abbreviation usage, and much more. In essence, lexicology delves into the vocabulary and distinctive attributes of words and word groups, which serve as the fundamental components of language (Ilienکو, Kamienieva, & Mostagh, 2020, p. 5).

1.1.2.1.1 Word Class

Word class, also known as part of speech or lexical category, refers to the grammatical category to which a word belongs in a given language based on its syntactic and morphological properties, as well as its meaning and function within a sentence. According to Harmer (1998), the English language can be divided into eight distinct units, namely: nouns, pronouns, objectives, verbs, adverbs, prepositions, determiners, and conjunctions (p. 37);

- **A noun** is a term used to denote a person, animal, place, object, or activity. It can serve as the subject or the object of a sentence; it can also be singular or plural.
- **A pronoun** is a linguistic unit utilized to substitute a noun or noun phrase, such as she or her. It can be used to avoid repetition or to make sentences less cumbersome.
- **An adjective** is a term that provides details or characteristics about a noun and typically appears adjacent to the noun it modifies.
- **A verb** is a word that conveys an action, a state, or an experience. It is often the main component of a sentence, and it can be used in different tenses to indicate when an action has occurred or will occur.
- **An adverb** is a word that serves to modify or add meaning to a verb, adjective, or another adverb within a sentence.
- **A preposition** is a word that is used to indicate the relationship between a noun or pronoun and other words in a sentence. It usually expresses direction, location, or time.

- **A determiner** is a type of word that provides clarification or description for a noun. It includes articles such as “a” or “the”, demonstrative adjectives like “this” or “that”, and possessive adjectives such as “my” or “your”.
- **A conjunction** is a type of word that connects different elements in a sentence or phrase, such as words, sentences, or phrases themselves. It can be used to indicate a relationship between ideas (e.g., “and”; “or”, “but”) or to show the order of events (e.g., “before”; “after”; “while”).

1.1.2.1.2 Word Formation

Word formation refers to the process of creating new words either by combining existing words or parts of words (morphemes) or by inventing entirely new words. According to Grains and Redman (1986), “There are three main forms of word building or word formation that are characteristic of English: affixation, compounding, and conversion” (p.47);

- **Affixation** is the process of attaching prefixes and suffixes to the root word, which can alter its meaning. (e.g., “unhappy”, “friendship”).
- **Compounding** is the process of constructing a new term by merging two or more distinct words together to create a new word with a distinct meaning. (e.g., "toothbrush," "blackboard").
- **Conversion**, which is also known as zero affixation, involves the usage of a single item in various word classes without modifying its form (Gairns & Redman, 1986, p. 48). (e.g., “text” (verb) -> “text” (noun)).

1.1.2.1.3 Word Meaning

According to Harmer (1991), it is crucial to recognize that words in a vocabulary frequently have multiple meanings. Hence, it is vital to consider the context in which a term is employed when endeavouring to decipher its intended significance. (pp.35-36). That is to say, the semantic value of a word, which pertains to its meaning or importance within a given context, is

what determines its intended definition. Semantic relationships can be demonstrated using diverse linguistic mechanisms like synonyms, antonyms, polysemy, hyponymy, metonymy, collocation, homophones, homonyms, and connotation (Jelyn, 2018, pp. 1-2; & Abdurrahman, 2019, pp. 3-4);

- **Synonyms** pertain to terms that possess identical or comparable connotations such as “happy” and “joyful”.
- **Antonyms** refer to words that possess contrary meanings, like “hot” and “cold”.
- **Polysemy** refers to the words that have several interpretations or significances, such as “bank” which can signify a financial establishment or the side of a river.
- **Hyponymy:** The term hyponymy refers to the relationship between two words in which the meaning of one word is included inside the meaning of another. For example, “rose” is a hyponym of “flower” because a rose is a specific type of flower. Similarly, “carrot” is a hyponym of “vegetable” because a carrot is a specific type of vegetable.
- **Metonymy:** A type of word association that relies on a strong link in our daily encounters is exemplified by pairs like “bottle – coke” (which signifies a container – contents relationship), “car – wheels” (representing a whole – part connection), and “king – crown” (demonstrating a representative – symbol correlation).
- **Collocation:** These are words that commonly appear together, forming natural pairs. For example, “hammer” and “nail,” “table” and “chair,” and “salt” and “pepper” are frequently seen together in various contexts.
- **Homophones:** Homophones are two or more written forms that have similar sounds but differing meanings. Words with homonymies include "meet" and "meat," as well as "write" and "right."
- **Homonyms:** The term homonymy is employed when a single form, whether it be written or spoken, possesses multiple meanings that are unrelated to each other. For example, the word “bank” can refer to the side of a river or a financial institution.

- **Connotation:** The connotation of a word encompasses the sentimental or mental connections it evokes. It extends beyond its literal definition to convey the emotions, ideas, and visuals associated with the word. For instance, the word “winter” may evoke thoughts of snow, cold temperatures, and short days for people living in the north. However, these associations do not fully define the word’s meaning, as “winter” is still used to refer to the period between December and March, regardless of the presence of snow or cold weather, especially in regions further south.

1.1.2.2 Lexicography

Lexicography is considered a distinct methodology that involves the creation and compilation of dictionaries (Jackson & Zé Amvela, 2000, p. 8). In simpler terms, it pertains to the process of assembling, writing, and revising dictionaries. A dictionary is a reference work that organizes the lexical entries of a language in alphabetical order, providing details about their spelling and pronunciation. These lexical items can be elucidated or translated using monolingual, bilingual, or multilingual dictionaries.

1.1.3. Types of Vocabulary

Every individual possesses a rich and varied vocabulary tailored to suit their unique needs and communication goals across diverse contexts (Hiebert & Kamil, 2005, p. 3). Furthermore, this vocabulary has been classified by some scholars into four main categories: active vocabulary, passive vocabulary, receptive vocabulary, and productive vocabulary.

1.1.3.1 Active Vocabulary Vs Passive Vocabulary

Haycraft (1978) defined active vocabulary as “words which the student understands, can pronounce correctly, and uses constructively in speaking and writing” (p. 44). In other words, active vocabulary refers to the words that a student can confidently use since he/she understands their meanings and how to use them appropriately when speaking or writing. According to Bite (2015, p. 5), the term “active vocabulary” pertains to the productive aspect of language. Hence, for students to achieve proficiency in both spoken and written languages, it is crucial to

continuously expand their active vocabulary. Developing an active vocabulary involves several components, including using the right words in the right context, being able to spontaneously recall words, using correct grammar such as tenses, inflections, and word order, and demonstrating fluency in speech by reproducing accurate sounds, pronunciation, intonation, and rhythm. An example of active vocabulary is when you ask a student to create a sentence with a specific word. If he or she can do so, the word is considered to be part of his or her active vocabulary.

Conversely, passive vocabulary is defined as “[the] words that the student recognises and understands when they occur in a context but which he cannot produce correctly himself” (Haycraft, 1978, p. 44). Put differently, passive vocabulary refers to the words for which the student may not know their exact meanings and does not typically use them in his speech or writing. However, he may have a partial understanding of their meanings based on the context in which they appear. Moreover, passive vocabulary is perceived as the receptive aspect of language (Bite, 2015, p. 5). Essentially, passive vocabulary in any language is more extensive than active vocabulary because students tend to use words that they are familiar with and understand their meanings. Conversely, they disregard words whose meanings and usage they are unsure of. Furthermore, an effective communicator endeavours to convert passive vocabulary into active vocabulary. Over time, words that were once in the passive vocabulary can shift to become part of one’s active vocabulary. There are no set rules for acquiring active vocabulary, but it mainly depends on the learner’s eagerness, hard work, and appropriate guidance (Bite, 2015, p. 5).

To sum up, active vocabulary pertains to words that a student comprehends well and can use confidently in speech or writing. In contrast, passive vocabulary includes words that the student may not know the exact definition of and does not usually use in their communication. However, the student may have a partial understanding of these words based on their context. As time passes, some words from the passive vocabulary can move into the active vocabulary as the student gains more familiarity with them.

1.1.3.2. Receptive Vocabulary Vs Productive Vocabulary

Several researchers, including Hiebert and Kamil (2005, p. 3), Stuart (2005, pp. 33 - 52), and Milton (2009, p. 13), have examined the nature of vocabulary. Accordingly, they have all concluded that vocabulary is both receptive and productive.

Recognition vocabulary, or receptive vocabulary, refers to a collection of words that a person can comprehend when reading or listening. Such words are typically less familiar to students and are used less frequently. Thus, although individuals may not be entirely aware of the nuances of their meanings, they can still attribute some level of significance to them (Hiebert & Kamil, 2005, p. 3). Meaning, receptive vocabulary are words that individuals do not typically use in their everyday language, yet they can still recognize them simply from the context in which they are used. Also, receptive knowledge refers to the words that a person can understand when they hear or read them. This means that they need to receive both the form and meaning of the word from others before they can comprehend it. Hence, when someone knows the written form of a word, it becomes easier for them to understand it when they encounter it in writing. Moreover, receptive vocabulary is often seen as a passive process since the learner is only receiving information through listening or reading. Furthermore, according to Akar (2010, p. 17), a person's passive vocabulary is always larger than their active vocabulary because they may have come across words or phrases that they understand but never have the need to use. However, with repetition and practice over time, a person can convert their receptive vocabulary into productive vocabulary. Also, teachers can assist in this process by presenting vocabulary in meaningful and contextualized ways to help students remember and utilize it in the future.

Conversely, productive vocabulary refers to the collection of words that learners comprehend, can articulate accurately, and effectively utilize in verbal and written communication. It encompasses the receptive vocabulary required for understanding as well as the capacity to employ the words appropriately in speaking and writing. Consequently, productive

vocabulary can be considered an active undertaking since learners can actively generate words to convey their thoughts to others (Stuart , 2005, pp. 33-52). That is to say, productive vocabulary consists of commonly used and familiar words that enable effective communication through speaking and writing (Hiebert & Kamil, 2005, p. 3). And, which are first frequently used in listening and reading, are then applied to productive skills. Additionally, using productive vocabulary effectively necessitates correct pronunciation to ensure comprehension as well as selecting the appropriate words for a given context. Furthermore, productive vocabulary is perceived as an active process in which learners generate vocabulary in their speech and writing activities. Therefore, it is essential for clear communication and requires active engagement and proficiency in both speaking and writing.

To conclude, receptive vocabulary, or passive vocabulary, refers to the ability to understand and comprehend language elements within their context through reading and listening. On the other hand, productive vocabulary, or active vocabulary, involves recalling and correctly using linguistic elements in speech or writing (Gairns & Redman, 1986, pp. 64-65).

1.1.4 The Importance of Vocabulary Learning

Learning English as a second or foreign language is a multifaceted process that encompasses the acquisition of several linguistic components, with vocabulary being a key element. As Harmer (1991) said, "If language structures are the skeleton of language, then the vocabulary is the vital organ and the flesh" (p.153). In other words, having a good grasp of vocabulary is crucial for learners to effectively utilize the structures and functions they have learned in order to communicate in a clear and understandable manner (Rivers,1983, cited in Nunan, 1991, p. 117). Essentially, this emphasizes the importance of placing vocabulary acquisition at the forefront of language education. Vocabulary development is a significant aspect of overall language development. In other words, language development is reliant on a mastery of vocabulary. The greater the range of vocabulary that students possess, the more effectively they

will be able to develop their language usage skills. According to Nation (2001), vocabulary proficiency and language usage are mutually supportive components where having a good command of vocabulary facilitates language usage, and in turn, language usage enhances vocabulary knowledge (p. 6).

In English language learning as a second or foreign language, the acquisition of vocabulary is crucial to the development of all language skills. Huckin (1995, p. 225) demonstrated that second language readers heavily depend on their vocabulary knowledge, and the absence of such knowledge is the primary and most significant obstacle that second language readers must overcome. When it comes to producing language, if students have a particular idea or concept that they want to convey, they require a disposal of words from which they can choose to express that idea or concept. Hence, without a solid grasp of vocabulary, learners cannot effectively apply the grammatical knowledge they have acquired. Additionally, they will struggle to showcase their writing abilities. Also, they will be unable to articulate their thoughts and convey information, which can hinder their ability to build social connections. Thornbury (2002, p. 13) asserted that dedicating the majority of time to studying grammar may hinder language development and that acquiring new vocabulary and expressions is more effective. In essence, even if learners have a strong grasp of grammar, their ability to communicate successfully is limited without an adequate vocabulary, impeding their capacity to comprehend and produce oral and written communication. Hence, in language learning, having a strong vocabulary is more important than mastering grammatical structure since learners can effectively communicate using just one word, whereas correct grammar alone cannot convey meaning. So, learners should focus on acquiring a vast vocabulary before studying grammar rules. And, language teachers should prioritize teaching vocabulary to their students. Furthermore, effective communication is vital when traveling to foreign countries, and having a strong vocabulary is crucial to achieving this. Without a robust vocabulary, learners may struggle to convey their messages accurately to native speakers,

hindering their ability to effectively communicate and connect with others in new cultural contexts.

To sum up, the significance of vocabulary in the process of learning the English language cannot be overstated. Hence, developing a strong and extensive vocabulary is essential for effective communication, reading comprehension, writing proficiency, and academic success.

1.1.5 Major Techniques in Teaching Vocabulary

For educators, it is crucial to employ various techniques and methodologies while instructing students in vocabulary. By adopting this approach and using different techniques and methods while teaching vocabulary to their students, teachers can make the learning process more effective and efficient for students. Additionally, employing various strategies can assist teachers in explaining new words and their meanings in a manner that is comprehensible for students. Gairns and Redman (1986, p. 73) examined the typical methods used to introduce and convey the meaning of new vocabulary items, which encompass:

1.1.5.1 Visual Techniques

Using visual techniques has been perceived as a successful technique in vocabulary teaching as it involves students in a multisensory learning experience, fosters students' retention of words, and provides an opportunity for learners to extend their understanding of new vocabulary items. This technique is said to be beneficial for improving the ability to remember vocabulary entries since the ability of the human brain to remember visual information is noteworthy. Using visual aids such as flashcards, pictures, and a blackboard to illustrate new words can be of great benefit for recalling these words easily and effectively (Gairns & Redman, 1986, p. 73) . Moreover, a different visual strategy utilized to educate students on vocabulary is the use of mime and gesture, which reinforce the significance of words and ideas through nonverbal methods. Mime and gestures involve using facial expressions, hand motions, or body language to introduce complex terms. For instance, to teach a term like 'to swerve,' an educator

could create a scenario to exhibit the concept and use gestures and the blackboard to enhance comprehension (Gairns & Redman, 1986, p. 73).

1.1.5.2 Verbal Techniques

Using verbal techniques has a significant role in the efficacy of teaching new vocabulary knowledge, as it helps students understand and make a connection between their previous knowledge and the new one. As the visual explanation fails to illustrate the significance of a given word, the teacher comes to provide its definition, synonym, or antonym in order to clear up any sense of ambiguity. Hence, this technique is regarded as an effective one that helps learners boost and enlarge their vocabulary acquisition as well as retain a great number of words.

1.1.5.3 Translation

According to Grain and Redman (1986), while translation saves time by avoiding complex explanations that may confuse learners, the possibility of using incorrect homophones should be considered in monolingual groups. As a matter of fact, this technique is considered effective as it allows learners to quickly grasp the meaning of words without requiring a lot of effort or resources to explain them.

1.1.6 Vocabulary Learning Strategies

Vocabulary learning strategies (VLS) refer to the range of techniques and methods that learners utilize in order to boost their vocabulary. These strategies can vary considerably between individuals and are dependent on their unique learning styles. Oxford (1990, p. 1) defined VLS as “actions, steps, methods, or approaches employed by learners to enhance their acquisition and application of L2 frequently and without conscious awareness”. Moreover, vocabulary learning is regarded as a part of language learning strategies, as Nation (2001, p. 352) suggested. Nation, furthermore, noted that learners ought to have a combination of knowledge and proficiency in different strategy features such as complexity, level of required knowledge, and so on. As a matter of fact, various taxonomies have been developed for vocabulary learning strategies, with

Schmitt's taxonomy (1997) being widely recognized in this field. Schmitt classified the strategies into two primary types: discovery strategies and consolidation strategies. Under each category, there are numerous techniques that employ various methods for learning and retaining new words.

1.1.6.1.1 Discovery Strategies

1.1.6.1.1 Determination Strategies

According to Schmitt (1997), learners used determination strategies to understand the meaning of new words "without relying on someone else's expertise" (p. 205). In other words, learners rely solely on their own abilities. Such strategies may encompass referencing materials like dictionaries or guessing the meanings of words based on the context in which they are used.

1.1.6.1.2 Social Strategies

Social strategies pertain to the various techniques and methods utilized for acquiring new vocabulary through social interaction. For instance, learners can seek clarification of new words' meanings by asking their teachers or peers. According to Schmitt (1997), various methods can be employed to tackle this issue, such as utilizing synonyms, antonyms, translation, and other related techniques.

1.1.6.2 Consolidation Strategies

1.1.6.2.1 Memory Strategies

Memory strategies comprise the techniques and methods that aid in recalling and retaining new vocabulary words. Actually, there are two frequently used memory strategies for vocabulary acquisition: semantic association and the keyword technique. Semantic association involves categorizing related words together based on their meaning. For instance, while learning the word "education," a student may also learn other words linked to the concept of education such as "learner," "teacher", "school," and "book", this aids the learner in recalling the words in a structured manner that is related to their meaning, whereas the keyword technique involves linking

new words with a memorable image or phrase that is easy to recall. For instance, to recall the word “auspicious,” one may associate it with the image of a rabbit’s foot for good luck.

1.1.6.2.2 Cognitive Strategies

Cognitive strategies in learning vocabulary refer to the techniques or methods that learners use to acquire and retain new vocabulary words in their long-term memory. Among the most commonly used cognitive strategies are the use of word cards, rote learning, rehearsal, and list learning. In fact, these techniques are particularly beneficial for independent and non-academic learners who do not learn in a classroom setting. To exemplify, the word card technique involves writing L2 (second language) words on one side of the card and their meaning in L1 (first language) on the other side. The learner can then use these cards to remember the meaning of L2 words in L1. Another example is rote learning, which involves memorizing information through repetition. According to the study carried out by Nation (2001, p. 329), people tend to forget new information most quickly right after they have learned it. However, this rate of forgetting will slow down over time. Therefore, it is advised to repeat information as soon as it is acquired and subsequently space out the repetitions to improve memory retention.

1.1.6.3 Metacognitive Strategies

Metacognitive strategies refer to the techniques or methods that learners use to monitor and regulate their own learning. According to Schmitt (1997), there are five metacognitive strategies that can be used for learning vocabulary. These strategies involve a systematic process in which the learner is empowered to choose their own path. Therefore, the learner will plan, monitor, and assess themselves to determine the most effective way to enhance their lexicon. By using these strategies, learning vocabulary can be significantly simplified for the learner. Hence, students should carefully select the most relevant approaches that suit their learning (Schmitt, 1997).

1.1.7 Steps of Vocabulary Learning

Vocabulary learning is a crucial aspect of language acquisition as it enables effective communication through the acquisition and use of words and phrases in a particular language. The process of learning vocabulary involves several steps that are necessary for mastering new words and expanding one's vocabulary. Hence, Brown and Payne (1994) suggested five essential steps that learners should follow to boost their lexicon acquisition (cited in Hatch & Brown, 1995, p. 267). These steps are crucial in helping learners acquire and retain new words effectively. These five steps are the following:

1.1.7.1 Meeting New Words

The first step of vocabulary learning involves the initial exposure to a new word, which can occur through various means such as reading, listening, or direct instruction. Nonetheless, it is essential for learners to actively focus on the language input to successfully perceive new words. In essence, attentiveness towards the language utilized is imperative for learners to become cognizant of new vocabulary. Additionally, learners strive to obtain vocabulary that caters to their necessities, making their needs a significant factor in the process of acquiring new words. Apart from that, learners' interests and motivation also guide them towards focusing on specific words over others during their learning process.

1.1.7.2 Obtaining the Word Form

The second step of vocabulary learning is to have a clear image of the word form-spelling, pronunciation, or both. Obtaining the form of a word is very important, especially when students are asked to define words.

1.1.7.3 Obtaining the Word's Meaning

The third step of vocabulary learning is obtaining the word's meaning. Learners must understand the meaning of the new word, which can involve using contextual clues or putting

words in context, looking up the word in a dictionary as it is considered a source of word definitions, or asking for clarification from a teacher, a native speaker, or a peer.

1.1.7.4 Memory Centralization of Word Form and Meaning

The fourth step of vocabulary learning is centralizing the word into memory. Once the learner understands the meaning of the new word, they need to commit it to memory. This can involve repeated exposure to the word in different contexts, using the word in speaking or writing, or using mnemonic strategies to help remember the word.

1.1.7.5 Using the New Word

The final step in vocabulary learning is using the new word. Learners need to be able to use the new word in appropriate contexts. In other words, at this final stage, learners are able to retrieve the word from memory quickly and effortlessly and use it accurately in spoken or written language. This requires not only knowing the meaning of the word but also understanding its collocations, connotations, and appropriate usage patterns.

All in all, this model emphasizes the importance of repeated exposure to new vocabulary in different contexts as well as the need to actively engage with new words in order to move them from short-term to long-term memory. Hence, the learners require all five steps in order to expand their vocabulary and gain a thorough understanding of the words they wish to learn.

1.1.8 Vocabulary Learning Assessment

Vocabulary learning assessment refers to the process of evaluating a learner's acquisition and retention of new words and their meaning. According to Thornbury (2002, p. 129), there is no reliable means of knowing how effective a teaching sequence has been without testing. Testing provides valuable feedback for both learners and teachers, and it can also motivate learners to review and reinforce their vocabulary in preparation for a test. Hence, a good mastery of vocabulary requires regular practice by the learner as well as continuous assessment by the

teacher. Teachers should recognize the significance of vocabulary and understand how to measure their students' vocabulary knowledge. Later, Thornbury (2002) noted that there are two types of testing vocabulary: informal testing and formal testing (p. 130).

1.1.8.1 Informal Vocabulary Learning Assessment

The informal vocabulary learning assessment is a method used to assess a child's vocabulary acquisition. The process involves creating a vocabulary inventory by selecting words from the child's classroom materials, such as a textbook or learning resources. Once the inventory is created, the child is asked to define each word or use it in a sentence to demonstrate their understanding. Thus, informal vocabulary assessments lack standardization and may not have specific scoring criteria. This type of assessment aids in identifying a child's strengths and weaknesses in vocabulary.

1.1.8.2 Formal Vocabulary Learning Assessment

Formal vocabulary learning assessment is a method of evaluating a child's vocabulary skills through standardized tests. It involves presenting the child with pictures of objects, animals, or actions, and asking them to identify the corresponding word or concept. Hence, these tests are designed to measure a child's ability to recognize and understand words and their meaning, as well as their ability to use context clues to derive the meaning of unfamiliar words.

Section Two: Teaching and Learning Through Gestures

1.2.1 Definition of Gestures

The utilization of nonverbal communication in the classroom, such as gestures, has been considered a proficient technique for teaching vocabulary in a foreign language to young EFL learners. According to the Longman Dictionary of Language Teaching and Applied Linguistics, gestures are physical movements or facial and bodily expressions that convey a message or meaning, such as nodding to show agreement (2002, p. 225). Hauge (2000) added that gestures can be any visible movement of the body, but they are most commonly associated with movements involving the hands, upper limbs, or head. Gestures can be accompanied by verbal communication, but they can also stand alone without any verbal cues. Furthermore, gestures can be intentional or unintentional, as they can be made with or without conscious intent. Interestingly, gestures serve as a mean for communicating messages to other individuals, whether it is intentional or not (p. 29). Kendon's research on gestures highlights several essential features that a movement must possess to qualify as a gesture. First, a gesture must have a recognizable pattern of action with clear beginnings and endings, which means that it can be distinguished from random or unintentional movements. Second, a gesture is often performed against a background of more sustained activity, such as talking or walking. Finally, a gesture is seen as having a communicative function, which means that it conveys information or meaning to others. These features distinguish gestures from other types of movements and actions, and help to identify them as intentional and purposeful communicative acts (Kendon , 1981, p. 135). In summation, gestures form the core of body language. They encompass a broad range of body movements that convey meaning, from hand gestures that supplement or illustrate speech to movements of the upper limbs or head. Additionally, gestures can also include unintentional fidgeting movements that people make while communicating. Hence, it is important to note that gestures can be intentional or unintentional as they may be made with or without conscious intent.

1.2.2 Classifications of Gestures

Over the course of years, a plethora of scholars have proposed classification schemes for gestures, including Efron (1941), Freedman and Hoffman (1967), Ekman and Friesen (1969), and McNeill (1992). The following table summarizes the schemes put forth by these scholars.

Table 1.1

Four Gestures Classification Schemes

Efron	Freedman and Hoffman	Ekman and Friesen	McNeill
Physiographics Kinetographics	Literal-reproductive	Kinetographs Pictographs	Iconics
Ideographics	Concretization minor and major qualifying	Ideographs Underliners Spatial	Metaphorics
Deictics		Deictics	Deictics
Batons	Punctuating	Batons Rhythmics	Beats
	Speech failures		Butterworths

Note. Adapted from *Hand and Mind: what Gestures Reveal about Thought*, by D. McNeill, 1992, p.76, The University of Chicago Press. Chicago and London.

1.2.2.1 Efron's Classification

Efron (1941) is widely recognized as the pioneer of gestural classification, having proposed two major categories of gestures. The first category is objective-focused gestures, which have meaning independent of speech. Objective-focused gestures can be further classified into deictic, physiographic, and symbolic gestures. Deictic gestures are used to refer to a visually

present object, such as a pointing gesture. Physiographic gestures represent the form of a visual object, spatial relationship, or bodily action, such as a speaker using their index finger to write in the air. Symbolic or emblematic gestures, like the North American OK sign, have conventionalized meanings and are taken from a commonly known vocabulary. The second category of gestures proposed by Efron is logical-discursive gestures, which accompany speech and represent the thought process itself. Logical-discursive gestures are related more to the ‘how’ than to the ‘what’ of the ideas they re-enact and are classified into two subcategories: batons and ideographics. Batons are rhythmic gestures that match the speed of our thinking; similar to how a conductor uses a baton to guide orchestra. They help convey the flow and rhythm of our thoughts as we explain or discuss something. Ideographic gestures involve tracing or sketching movements in the air to show the paths and directions of our thought patterns. For example, a speaker might shake their arm in the air between two imaginary points to illustrate the connection between two tasks or ideas (Vafaei, 2013, p. 4).

1.2.2.2 Freedman and Hoffman’s Classification

Freedman and Hoffman (1967) developed a system for categorizing hand movements based on their observations of two paranoid patients during psychotherapy sessions. They identified two types of movements: object-oriented and body-oriented. Object-focused movements are closely linked to speech and modify the communicative process, while body-focused movements are unrelated to speech and may modify sensory experiences or express preoccupations with certain needs. Object-focused movements can be further classified into six categories based on their relationship to speech. The first category, punctuating movements, emphasizes what is being said without adding additional information. The second category, minor qualifying movements, adds something to what is being said. The third category, literal-reproductive movements, attempts to literally reproduce an event or thing that has a clear physical reference. The fourth category, literal-concretization movements, refers to gestures made with the hands to represent an event or emotion, even when there is no physical object involved. These

movements are used to make abstract feelings or ideas more tangible. The fifth category, major qualifying movements, is disruptive to the verbal dialogue and seems to bear no discernible connection with what is being said. These movements appear to be autonomous and have primacy in the motor realm (Freedman & Hoffman, 1967, pp. 527-539). The sixth category, is speech failure, which refers to the gestures that arise in response to a failure in speech (Brian Butterworth, 1989, cited in McNeill, 1992, p. 77).

1.2.2.3 Ekman and Friesen's Classification

In 1969, Ekman and Friesen expanded on Efron's work and developed their own system for classifying gestures. One category they added was emblems, which are gestures that have an iconic relationship with the conveyed meaning. They combined batons, which accentuate or emphasize a particular word or phrase; ideographs, which illustrate the path or direction of thought; deictic movements which point to an object, place, or event; spatial movements, which illustrate a spatial relationship; rhythmic movements, which convey the rhythm or pacing of an event; kinetographs, which depict bodily or non-human physical actions; and emblematic movements, which use gestures or symbols to illustrate a verbal statement, either repeating or substituting for a word or phrase, in a single category called Illustrators, and added a new category called Pictographs, which use movements to draw a picture of the shape of the referent. They also introduced four parameters for gesture categorization: intentionality, awareness, culturally shared meaning, and modification of listener's behaviour. These parameters assist in categorizing gestures as either communicative, informative, interactive, or idiosyncratic. Communicative gestures have a culturally determined and shared meaning and a high degree of awareness and intentionality. Informative gestures are unintentional, while interactive gestures aim to modify the listener's behaviour, and their intentionality is not relevant. Idiosyncratic gestures are not communicative, as they do not convey a shared meaning. This classification system has been a significant innovation in the field of nonverbal communication (Ekman & Friesen, 1969, p. 360; Rossini, 2014, p. 125).

1.2.2.4 McNeill's Classification

McNeill (1992) categorized gesture movements into four primary groups, including iconic, metaphoric, deictic (pointing), and beat gestures. This classification emphasizes the essential linkage between gestures and accompanying speech. It highlights that a gesture category is formulated only in coordination with speech content. McNeill (1992) defines iconic gestures as the hand and body movements that represent a concrete event, object, or action that is mentioned simultaneously in speech. Metaphoric gestures are also defined as being like iconic gestures in that they use imagery, but they present an image of an abstract concept instead of a concrete object or event. Moreover, deictic gestures are defined as the movements used to point towards something. The most typical form of these gestures involves the use of a pointing finger, although other body parts such as the head, nose, or chin, as well as manipulated objects, can be used as well (McNeill, pp.76-80). For instance, we may point to an object in the immediate environment or we may point behind us to represent past time (Taleghani-Nikazm, 2008, p. 230). Furthermore, beats are defined as gestures that don't have a specific meaning but are recognized by their typical movement characteristics, which include being small, low-energy, and consisting of rapid movements of the fingers or hand. These gestures are usually performed wherever the hands happen to be, including rest positions like the lap or next to the cheek, and are not associated with any particular gesture space. Finally, the Butterworth category refers to the gestures that occur in response to speech failures, specifically when trying to recall a word or sentence structure. A typical Butterworth gesture involves the hand making a grasping or plucking motion in the air (McNeill, 1992, pp. 77-80).

In conclusion, the study of gesture classification has a long history, with pioneers such as Efron, Freedman and Hoffman, Ekman and Friesen, and McNeill developing different systems for categorizing gestures based on their observation and analysis of human behaviour. Efron's classification system (1941) consists of objective and logical-discursive gestures. Freedman and Hoffman (1967) developed a system based on object-oriented and body-oriented movements.

Ekman and Friesen (1969) expanded Efron's system and added emblems and introduced parameters for categorization. Finally, McNeill (1992) classified gestures into iconic, metaphoric, deictic, and beat gestures, emphasizing their connection to speech. In a nutshell, the classification of gestures is crucial for comprehending and interpreting gestures in diverse context within nonverbal communication.

1.2.3 The Importance of Gestures in Vocabulary Teaching and Learning

Acquiring a new language involves acquiring novel vocabulary, syntax, and proper application. It may also entail acquiring the ability to make gestures in a different manner (Gullberg, 2014, p. 1868). This perspective is supported by a number of theorists who propose that language consists of both speech and gesture, which combine to create a single "composite signal" (Clark, 1996; Kendon, 2004a; McNeill, 1992, 2005; Raffler-Engel, 1980b, cited in Gullberg, 2006, p. 108). In other words, the process of acquiring a language includes not only learning to speak but also learning to use appropriate gestures.

Gestures are incredibly significant in both the learning and teaching processes, as verbal language represents only half of the overall picture. Verbal language solely provides insight into verbal thoughts and does not reflect imagistic thought. Furthermore, when there is a language skill imbalance between the learners and the teacher, spoken communication may not be the most effective form of interaction. Roth (2001) backed up this viewpoint by demonstrating that simply listening to the verbal portion of a conversation does not result in a clear understanding of the intended meaning. It is only through the inclusion of gestural cues that the listener can fully comprehend the message being conveyed (Roth, 2001, cited in Hudson, 2011, p. 64).

According to Stam and Tellier (2021, p. 336), learners often use gestures to enhance their speech elaboration, while teachers utilize gestures to facilitate their students' speech comprehension (Sime, 2001; Hauge, 1999, cited in Tellier, 2008, pp. 219 - 220; Allen, 1995, 2000; Lazaraton, 2004; Mori, 1998, cited in Taleghani-Nikazm, 2009, p. 230). These gestures serve to

aid in the comprehension of semantically ambiguous or new lexical items and help prevent students from becoming “absent-minded” (Dai & Li, 2021, pp. 222-223), ultimately improving learning outcomes.

Moreover, learners’ gestures are valuable indicators of their language proficiency and comprehension of the material. As per Goldin-Meadow (2018), gestures can be a useful tool for teachers to comprehend what is going on in their students’ minds and gauge their level of understanding through their speech and accompanying gestures (Goldin-Meadow, 2018, cited in Freitas & Serarano De Andrade Neto, 2023, pp. 9 - 10).

Research studies have further shown that the use of gestures during word learning enhances vocabulary retrieval of young learners. Interestingly, gestures have been found to enhance memory not only for action words and phrases or concrete nouns but also for function and abstract words. Teachers expect learners to actively engage and pay attention during class. However, young learners tend to have shorter attention spans and prefer to learn through imitation and movement. Therefore, incorporating vivid and dynamic gestures can be an effective way to improve young learners’ vocabulary achievement and make the learning process more enjoyable (Lazaraton, 2004; Yang, 2016, cited in Dai & Li, 2021, pp. 222-223; Muhammad, 2014, cited in Simpuruh & Syamsinar, 2021, p. 10).

To conclude, acquiring a new language involves not only learning vocabulary and syntax but also acquiring the ability to use appropriate gestures. Gestures are an essential component of language and play a significant role in both the learning and teaching processes. Teachers can use gestures to facilitate their young learners’ speech comprehension, aid in the comprehension of new or semantically ambiguous lexical items, and enhance their vocabulary achievement. Additionally, young learners’ gestures serve as valuable indicators of their language proficiency and comprehension, providing teachers with insights into their young learners’ level of understanding. Therefore, incorporating vivid and dynamic gestures can be an effective way to

improve language learning outcomes, make the learning process more enjoyable, and enhance young learners' engagement and receptivity to instruction.

1.2.4 Language Teachers' Gestures and Their Functions

Teachers have the ability to utilize a range of nonverbal gestures when communicating with their students. These gestures are not haphazardly chosen, but rather they have specific forms and serve particular pedagogical functions (Allen 1995, 2000; Lazaraton 2004; Mori 1998, cited in Taleghani-Nikazm, 2008, p. 230). In fact, many of these gestures are intentionally and consistently employed by teachers as part of their teaching practice (Stam & Tellier, 2021, p. 348).

Gestures employed by teachers can hold a great deal of significance and provide immense assistance to students in the process of teaching and learning. In Lazaraton's (2004) study, the teacher utilizes a range of gestures, including iconics (both kinetographic and pictographic), emblems, metaphors, deictics, beats, and whole-body movements (Lazaraton, 2004, cited in Hudson, 2011, p. 78). By employing deictic and iconic gestures, the teacher constructs a gesture space and visually illustrates the discourse, which aids in enhancing the learners' comprehension. Additionally, the teacher utilizes a combination of deictic and iconic gestures to provide a visual representation of the correct form, allowing the students to self-correct verbally (Taleghani-Nikazm, 2008, p. 233). For example, the teacher uses gestures such as the thumb up, pointing, crossing hands, closing and opening hands, and hand clapping (Dai & Li, 2021, p. 223; Afdaliah, 2022, p. 184). When it comes to effective teaching, the use of proper body language by teachers can have a significant impact on students' motivation, retention, and overall understanding. Research shows that a teacher's gestures can create a more positive and encouraging classroom environment, heightening learners' attention and promoting their comprehension of instructional language. By using various types of gestures in their speech, teachers can reinforce their message, adding redundancy to their verbal explanations. Furthermore, the gestures used by teachers can help learners focus on the keywords in sentences, which can facilitate a more holistic approach to

language learning. These findings underscore the importance of nonverbal communication in the classroom and suggest that teachers who use effective body language can play a vital role in supporting their students' learning and growth (Allen, 1995, 2000; McCafferty, 2002; Mori, 1998; Lazaraton, 2004; Stam & McCafferty, 2008; Ward & von Raffler-Engel, 1980; Alibali & Nathan, 2007, as cited in Thompson, 2014, p. 121; Taleghani-Nikazm, 2008, p. 230).

Additionally, in the classroom setting, gestures serve a myriad of pedagogical functions that can be grouped into four categories: input, regulation, affect, and ultimately error correction (Kusanagi, 2005, cited in Afdaliah, 2022, p. 184; Tellier, 2008a, cited Stam & Tellier, 2021, p. 348; Muramoto, 1999, cited in Taleghani-Nikazm, 2008, p. 230).

1.2.4.1 Gestures Used for Input

Teachers often use various hand and head gestures to help foreign language learners understand the material better. According to Kusanagi (2005), gestures can provide additional input to speech, leading to better comprehension, motivation, and learning among students (p. 386). For example, a teacher may use a head gesture while explaining a concept by saying, "the words that haven't been added to the sentence don't have affixes" and shaking her head. This repetition of the verbal message using a gesture can reinforce the material's understanding. Similarly, a teacher may use hand gestures such as holding up two fingers while saying, "There are two types of biography" to accentuate the verbal message and make it easier for students to understand. In another example, while a teacher is explaining the lesson to his or her students, he or she may hold up a marker and raise his or her hand while saying, for example, "I say I have a pen". The teacher's purpose in this situation is to clarify the material and make it easier for her students to understand. By using a gesture, the teacher reinforces his/her verbal message and helps his/her students grasp the concept more effectively (Afdaliah, 2022, pp. 189-192). On the whole, teachers use these gestures to supplement verbal instruction and provide additional input to

students to help them understand the material better. Teachers can improve the learning experience for foreign language learners by using these gestures.

1.2.4.2 Gestures Used for Regulation

Teachers often use hand and head gestures to engage their students and regulate interactions in the classroom. For instance, a teacher may use a pointing gesture with his or her index finger to direct a student to read their answer and say, “Yeah, you!”. This gesture helps regulate the flow of conversation and encourage student participation. Moreover, teachers can use the beckoning or inviting gesture to encourage students to participate in classroom discussions. The teacher can raise his or her hand, move it back and forth, and say words or expressions such as “what?” or “come on” to prompt a hesitant student to answer a question or share their thoughts. This gesture encourages the student to speak up and reinforces the teacher’s verbal message. In addition to hand gestures, teachers may also use head gestures such as nodding to regulate interactions. For instance, when a teacher asks a student to read a paragraph, he or she may nod while saying, “Yeah, next, you. Paragraph two!”. This gesture signals to the student to start reading and helps regulate the flow of the classroom activity (Afdaliah, 2022, pp. 189-192). All in all, hand and head gestures are important tools that teachers can use to engage their students and create a more dynamic learning environment.

1.2.4.3 Gestures Used for Affection

Teachers often utilize various physical cues, like a thumbs up or hand clapping, as well as head gestures such as nodding, to show appreciation and offer rewards for their students’ performance. By doing so, students are more likely to feel valued and motivated to continue their good work. These gestures tend to occur towards the end of the learner’s response, enabling the teacher to provide a positive evaluation and bring closure to the answer (Stam & Tellier, 2021, p. 350). An excellent example of this is when a teacher combines a smile with a nod every time a student answers a question correctly. As another example, in a situation where multiple students

respond to a question simultaneously, the teacher can utilize kinesics cues, such as gestures like pointing or smiling, to evaluate the answers provided by the students. This can help the teacher identify the student who gave the expected response (Stam & Tellier, 2021, p. 350). These gestures serve as a sign of approval, a reward for the student's effort, and a display of affection towards the student (Afdaliah, 2022, pp. 184-195). In short, these gestures serve as a tangible way for teachers to recognize their students' efforts and provide a sense of encouragement that can help students excel in their academic pursuits.

1.2.4.4 Error Correcting

The teacher's gesture serves multiple functions in the classroom. It does not only initiate correction, but it also provides gestural cues for the correct answer, giving the student a chance to self-correct. The teacher achieves this through a combination of deictic and iconic gestures that provide the student with a clear visual representation of the correct form. For instance, when a student makes a mistake in a subordinate clause, the teacher uses gestures to help them correct it. The student's clause might contain the verb in an incorrect position, and the teacher employs deictic gestures to visually demonstrate the appropriate spatial location. Subsequently, an iconic gesture is performed, vividly portraying the verb's movement to its proper position. By doing this, the teacher makes it easier for the student to understand and visualize the correct form (Taleghani-Nikazm, 2008, pp. 234-236). When a statement contains errors, the teacher has two options: they can either interrupt the learner or wait until the end of the statement before intervening. Typically, if the teacher identifies an error in the learner's response, they will choose to indicate it non-verbally so as not to disrupt the flow of the learner's production. Instead of providing the correct answer outright, the teacher will use gestures to signal that there is an issue with the response. This approach allows the learner to identify where the mistake is and correct it, encouraging them to reflect on their mistakes and learn from them (Stam & Tellier, 2021, p. 350). To sum up, the teacher's use of gestures in the language learning process has multiple functions, including initiating correction and providing visual cues for the correct answer. The combination of deictic

and iconic gestures is particularly effective in helping students understand and visualize the correct form. Additionally, using nonverbal gestures to signal errors allows students to self-correct and reflect on their mistakes.

1.2.5 The Role of Gestures in Enhancing Foreign Language Learning

The use of gestures in foreign language learning has received growing attention in recent years due to its potential to enhance memory and communication skills. By linking words and phrases with physical actions, learners can effectively recall and retrieve them. Additionally, integrating gestures into communication can aid in bridging gaps in understanding, clarifying meanings, and conveying emotions and attitudes.

1.2.5.1 Gestures and Foreign Language Memorization

Throughout the centuries, gestures have been employed as a time-honoured technique to enhance vocabulary retention in language learning. While traditional approaches in linguistic theory and second language education have often emphasized the use of visual aids, recent researches have shed light on the effectiveness of incorporating gestures as a tool for improving memorization. Several studies have provided empirical evidence that suggests the inclusion of gestures during language learning can significantly enhance the retention of vocabulary.

In 2008, Tellier conducted a study on twenty pre-school children from France with an average age of 5.5. The children were taught eight common English words: scissors, rabbit, finger, cry, snake, book, swim, and house. Out of these, four words were associated with a picture, while the remaining four words were demonstrated through a gesture that the children saw in a video and then imitated. The results showed that the items enacted through gestures were significantly better memorized than the items enriched with visual aids such as pictures (Tellier, 2008, pp. 219-235).

A study conducted by Macedonia and Knösche (2011) examined the effect of enactment on learning abstract words. The words were presented within 32 sentences, each consisting of four grammatical components: subject, verb, adverb, and object. Only the nouns representing the subjects were assigned concrete meanings which indicated the actors, while the remaining words were abstract. The study involved twenty participants who learned the words under two different conditions: either memorizing them audio-visually or enriching their learning through gestures. The gestures used to illustrate abstract words were arbitrary and held symbolic value. The participants' memory performance was assessed through free recall and cued recall tests at six different time points. The results indicated that the enactment method, as a supplement to audio-visual encoding, enhanced memory performance for both concrete and abstract words (nouns, verbs, and adverbs). Additionally, in a transfer test, participants were asked to produce new (non-canonical) sentences with the words they had learned during training. The results showed that enacted items were significantly more frequently used than words learned through audio-visual means (Macedonia & Kriegstein, 2012, pp. 393-416).

In another study with school-aged children, observation alone or observation combined with performing gestures demonstrated by a virtual agent were used as supplements to audio-visual encoding. The results indicated that performing gestures oneself was the critical factor in improving learning (Macedonia et al., 2014a, cited in Macedonia, 2014, p. 1468).

In conclusion, incorporating gestures as a supplementary tool in vocabulary learning improves memory performance and retention. Gestures enhance the learning of both concrete and abstract words, leading to better understanding and application of the vocabulary.

1.2.5.2 Gestures and Foreign Language Communication

In the realm of communication, gestures play a vital role in conveying information beyond speech alone. According to McNeill (1992, p. 208), gestures are particularly useful in situations where the information being conveyed is unexpected, difficult to access, or interrupted.

Learners, especially those with limited language proficiency, often resort to gestures when they struggle to find words or express themselves appropriately. By employing non-verbal signals in place of verbal communication, learners can bridge the gaps caused by weak language skills. This utilization of gestures, known as emblematic or autonomous gestures, becomes crucial in challenging verbal communication scenarios, allowing learners to convey complex or ambiguous ideas effectively.

Furthermore, gestures hold the power to convey meanings that surpass the limitations of speech. Goldin-Meadow (2005, p. 13) emphasizes that gestures provide “substantive information” that speech alone cannot offer. Unlike speech, gestures are not restricted to fixed forms and can vary along multiple dimensions. As Church and Goldin-Meadow (1986, cited in Tellier, 2008, p.195) suggest, gestures possess the ability to provide information that is unexpected, enhancing the overall communicative experience. Combining both verbal and non-verbal signals results in a more comprehensive and nuanced representation of an object or idea (Goldin-Meadow, 2005, p. 25).

Additionally, gestures excel in describing verbs with a higher degree of specificity, surpassing the limitations of verbal communication alone ((Kendon, 2004, p. 175). While a teacher may utter the word “throw,” gestures allow for various interpretations and demonstrations of how the action is performed. McNeill (1992, cited in Tellier, 2008, pp.195-196). exemplifies the power of gesture through an instance where a woman uses her hand to illustrate an old lady wielding an umbrella as a weapon to chase a cat. Here, the gesture provides additional information beyond what is conveyed through speech.

Nevertheless, in cross-cultural contexts, gestures become even more significant, as cultural nuances heavily influence their interpretation and appreciation (Archer, 1997, p. 79). Teachers should be mindful of cultural diversity and ensure that their physical gestures are respectful and appropriate to avoid unintended offense or misunderstandings. Developing an

understanding of the cultural nuances of their learners and the communities they work with is essential for effective communication.

In conclusion, gestures serve as a significant aspect of communication, providing additional dimensions of meaning that speech alone cannot convey. They are an invaluable tool for closing language proficiency gaps and improving overall communicative experience. However, it is critical to understand that gestures can have diverse meanings in different cultures, underlining the importance of cultural sensitivity and knowledge. Teachers may establish an inclusive and effective learning environment for their students by understanding and valuing cultural diversity.

1.2.6 Foreign Language Learners' Gestures and Lexical Retrieval

Learning a foreign language is significantly aided by visualized gestures as they are intricately associated to lexical retrieval (Butterworth & Beattie 1978; Butterworth & Hardar, 1989; Krauss, et al. 2000, cited in Yoshioka, 2005, p. 36). These visualized gestures play a vital role in helping learners in enhancing the retrieval of vocabulary from both short-term and long-term memory (Macedonia, 2003, cited in Choi & Kim, 2015, p. 159).

By building upon Baddeley's (1990) study on cognitive components (Baddeley, 1990, cited in Tellier, 2008, p. 220), it is evident that gestures serve as a powerful link between the Visio-Spatial Sketchpad, the Central Executive Device, and the enhancement of lexical retrieval among learners. Firstly, gestures activate the Visio-Spatial Sketchpad by providing visual cues and kinaesthetic experiences that accompany words. When learners use gestures to represent or illustrate a word, a visual image is created that aligns with the word's meaning. This visual representation engages the Visio-Spatial Sketchpad, reinforcing the association between the gesture, the word, and its meaning. Consequently, the encoding and retention of lexical information are significantly enhanced. Secondly, gestures support the Central Executive Device in retrieving lexical knowledge from long-term memory. When learners use gestures during word

recall, it triggers the retrieval process by accessing stored information associated with the word. The physical act of gesturing serves as a retrieval cue, facilitating the activation and retrieval of the associated word from memory. Additionally, the combination of gestures with the Visio-Spatial Sketchpad and the Central Executive Device promotes a multimodal learning experience. By engaging multiple sensory modalities (visual, kinesthetic, and verbal), learners can form stronger connections and associations between words and their meanings.

Moreover, Macedonia's (2003) Connectivity Model of Semantic Processing suggests that using a gesture paired with the word creates a complex representation, a deep code, which is better retrieved and decays more slowly (Macedonia, 2003, cited in Macedonia & Knösche, 2011, p. 197). Studies have also demonstrated that learners are better able to remember movement-related sentences when they have physically enacted the action themselves (Engelkamp & Zimmer, 1997). Another factor that may affect the process of lexical retrieval is the length of the word. Researches have demonstrated that word length affects memorization and thus short words are better recalled than longer ones (Baddeley, Thompson, & Buchanan, 1975; Hulme & Tordoff, 1989, cited in Macedonia & Klimesch, 2014, p. 79).

In fact, there are a variety of gestures types that are used during lexical retrieval searches, and they can provide valuable clues to what a learner is trying to express. According to Beattie and Coughlan (1998, 1999), gestures used during lexical retrieval are not always iconic gestures, they can also be non-iconic. In Gullberg's (1998) study, it was discovered that metaphoric gestures were used, in addition to iconic gestures, to cope with issues related to fluency, grammar, and lexical retrieval. Furthermore, in Stam's (2001, 2012) investigations, it was determined that the types of gestures produced by learners depend on whether they know the word or whether they are trying to retrieve it, or if they were requesting assistance from the interlocutor. During lexical retrieval searches, learners often accompany their searches with iconic gestures that involve small rhythmic movements of the hands or fingers, while a larger beat occur when the retrieved word is found. However, it is important to note that these types of gestures are not the only ones used

during the search process. Other types of gestures, such as aborted gestures (those that are initiated but not completed), word search gestures, and deictic (pointing) gestures, are also used. Gestures that occur during unsuccessful searches are primarily iconic and aborted gestures which provided insight into what the learner is thinking but does not express verbally (Beattie & Coughlan, 1998, 1999; Gullberg, 1998; & Stam, 2001, 2012, cited in Stam & Tellier, 2021, pp. 339-340).

To sum up, visualized gestures significantly aid in the learning of a foreign language by enhancing lexical retrieval from both short-term and long-term memory. Enacting words with gestures create a deeper mental image of the word which enhances retrieval and decays more slowly. Additionally, the types of gestures produced during lexical retrieval searches vary and can include iconic, metaphoric, aborted, and deictic gestures which provide valuable clues to what an individual is trying to express. All in all, the use of gestures during foreign language learning can greatly enhance the learning experience and aid in the retention and retrieval of vocabulary.

1.2.7 Challenges of Using Gestures in Vocabulary Teaching and Learning

The use of gestures in vocabulary teaching and learning has gained popularity in recent years as it is believed to enhance young EFL learners' engagement, retention, and understanding of new words. However, like any instructional approach, using gestures in vocabulary teaching and learning also presents some challenges and limitations.

Incorporating gestures into vocabulary teaching can be a challenging task for EFL teachers as it requires extensive planning and effort. Teachers must carefully consider which gestures are appropriate for each vocabulary item and how to consistently demonstrate and reinforce them during the lesson. Performing this task might require a significant amount of time and specific instruction. Therefore, teachers ought to practise gestures in advance to guarantee they are applied suitably and regularly within the class. Using too many gestures can also be overwhelming for young EFL learners and may lead to confusion as they struggle to remember which gesture corresponds to which word (Huang, Kim & Christianson, 2019, cited in Freitas &

Serarano De Andrade Neto, 2023, p. 9). Hence, it is important for teachers to be mindful of the quantity and complexity of the gestures they use by focusing on using simple and intuitive gestures that are easy for learners to remember and associate with specific vocabulary words.

In providing appropriate situations for gesture input, it can be challenging when not knowing the learners well enough such as their cognitive and affective abilities (Khanukaeva, 2014, p.85). Learners with lower language proficiency may struggle to understand and produce complex gestures due to their limited vocabulary and comprehension skills. In addition, this type of vocabulary input may pose a difficulty for certain learners who have lower levels of concentration or lack motivation as they may find it tedious and unhelpful (Khanukaeva,2014, p.85). Furthermore, not all young EFL learners learn best through visual or kinaesthetic means, and for those learners, gestures may not be an effective learning tool. Another challenging problem is that the use of teacher's gestures may impede learners' focus on the lesson content (Khanukaeva, 2014, p.85). Consequently, it's crucial to use suitable and effective gestures that aid learners' understanding and acquisition without causing any interference in their learning process.

Moreover, using gestures to teach vocabulary can be useful, but its effectiveness depends on the complexity of the concept being taught. That is to say, concrete concepts that can be easily demonstrated visually are well-suited for gesture-based learning. However, abstract concepts that are challenging to represent physically may not be as effective when taught through gestures alone. Therefore, teachers may need to supplement gesture-based teaching with other methods, such as visual aids or real-life scenarios, to help learners grasp the meaning of abstract concepts. Furthermore, gestures have different meanings in different cultures, so they may not have a universal interpretation or appreciation (Archer, 1997, p. 79). Consequently, teachers need to be careful regarding cultural diversity and guarantee that their physical gestures are respectful and suitable. To avoid unintended offense or misunderstandings, teachers should get to know the cultural nuances of their learners and the communities they work with.

In a nutshell, incorporating gestures into vocabulary instruction can enhance young EFL learner's engagement, retention, and comprehension of new words. However, this approach has its drawbacks and limitations which require EFL teachers to thoughtfully select suitable and uncomplicated gestures, balance their use with other teaching strategies, and exhibit cultural sensitivity. Additionally, not all learners may find this technique helpful and may even impede or confuse their learning progress. Consequently, teachers need to utilize gestures effectively and judiciously to facilitate vocabulary acquisition.

Conclusion

To recapitulate, this chapter has provided a thorough overview of the crucial role that vocabulary plays in learning a foreign language, as well as the benefits that gestures can bring to the process of acquiring and retaining new vocabulary. The chapter is divided into two main sections, with the first section exploring various aspects of vocabulary teaching and learning, while the second section focuses specifically on using gestures as a tool for enhancing vocabulary acquisition. In the first section, the chapter covers a range of topics related to vocabulary such as its definition, types, significance, teaching techniques, learning strategies, assessment methods, and related fields. It emphasizes the importance of understanding the subtle nuances of vocabulary such as the difference between active and passive vocabulary, as well as productive and receptive vocabulary. Moving on to the second section, the chapter delves into the value of incorporating gestures into foreign language vocabulary teaching and learning. It discusses different classifications of gestures, their pedagogical functions, and the benefits they can bring, including improved memorization and communication skills. The chapter also addresses potential challenges that may arise when using gestures in the vocabulary teaching and learning process. All in all, this chapter highlights the critical importance of vocabulary in foreign language learning, and underscores the potential of gestures to enhance vocabulary acquisition and retention.

Chapter Two: Research Methodology and Data Analysis

Introduction

The previous theoretical chapter gave an overview of the teaching and learning of vocabulary, as well as the teaching of vocabulary using gestures. This particular chapter is designed to shed light on the practical part of this study, which aims at eliciting information about the middle school EFL teachers' perceptions of the efficacy of using gestures to teach new vocabulary to young EFL learners. Throughout this practical chapter, many things will be tackled in detail. Starting from the research methodology, which is about the research design, the population and sampling, the aim of the questionnaire, the administration, and the description of the questionnaire, which will be discussed in section one. Then, focus will be shifted to the most critical aspect of the dissertation. i.e., data analysis and interpretation as well as the discussion of the results, which will be discussed in section two. Finally, the dissertation will end with a general conclusion, the pedagogical implications, the limitations, and some suggestions for future researchers.

Section One: Research Design and Data Collection Instrument

2.1.1 Research Design

The study aims to explore how middle school EFL teachers perceive the effectiveness of using gestures to teach new vocabulary to young EFL learners. It employs a descriptive research methodology with a quantitative approach to data collection and analysis. Due to pedagogical considerations, the planned interview in this study could not be conducted alongside the questionnaire, which aimed to gain a more comprehensive understanding of the teachers' viewpoints. As a result, the questionnaire became the primary method for collecting substantial data, which, according to Brown (2001, cited in Mackey & Gass, 2005, p. 92), is "any written instrument that presents respondents with a series of questions or statements to which they are to respond either by writing out their answers or selecting from among existing answers". The

questionnaire used in this study includes questions that are suitable for collecting factual and behavioural attitudinal data within a short time frame. Moreover, using a questionnaire as a data collection method allows us to formulate questions and receive responses without the need for direct interaction with the respondents.

2.1.2 Population and Sampling

2.1.2.1 Population

The population of interest for this study consists of First-year middle school EFL teachers in Jijel, for the academic year 2022-2023. This population is characterized by teachers who are actively employed in public middle schools in the region. The total number of teachers in this population is estimated to be 336.

2.1.2.2 Sampling

Owing to the large size of the population, it is not possible to include every single first-year middle school EFL teacher in the study. Hence, a sampling strategy (random selection) is employed to select a representative subset of the population. The sample size for this study has been determined to be 111 middle school EFL teachers, which is considered sufficient to draw meaningful conclusions while still being manageable for data collection and analysis.

2.1.3 Aim of the Questionnaire

The primary goal of the questionnaire is to explore middle school EFL teachers' perceptions of the efficacy of employing gestures as a teaching strategy for introducing new vocabulary to young EFL learners. The questionnaire is specifically developed to elicit information about instructors' perspectives, attitudes, and experiences with the use of gestures in vocabulary instruction. The questionnaire aims to achieve the following specific goals:

- Assess teachers' awareness and comprehension of the concept of using gestures as a tool for teaching new vocabulary.

- Explore teachers' beliefs and attitudes towards incorporating gestures in their vocabulary instruction.
- Investigate teachers' opinions on the effectiveness of using gestures in helping young EFL learners learn and retain new vocabulary.
- Identify any challenges or limitations that teachers may encounter when utilizing gestures to teach vocabulary.
- Gather teachers' suggestions and recommendations for optimizing the use of gestures in vocabulary instruction.

In summary, by collecting responses from teachers through this questionnaire, the study seeks to obtain valuable insights into their perspectives on using gestures as a tool for teaching new vocabulary to young EFL learners. These insights will contribute to a deeper understanding of the potential benefits and challenges associated with incorporating gestures into vocabulary instruction.

2.1.4 Administration of the Questionnaire

The questionnaire was conducted online with a total of one hundred and eleven (111) middle school EFL teachers from the province of Jijel. These teachers were randomly selected from a list of middle school teachers in Jijel, which was compiled from the membership lists of twenty-one (21) Algerian middle school teachers' groups on Facebook. These groups include "MS Teachers of English all over Algeria," "Middle School Teacher's All Documents," "Middle School Teachers of English in Algeria," "English Middle School Teachers – Algeria," and "Novice Algerian Middle School Teachers," among others. The teachers were kindly requested to complete the questionnaire, and they were informed that their participation was voluntary. Furthermore, the link to the online survey was sent privately to each selected teacher starting from April 26, 2023, and the data collection period spanned from April 26 to May 21, 2023.

2.1.5 Description of the Questionnaire

The Teacher Questionnaire is a research instrument designed to gather information from middle school EFL teachers regarding their perceptions and experiences with using gestures as a teaching tool for introducing new vocabulary to young EFL learners. The questionnaire aims to assess the effectiveness of gestures in vocabulary instruction and gather insights from teachers regarding their practices, challenges, and beliefs.

The questionnaire begins with a brief introduction explaining the purpose of the research study and expressing gratitude for the teachers' participation, as well as emphasizing the voluntary and confidential nature of their responses.

The questionnaire consists of twenty-one (21) questions: seven (6) multiple-choice questions, fourteen (12) closed-ended questions, and three open-ended questions, divided into four sections as follows:

Section One: General Background Information

This section consists of three close-ended questions. It captures basic demographic information on the teachers, such as educational qualifications (Q1), and years of experience teaching English as a foreign language to young EFL learners (Q2). It also includes a question concerning the average class size of the participants (Q3).

Section Two: Vocabulary Teaching and Vocabulary Learning Assessment

This section looks at how teachers assess young EFL learners' English vocabulary ability and how they teach vocabulary. It contains one close-ended question about learners' English vocabulary proficiency (Q4) and two multiple choice questions about the methods used by teachers for instructing vocabulary (Q5) and the sorts of assessments utilized to measure the effectiveness of their lessons (Q6).

Section Three: The Use of Gestures in Teaching New Vocabulary to Young EFL Learners

This section comprises eight closed-ended questions, two open-ended questions, and three multiple-choice questions. Its goal is to look into the use of gestures in teaching new vocabulary words and their influence on young EFL learners' grasp, memorization, and retention of these words. It begins by providing a comprehensive definition of gestures and then proceeds to inquire about teachers' practices regarding the utilization of gestures. The questions cover various aspects, including the frequency of gesture use (Q7), the specific types of gestures employed (Q8–Q9). Additionally, this section aims to understand the efforts made by teachers to ensure that YFL learners comprehend the significance of gestures (Q10) and whether they encourage them to use gestures themselves (Q11). Moreover, it explores the beliefs of teachers regarding the benefits (Q12), challenges (Q13), and potential improvements associated with using gestures in vocabulary instruction (Q14). Furthermore, it explores teachers' perceptions of the effectiveness of gestures in boosting young EFL learners' understanding, memorization, and retention (Q15). It also examines teachers' levels of comfort (Q16), the training they have received (Q17), and their views on the benefits and drawbacks of utilizing gestures (Q18). Furthermore, their perspectives on the importance and effectiveness of gestures (Q19) are investigated, as is their usefulness in comparison to other strategies for teaching vocabulary (Q20). By gathering insights from teachers, this section aims to provide an understanding of the impact and effectiveness of gestures in teaching new vocabulary words.

Section Four: Suggestions

This section is made-up of only one open-ended question. It allows teachers to provide any additional comments or suggestions regarding the use of gestures in teaching new vocabulary to young EFL learners (Q21).

All in all, the Teacher Questionnaire aims to gather comprehensive information about middle school EFL teachers' perceptions, experiences, and practices related to using gestures as a teaching tool for vocabulary instruction in the context of young EFL learners in middle school.

Section Two: Data Analysis and Interpretation

2.2.1 Analysis of the Results

Section One: General Background Information

Q1: What degree do you hold?

The purpose of this question is to determine teachers' educational qualifications.

Table 2.1

Teachers' Educational Degree

Educational Degree	Frequency	Percentage (%)
Magister Degree	3	2.7
TTS Degree	14	12.6
License Degree	64	57.7
Master Degree	30	27
Total	111	100

The Table 2.1 present the distribution of the educational degrees among middle school EFL teachers, revealing interesting insights. It shows that 57.7% of teachers hold a License degree, while 27% have pursued a Master degree. Additionally, 12.6% have obtained a TTS degree, and a mere 2.7% possess a Magister degree. The wide array of degrees held by teachers facilitates the gathering of a multitude of perspectives. Each degree signifies a distinctive educational background and specialized knowledge, leading to varying levels of experience and viewpoints among teachers. This diversity expands the pool of viewpoints that can be taking into account, providing a more comprehensive understanding of their stances on the efficacy of employing gestures as a vocabulary teaching method for their young EFL learners.

Q2: How long have you been teaching English as a foreign language to young EFL learners?

The purpose of this question is to investigate the number of years that teachers have dedicated to teaching English as a foreign language to young EFL learners. In particular, the main aim is to understand whether teachers' extensive experience in the field of education has an impact on their views regarding the use of gestures when teaching new vocabulary.

Table 2.2

Teachers' Years of Teaching Experience in EFL for Young EFL Learners

Years of Teaching Experience	Teachers' number	Percentage (%)
Less than 5 years	35	31.5
Between 5 and 10 years	11	9.9
Between 10 and 15 years	17	15.3
More than 15 Years	48	43.2
Total	111	100

The data in table 2.2 shows that 43.2% (48) of teachers have more than 15 years of experience, 31.5% (35) have less than 5 years of experience, 15.3% (17) have between 10 and 15 years of experience, and 9.9% (11) have between 5 and 10 years of experience. This notable variation in experience levels provides us with the opportunity to gather a wealth of perspectives from both seasoned educators, who possess extensive experience, and fledgling teachers who are embarking on their exploratory journey in the field.

Q3: What is the average number of young EFL learners in your class?

The aim of this question is to gather data on young EFL learners' population in each class with the goal of gaining a comprehensive understanding of the teaching environment.

Also, to identify any potential issues that may arise from the number of learners in each class, particularly to utilizing gestures for vocabulary instruction.

Table 2.3

Avrege Number of Young EFL Learners per Class

Number of Young Learners	Frequency	Percentage (%)
20 - 25 Learners	13	11.7
26 - 30 Learners	12	10.8
31 – 35 Learners	25	22.5
More than 35 Learners	61	55
Total	111	100

The findings in table 2.3 indicates that the majority (55%) of classrooms have more than 35 learners, while 22.5% have between 31 and 35 learners. Furthermore, 11.7% of classrooms have between 20 and 25 learners, and 10.8% have between 26 and 36 learners.

Section Two: Vocabulary Teaching and Vocabulary Learning Assessment**Q4: How can you assess your young EFL learners' English vocabulary proficiency?**

This question aims at investigating teachers' perceptions towards their young EFL learners' English vocabulary proficiency.

Table 2.4

Young EFL Learners' English Vocabulary Proficiency Level

Vocabulary Proficiency Level	Frequency	Percentage (%)
Low	27	24.3
Medium	77	69.4
High	7	6.3
Total	111	100

Upon a quick glance at the table 2.4, it becomes evident that the vast majority of teachers (69.4%) perceive their young EFL learners' vocabulary proficiency level to be at a medium level, while 24.3% of teachers consider it to be low. Also, only a mere 6.3% of teachers believe that their learners possess a high level of vocabulary proficiency. These findings indicate a general dissatisfaction among teachers regarding their learners' proficiency as most perceive it to be moderate, a significant proportion regard it as low, and only a small fraction believe that their young EFL learners have a higher level of proficiency. Consequently, there is a pressing need to enhance their vocabulary proficiency which requires the teachers to choose the most appropriate technique for vocabulary instruction that best suits them.

Q5: What methods do you employ for instructing vocabulary?

The primary objective of this question is to explore the prevailing method utilized by teachers for vocabulary instruction. Additionally, it aims to gain insights into whether teachers place significance on the incorporation of gestures when imparting new vocabulary.

Table 2.5

Methods Employed by Teachers for Instructing Vocabulary

Methods	Frequency	Percentage (%)
(a) Using mnemonic devices	0	0
(b) Guessing from context	2	1.8
(c) Using flashcards	2	1.8
(d) Using gestures	1	0.9
(e) Translation	3	2.7
d + e	1	0.9
c + d	9	8.1
c + d + e	11	9.9
c + e	4	3.6
a + c	2	1.8
a + c + d	6	5.4
a + c + d + e	2	1.8
a + b + c + d	10	9
a + b + e	1	0.9
a + b + c + e	1	0.9
b + d	3	2.7
b + c	2	1.8
b + c + d + e	18	16.2
b + c + d	16	14.4
b + c + e	1	0.9
b + d + e	5	4.5
a + b + c + d + e	10	9
Not mentioned	1	0.9
Total	111	100

The data presented in table 2.5 highlights the widespread utilization of flashcards as the primary instructional tool among teachers, with an overwhelming majority of 84.7% embracing this method. Following closely behind is the effective use of gestures, with a substantial 82.9% indicating their reliance on this method. Guessing from context emerges as a strong contender in third place, with a considerable proportion of 62.1% of teachers employing this method. On the other hand, translation garners a respectable percentage of 51.4% of teachers implementing it. Meanwhile, 30.6% of teachers opts for mnemonic devices as their preferred instructional tool.

Furthermore, it is noteworthy that only one teacher did not specify any particular method, suggesting a high level of engagement with various pedagogical techniques.

Q6: How do you evaluate the effectiveness of your English vocabulary lessons in class?

The aim of this question is to provide insights into the ways teachers evaluate the effectiveness of their English vocabulary lessons.

Table 2.6

Ways of Evaluation Used by Teachers to Evaluate the Effectiveness of their English Vocabulary Lessons

Ways of Evaluation	Frequency	Percentage (%)
(a) Through formal assessments (e.g., quizzes, or tests)	17	15.3
(b) Through informal assessments (e.g., observing learners' engagement and participation in class)	16	14.4
(c) By asking learners for feedback on the effectiveness of your lessons	4	3.6
a + b	38	34.2
a + c	9	8.1
c + b	4	3.6
All of the above	22	19.8
Not mentioned	1	0.9
Total	111	100

Table 2.6 provides insights into the ways teachers evaluate the effectiveness of their English vocabulary lessons. It reveals that teachers employ a variety of assessment methods to gauge student progress. The most common approach, used by 34.2% of teachers, involves a combination of formal and informal assessments. This indicates a recognition of the value of using

different evaluation tools to obtain a comprehensive understanding of learner learning. Formal assessments, such as quizzes or tests, are utilized by 15.3% of teachers, highlighting the importance placed on traditional evaluation methods. Additionally, 14.4% of teachers rely on informal assessments, such as observing student engagement and participation in class, suggesting an appreciation for less structured evaluation techniques and highlighting the importance of gauging students' understanding through real-time observations. Some teachers also incorporate learner feedback into their assessment process, with 8.1% asking for feedback alongside formal assessment and 3.6% doing the same with informal assessment. Furthermore, 3.6% of teachers solely rely on learner feedback to assess lesson effectiveness, recognizing the value of considering student perspectives. Additionally, 19.8% of teachers utilize all of the mentioned evaluation methods, indicating a comprehensive and holistic approach to evaluating their lessons. Finally, a minority of teachers (0.9%) did not mention any specific evaluation method. All in all, the data illustrates that teachers employ a range of evaluation strategies to ensure a comprehensive understanding of the effectiveness of their English vocabulary lessons.

Section Three: The Use of Gestures in Teaching New Vocabulary to young EFL

Learners

Q7: As a teacher, do you use gestures when teaching new lexical items?

The objective of this question is to acquire valuable insights regarding the use of gestures by teachers during their vocabulary teaching lessons. Moreover, it aims to gather information on the frequency with which they employ gestures and to gain a deeper understanding of the reasons behind their decision not to utilize them.

Table 2.7

Gestures' Utilization in Teaching New Lexical Items

Options	Frequency	Percentage (%)
Yes	111	100
No	0	0
Total	111	100

Table 2.7 demonstrates that every single teacher within the population, accounting for a full 100% of the sample, declare their utilization of gestures when instructing new lexical items.

a) If the answer is « Yes », how often do you use gestures in your vocabulary lessons with young EFL learners?

The aim of this question is to gather information about the frequency of using gestures in vocabulary lessons with young EFL learners.

Table 2.8

Frequency of Teachers' Use of Gesture in their Vocabulary Lessons

Frequency of gesture use	Frequency	Percentage (%)
Always	41	36.9
Very often	52	48.8
Sometimes	18	16.2
Rarely	0	0
Never	0	0
Total	111	100

Table 2.8 offers a comprehensive overview of the frequency with which gestures are employed by teachers during their vocabulary lessons. The data presented unveils some valuable

insights. Firstly, a remarkable 36.9% of teachers report that they consistently incorporate gestures in their vocabulary lessons, as they “always” utilize them. Moreover, a significant majority of 48.8% of teachers state that they employ gestures “very often”, highlighting the high frequency of gesture usage within the classroom. In contrast, a smaller proportion of teachers (16.2%) indicate that they “sometimes” use them in their vocabulary lessons. Although this percentage is relatively modest, it still underscores the recognition of gestures as a valuable tool for those teachers. Furthermore, none of the teachers surveyed report a rare or non-existent use of gestures. This absence implies that gestures are universally acknowledged and embraced by teachers as an effective means for vocabulary instruction.

b) If the answer is « No», why don't you use them?

The aim of this question is to gain a deeper understanding of the rationales behind teachers' choice not to incorporate gestures in their vocabulary teaching lessons.

As stated in Table 2.7, all teachers reported using gestures, and none of them claimed not to use them. Therefore, there are no negative responses recorded for this particular question.

Q8: What type of gestures do you employ?

The essence of this question lies in discerning the specific type of gestures that teachers predominantly employ while imparting new vocabulary to young EFL learners.

Table 2.9

Types of Gestures Used by Teachers when Instructing New Vocabulary

Types of gestures	Frequency	Percentage (%)
Iconic	9	8.1
Metaphoric	4	3.6
Deictic	2	1.8
Iconic + Deictic	14	12.6
Iconic + Metaphoric	4	3.6
Metaphoric + Deictic	3	2.7
Iconic + Metaphoric + Deictic	74	66.7
Not mentioned	1	0.9
Total	111	100

The data presented in Table 2.9 reveals the types of gestures that teachers employ when teaching new vocabulary. The analysis of the table highlights the use of various gesture types to enhance the learning experience. Among these types, iconic gestures stand out as the most prominent, with 90.1% of teachers incorporating them. Following closely behind are deictic gestures, which are utilized by 83.8% of teachers. Finally, metaphoric gestures are preferred by 76.6% of teachers. Furthermore, it is worth noting that a combination of all three types of gestures, namely iconic, metaphoric, and deictic, is preferred by 64.9% of teachers.

Q9: Are there any specific types of gestures you have found to be particularly effective in teaching English vocabulary to young EFL learners?

The aim of the question is to inquire about any specific types of gestures that have been found to be particularly effective in teaching English vocabulary to young EFL learners.

The responses provided emphasize the diverse array of gestures that teachers find highly effective when teaching English vocabulary to young EFL learners. Hand gestures play a crucial

role in this process, as they enable the visualization and reinforcement of word meanings, particularly in the context of numbers, and sentence structure. To teach emotions and vocabulary associated with feelings and expressions, teachers make use of facial expressions. While gestures involving body parts are utilized to teach about illnesses or describe physical appearance. On the other hand, deictic gestures such as pointing serve the purpose of directing students' attention and guiding their understanding. Symbolic and metaphoric gestures which represent abstract concepts are regarded as highly effective for aiding comprehension, memorization, and vocabulary learning. Furthermore, mime and acting techniques are employed to elicit vocabulary from students, as teachers often act out scenes or situations, encouraging students to guess or provide vocabulary words related to the acted-out scenarios. In addition, iconic gestures are employed to create visual representations of words or concepts. Finally, beat gestures, characterized by rhythmic hand movements, are utilized to emphasize specific words or phrases. To sum up, hand gestures, facial expressions, body gestures, deictic gestures, symbolic or metaphoric gestures, mime and acting techniques, iconic gestures, and beat gestures all play a significant role in enhancing comprehension, memorization, and vocabulary learning. However, it is important to recognize that the effectiveness of these gestures may vary among teachers based on their teaching style and learners' needs.

Q10: What steps do you take to make sure that your young EFL learners comprehend the significance of the gestures you employ during your lessons?

This question aims at gaining a deep understanding of the steps employed by teachers to facilitate the understanding of gestures among young EFL learners.

Table 2.10

Steps Used for Ensuring Young EFL Learners' Comprehension of the Meaning of the Gestures being Used

Steps	Frequency	Percentage (%)
(a) I explain the meaning of the gestures before I use them	4	3.6
(b) I demonstrate the gestures and ask learners to imitate them	1	0.9
(c) I ask learners to explain the meaning of the gestures	22	19.8
(d) I use gestures that are universal and easily understood	29	26.1
a + c	3	2.7
a + d	2	1.8
a + c + d	1	0.9
c + d	35	31.5
b + d	2	1.8
b + c	4	3.6
b + c + d	3	2.7
All the above	4	3.6
Not mentioned	1	0.9
Total	111	100

Table 2.10 provides valuable insights into the strategies employed by teachers to facilitate the understanding of gestures among young EFL learners. The most notable finding is that utilizing universally understood gestures accounts for a significant 66.7% of the total frequencies, indicating its effectiveness as a primary strategy. This suggests that using gestures that are universally recognizable and comprehensible plays a crucial role in ensuring comprehension among young EFL learners. Another significant step identified in the table is the practice of asking learners to articulate the meaning of the gestures themselves, which contributes to 63.1% of the frequencies. This finding highlights the importance of actively engaging learners in the process and encouraging them to reflect on the meaning of the gestures. By involving learners in this manner, teachers foster a deeper understanding and promote active participation. Interestingly, two methods emerge as equally effective, with both explaining the meaning of gestures before their utilization and demonstrating the gestures while prompting learners to imitate each

accounting for 12.61% of the frequencies. This suggests that a combination of verbal explanations and visual demonstrations is beneficial in supporting young EFL learners' comprehension of gestures. By providing both auditory and visual cues, teachers cater to different learning styles and enhance the overall effectiveness of their instructional methods. Additionally, the table showcases combinations of all the identified steps, representing a significant portion at 3.6% of the frequencies. This observation indicates that some teachers adopt a comprehensive approach, utilizing multiple strategies in tandem to ensure the comprehension of gestures by young EFL learners. By employing a holistic methodology that incorporates various techniques, teachers maximize their efforts to facilitate effective communication through gestures. In conclusion, the findings from Table 2.10 highlight the diverse range of methods employed by teachers to enhance the understanding of gestures among young EFL learners. Universally understood gestures, learner engagement through articulating meanings, verbal explanations, visual demonstrations, and comprehensive combinations of these steps all play vital roles in ensuring effective comprehension. By leveraging these strategies, teachers create an enriched learning environment that promotes meaningful communication and understanding through gestures.

Q11: Do you promote the use of gestures among your young EFL learners?

The purpose of this question is to ascertain whether teachers actively promote the use of gestures as a tool for learning among their young EFL learners.

Table 2.11

Frequency of Promoting the use of Gestures among Young EFL Learners

Options	Frequency	Percentage (%)
Frequently	64	57.7
Occasionally	44	39.6
Never	5	4.5
Total	111	100

Table 2.11 offers valuable insights regarding how often teachers encourage their young EFL learners to use gestures. The data demonstrates that a significant proportion of teachers (57.7%) actively support the use of gestures among their learners. Such support boosts young EFL learners' confidence and motivation, leading to increased participation and active involvement in the learning process. As a result, this active engagement contributes to improving their comprehension, memorization, and retention of new vocabulary. Additionally, a considerable percentage of teachers (39.6%) occasionally promote the use of gestures among their young EFL learners, showing a recognition of their value, albeit to a lesser extent. However, it is important to note that a small minority of teachers (4.5%) never encourage the use of gestures among their young EFL learners. This may be attributed to the unsupportive teaching environment, often characterized by large class sizes, where attempts to promote the use of gestures could lead to classroom disruption.

Q12: How do you think gestures can help your young EFL learners in English vocabulary learning?

The aim of this question is to inquire about the potential benefits of using gestures to aid young EFL learners in their English vocabulary learning process.

Table 2.12

Potential Benefits of the Use of Gestures in English Vocabulary Learning

Potential benefits	Frequency	Percentage (%)
It makes the learning process more fun and engaging (a)	2	1.8
It helps learners remember the meaning of words (b)	6	5.4
It helps learners associate words with actions or visuals (c)	2	1.8
It facilitates understanding of abstract concepts (d)	7	6.3
b + c	7	6.3
b + c + d	5	4.5
c + d	3	2.7
b + d	10	9
a + b	4	3.6
a + d	2	1.8
a + b + c	16	14.4
a + b + d	14	12.6
a + c + d	2	1.8
a + b + c + d	31	27.9
Total	111	100

Table 2.12 presents the results of a multiple-choice question that asked teachers about the benefits of incorporating gestures into English vocabulary learning. The respondents were asked to select the advantages they perceived from a list of options. According to the findings, the most frequently mentioned benefit, selected by 83.8% of teachers, is the assistance that gestures provide in helping young EFL learners remember the meaning of words. Another notable advantage, highlighted by 66.7% of teachers, is the facilitation of understanding abstract concepts. Additionally, 64% of teachers emphasize that gestures make the learning process more enjoyable and engaging. Furthermore, 58.5% of teachers recognize that gestures aid in associating words with actions or visuals. It is noteworthy that 27.8% of the teachers endorse a combination of all the benefits, encompassing gestures' role in enhancing the learning process, aiding memory, facilitating understanding, and connecting words with actions or visuals. Based on the teachers' responses, it can be concluded that the incorporation of gestures into English vocabulary learning offers a wide range of advantages, significantly enhancing the learning experience for young EFL learners.

Q13: What challenges, if any, have you encountered while using gestures in your vocabulary instruction?

The question seeks to identify any difficulties or obstacles that teachers may have encountered when incorporating gestures into their instructional practices for teaching English vocabulary. By doing so, we aim to identify potential areas for improvement or alternative strategies that can effectively enhance the incorporation of gestures in vocabulary instruction for teachers.

Table 2.13

*Potential Challenges that Teachers may Encounter when Using Gestures for English**Vocabulary Instruction*

Potential challenges	Frequency	Percentage (%)
Lack of training on how to use gestures effectively (a)	3	2.7
Difficulty in selecting appropriate gestures for different vocabulary items (b)	9	8.1
Resistance from learners who find gestures childish or embarrassing (c)	4	3.6
It may take more time to plan and prepare lessons that incorporate gestures (d)	4	3.6
It may be challenging to use gestures in large classes (e)	16	14.4
a + b	7	6.3
a + c	1	0.9
a + c	1	0.9
a + e	1	0.9
a + b + e	1	0.9
a + e + c	1	0.9
b + e	11	9.9
b + e + c	2	1.8
e + d	5	4.5
b + c	2	1.8
b + d	4	3.6
e + c	5	4.5
d + c	1	0.9
a + b + c + d + e	1	0.9
Not mentioned (f)	24	21.6
Total	111	100

The analysis of the potential challenges presented in Table 2.13 unveils several noteworthy points regarding the utilization of gestures in vocabulary instruction. Firstly, a considerable percentage of teachers (38.7%) find it challenging to employ gestures in large classes. The size of the class can hinder the visibility and efficacy of gestures, posing difficulties for teachers to actively engage all students. Another significant hurdle is the task of selecting appropriate gestures for different vocabulary items (33.3%). This suggests that teachers may encounter obstacles in effectively aligning gestures with specific words or concepts, potentially impacting the accurate conveyance of meaning. Additionally, there is concern regarding resistance from learners who perceive gestures as childish or embarrassing (15.3%). Some learners may view gestures as immature or uncomfortable, leading to potential resistance or unease during classroom activities. Furthermore, a notable portion of teachers (14.4%) express a lack of training on how to effectively utilize gestures. This indicates that educators may require additional support or professional development to enhance their skills in this area. Moreover, incorporating gestures into lessons may necessitate more time for planning and preparation (14.4%), implying that teachers need to allocate additional resources to create seamless lesson plans that integrate gestures effectively. Additionally, it is worth noting that a significant proportion of teachers indicate that they have other challenges not mentioned (21.6%), while a smaller percentage (7.2%) did not provide any responses, suggesting that they have no difficulties with incorporating gestures into their vocabulary teaching. This could be attributed to a useful training they received on the effective usage of gestures. In summary, the analysis emphasizes the importance of providing adequate training and support for educators to employ gestures effectively. This would address concerns related to gesture selection, young EFL learners' resistance, time management, and adaptation to varying class sizes.

Q14: Have you noticed any specific improvements in your young EFL learners' vocabulary proficiency as a result of using gestures in your lessons?

The purpose of this question is to ascertain whether the incorporation of gestures into lessons has yielded discernible enhancements in the vocabulary proficiency of young EFL learners.

Table 2.14

Teachers' Feedback on Whether there Has Been any Improvement in their Young EFL Learners' Vocabulary Proficiency Due to the Effective use of Gestures

Options	Frequency	Percentage (%)
Yes, always	30	27
Yes, often	46	41.4
Sometimes	32	28.8
No, rarely	3	2.7
No, not at all	0	0
Total	111	100

The analysis presented in Table 2.14 highlights teachers' feedback regarding the effectiveness of utilizing gestures to enhance the vocabulary proficiency of young EFL learners. According to the data, a total of 111 responses were collected, revealing that the majority of teachers (68.4%) report positive outcomes. Specifically, 27% of teachers state that there is consistent improvement in vocabulary proficiency, while 41.4% indicate that improvement occurs frequently. Another 28.8% of teachers report that improvement is observed sometimes. In contrast, only a small proportion of teachers (2.7%) state that improvement occurs rarely, and none of the teachers report no improvement at all. These findings clearly demonstrate that the majority of teachers strongly believe in the power of using gestures as an effective approach to enhance vocabulary proficiency, as they consistently observe improvements and progress among their young EFL learners. This, also, affirms that employing gestures greatly aids young EFL learners in comprehending, memorizing, and retaining new vocabulary. However, it is crucial to acknowledge that a minority of teachers have reported limited improvement, suggesting that the

effectiveness of this teaching method may vary based on individual learning styles. In summary, these findings provide compelling evidence that incorporating gestures into teaching practices can have a significant and positive impact on the development of vocabulary proficiency among young EFL learners.

Q15: Do you believe that using gestures has a positive impact on your young EFL learners' understanding, memorizing, and retrieving of new lexical items?

The aim of this question is to inquire about the EFL teachers' belief regarding the positive impact of using gestures on the understanding, memorization, and retrieval of new vocabulary by young EFL learners.

Table 2.15

Teachers' Views towards the Impact of Gestures Usage on their Young EFL Learners' Understanding, Memorizing, and Retrieving of New Lexical Items

Options	Frequency	Percentage
Yes	93	83.8
No	0	0
Somehow	18	16.2
Total	111	100

The findings presented in Table 2.15 provide compelling evidence that a significant majority of the surveyed teachers, specifically 93 teachers (83.8%), hold a positive belief about the beneficial effect of using gestures on their young EFL learners' comprehension, retention, and recall of new vocabulary. This indicates a strong consensus among teachers that gestures play a crucial role in facilitating vocabulary learning. What is particularly noteworthy is the absence of any negative responses from the teachers. Not single teacher (0%) expresses the view that gestures have no positive impact. This suggests a unanimous agreement among the surveyed teachers, firmly supporting the notion that gestures do indeed have a positive

influence on vocabulary acquisition. However, it is interesting to observe that a small group of teachers, comprising 18 teachers (16.2%), respond with the word “somehow”. This indicates that while they acknowledge the existence of some impact, they might have reservations or uncertainties regarding the extent or effectiveness of gestures in vocabulary learning. To sum up, the data from Table 2.15 underscores a high level of consensus among teachers regarding the favourable impact of employing gestures for enhancing young EFL learners’ understanding, retention, and retrieval of new vocabulary.

Q16: On a scale of comfort, how at ease are you with utilizing gestures to instruct vocabulary?

The aim of this question is to assess teachers’ level of comfort in using gestures as a method of teaching vocabulary.

Table 2.16

Comfort Level with Utilizing Gestures for Vocabulary Instruction

Comfort level	Frequency	Percentage (%)
Very comfortable	71	63.1
Somewhat comfortable	39	35.1
Not very comfortable	2	1.8
Not comfortable at all	0	0
Total	111	100

According to Table 2.16, there are a total of 111 respondents. Out of these, 71 teachers (63.1%) feel “very comfortable” using gestures for vocabulary instruction. This shows that these teachers are likely to use gestures frequently and effectively in their teaching. Additionally, 39 teachers (35.1%) feel “somewhat comfortable” using gestures. While they may not be as confident as the “very comfortable” group, they still show a significant level of comfort and willingness to use gestures in their vocabulary instruction. However, only 2 teachers (1.8%) report “not feeling very comfortable” using gestures for teaching vocabulary. This suggests that a small number of

teachers may have some reservations or concerns about using gestures as a teaching method. Interestingly, none of the respondents report feeling “not comfortable at all” with using gestures for vocabulary instruction. This implies that, at least within the surveyed teachers, there is a general level of openness and willingness to use gestures as a teaching method. All in all, the data indicates that the majority of teachers in this study are comfortable or somewhat comfortable using gestures for teaching vocabulary. This finding highlights the potential effectiveness and acceptance of incorporating gestures into vocabulary instruction methods.

Q17: Have you ever been provided with any instruction or undergone any professional growth on the proper usage of gestures while teaching English vocabulary to YFL learners?

The purpose of this question is to explore whether teachers have undergone any specific training or professional development on the proper utilization of gestures when teaching English vocabulary to young EFL learners.

Table 2.17

Teachers' Feedback on Whether They Have Had any Professional Instruction on the Appropriate Usage of Gestures for Teaching English Vocabulary to young EFL Learners

Options	Frequency	Percentage (%)
Yes	45	40.5
No	66	59.5
Total	111	100

The findings in Table 2.17 reveal that 45 teachers, accounting for 40.5% of the total, have received professional instruction on the appropriate usage of gestures for teaching English vocabulary to young EFL learners. On the other hand, the majority of teachers, comprising 66 teachers (59.5%), indicate that they have not had any professional instruction in this area. These

findings suggest a significant gap in the training and preparation of teachers when it comes to utilizing gestures effectively for teaching English vocabulary to young EFL learners. Hence, addressing this gap through targeted professional development opportunities could potentially enhance the teaching practices and overall effectiveness of these teachers in facilitating new vocabulary to their young EFL learners.

a) If you answered «Yes », to what extent did the training assist you in enhancing your use of gestures?

This question seeks to measure the impact and effectiveness of the training in improving teachers' ability to use gestures effectively.

Table 2.18

Teachers' Feedback on the Effectiveness of Training in Enhancing their Proficiency in Using Gestures while Instructing Vocabulary

The effectiveness of the training	Frequency	Percentage (%)
Very helpful	27	60
Somewhat helpful	18	40
Not very helpful	0	0
Not helpful at all	0	0
Total	45	100

The feedback mentioned in Table 2.18 represent the responses exclusively from the teachers who underwent the training, rather than the entire population of teachers. The data clearly demonstrates that among these trained teachers (60%) find the training to be highly beneficial in improving their proficiency in using gestures during vocabulary instruction. This indicates that a significant number of teachers are reaping the rewards of the training and experiencing positive outcomes in their teaching practices. Moreover, 40% of the trained teachers view the training as

somewhat helpful, indicating that they recognize its effectiveness to some extent when incorporating gestures into their instruction. Notably, none of the respondents express that the training is not very helpful or not helpful at all, implying that the overall impact of the training on participants is positive. These findings underscore the potential of training programs to enhance teachers' abilities in utilizing gestures as an instructional tool and suggest that further investment in such training initiatives may yield favourable outcomes for teachers.

b) If you answered « No », are you open to the idea of getting trained or enhancing your professional skills in using gestures?

The aim of this question is to determine teachers' willingness to receive training or enhance their professional skills in utilizing gestures.

Table 2.19

Teachers' Willingness to Receive Training and Enhance Professional Skills in Using Gestures

Teachers' willingness	Frequency	Percentage (%)
Yes, definitely	41	62.1
Yes, maybe	11	16.7
No, not really	13	19.7
No, not at all	1	1.5
Total	66	100

According to Table 2.19, a significant majority of non-trained teachers (62.1%) demonstrate a clear willingness to enhance their professional skills by receiving training in using gestures. This positive attitude among a substantial portion of the teachers signifies their openness to incorporating gestures into their instructional practices. Furthermore, 16.7% of non-trained teachers express potential interest in receiving training, albeit with some uncertainty. While this group may benefit from additional support and information to fully commit to the training, their

receptiveness suggests the potential for further engagement. However, it is important to acknowledge that 19.7% of non-trained teachers state that they are not particularly interested in receiving training in using gestures, with 1.5% expressing no interest at all. To sum up, the results indicate a positive trend towards teachers' willingness to enhance their professional skills through gesture-based training. To fully capitalize on this opportunity, it is crucial to provide comprehensive support and information to address any uncertainties and to engage with the smaller subset of teachers who may be less interested. By doing so, the education system can maximize the potential benefits of incorporating gestures into instructional practices and promote effective teaching methodologies.

Q18: In your opinion, what are the benefits or drawbacks of using gestures in teaching new vocabulary to young EFL learners?

The aim of this question is to solicit the opinions of teachers regarding the benefits and drawbacks of using gestures in teaching new vocabulary to young EFL learners.

A total of 86 teachers participates in responding to this open-ended question, shedding light on the advantages and disadvantages of integrating gestures into vocabulary instruction for young EFL learners. Summarising their perspectives reveals the following insights:

1. Benefits of Incorporating Gestures into Vocabulary Instruction

- Learners effortlessly grasp new vocabulary: Gestures effortlessly aid young EFL learners in understanding the meaning of words more quickly and effectively.
- Activation of long-term memory: Associating vocabulary with gestures significantly contributes to the activation of young EFL learners' long-term memory.
- Fun and engagement: young EFL learners, especially those with kinaesthetic learning styles, derive enjoyment from mimicking gestures, thus enhancing the learning process.
- Improved vocabulary level: The utilization of gestures enables students to enhance their vocabulary and develop a deeper comprehension of words.

- Memorization of new vocabulary: Gestures serve as a valuable tool in assisting young EFL learners with memorizing and easily recalling new vocabulary.
- Avoiding the use of mother tongue: Gestures provide an alternative to employing the mother tongue within the classroom, thereby promoting an immersive language environment.
- Increases young EFL learners' use of English and minimizes teacher talking time: Gestures encourage learners to actively use English, reducing the dominance of the teacher's voice and promoting student participation.
- Attracts young EFL learners' attention and facilitates understanding: The use of gestures captures learners' attention and aids in the facilitation of comprehension.
- Saves time and effort: The incorporation of gestures saves time and effort by accelerating the acquisition and retention of vocabulary.
- Multi-sensory learning: Gesture-based learning facilitates multi-sensory learning experiences, involving visual, auditory, and kinaesthetic modalities.
- Helps teachers explain and assess: Teachers can utilize gestures to explain concepts and assess young EFL learners' understanding, making the evaluation process more comprehensive.
- Encourages young EFL learners to use their own gestures comfortably: learners are encouraged to employ their own gestures comfortably, fostering individual expression and ownership of the learning process.

2. Drawbacks/Challenges of Incorporating Gestures into Vocabulary Instruction

- Misinterpretation: young EFL learners may misinterpret gestures, leading to incorrect interpretations and potential fossilization of wrong interpretations.
- Loss of interest: Some young EFL learners may perceive gestures as childish, leading to a loss of interest in the lesson. Also, learners may make fun of the teacher when using gestures. Building a positive teacher-learner relationship is crucial to overcome this.

- Effort and Time-consuming for slow young EFL learners: Slow learners may struggle to catch the meaning of target words through gestures, requiring repeated explanations and potentially consuming more time and effort.
- Individual differences: Not all young EFL learners share the same code of gestures, making it challenging to ensure universal understanding.
- Difficulty in finding appropriate gestures: It may be challenging for teachers to find the right gestures to convey specific meanings accurately, especially when dealing with abstract words. Incorrect gestures can be misleading.
- Not suitable for all types of young EFL learners, particularly those who do not rely on visual learning.
- May create disturbance in large classes.

To sum up, these findings highlight that using gestures in teaching vocabulary, according to the surveyed teachers, has manifold benefits such as facilitating learning, making it fun and engaging, avoiding the use of the mother tongue, and improving comprehension and retention. However, challenges may arise in terms of misinterpretation, individual differences, and finding appropriate gestures for certain concepts. Hence, it is crucial for teachers to be mindful of these challenges and address them appropriately to ensure effective and inclusive instruction. Despite these challenges, the advantages of utilizing gestures in teaching vocabulary to young EFL learners are substantial and can greatly enhance their learning experience.

Q19: To what extent do you think that the use of gestures in teaching new vocabulary to YFL learners is a valuable teaching method?

The primary aim of this question is to delve into the worth and efficacy of incorporating gestures as a teaching method to introduce new vocabulary to young EFL learners. More specifically, it seeks to explore the extent to which gestures can enhance the learning experience and facilitate the acquisition of new vocabulary.

Table 2.20

Teachers' Perceptions towards the Value of Utilizing Gestures as a Teaching Method for Instructing New Vocabulary to Young EFL Learners

Perceived value of gestures	Frequency	Percentage (%)
Not valuable at all	0	0
Slightly valuable	10	9
Moderately valuable	15	13.5
Very valuable	61	55
Extremely valuable	25	22.5
Total	111	100

The insightful findings derived from the analysis of Table 2.20 shed light on teachers' perceptions regarding the use of gestures as a powerful teaching method for imparting new vocabulary to young EFL learners. The results unequivocally reveal that the majority of teachers hold positive perceptions regarding the value of incorporating gestures as a teaching tool for teaching new vocabulary to young EFL learners. A significant proportion, totalling 77.5%, consider gestures to be either "very valuable" or "extremely valuable. This substantial percentage of teachers recognizing the significance of gestures underscores their awareness of the associated benefits and indicates their acknowledgment of the positive impact that gestures can have on young EFL learners' vocabulary development. It is worth noting, however, that a small percentage of teachers (9%) find gestures to be only "slightly valuable. This suggests that there might be a few teachers who are less convinced of the benefits associated with using gestures. Nevertheless, the overall distribution of responses indicates a general consensus among the surveyed teachers, with the majority acknowledging the value of gestures as an instructional tool for vocabulary teaching. These findings highlight the potential of incorporating gestures in the classroom to enhance the effectiveness of vocabulary instruction. By utilizing gestures, teachers can create a

more engaging and interactive learning environment, thereby facilitating better vocabulary acquisition among young EFL learners.

Q20: What is your opinion on the effectiveness of using gestures compared to other methods like word list, repetition or translation for teaching vocabulary?

The aim of this question is to seek teachers' opinions on the effectiveness of using gestures as a method for teaching vocabulary, in comparison to other methods such as word lists, repetition, or translation.

Table 2.21

Comparison of the Effectiveness of Vocabulary Teaching Methods: Gestures vs. Word List, Repetition, and Translation

Options	Frequency	Percentage (%)
Less effective	3	2.70
About as effective	52	46.85
More effective	56	50.45
Total	111	100

Table 2.21 presents a comparison of various vocabulary teaching methods, specifically contrasting gestures versus word lists, repetition, and translation, in terms of their effectiveness. The data uncovers fascinating insights regarding the participants' opinions. Among the 111 teachers who took part in the study, only a mere 2.7% believe that gestures are less effective for vocabulary teaching. In contrast, a substantial 46.85% of the teachers perceive gestures to be equally effective as other methods, while the majority, comprising 50.45%, consider gestures to be more effective. Therefore, drawing from this compelling data, it can be confidently inferred that gestures are widely acknowledged as a highly effective approach for imparting vocabulary, with only a negligible number of teachers dissenting regarding their efficacy.

Section Four: Suggestions

Q21: Do you have any additional comments or suggestions about the use of gestures in teaching new vocabulary to young EFL learners?

The purpose of this question is to gather further comments or suggestions on the utilization of gestures when teaching young EFL learners new vocabulary. More specifically, it aims at acquiring valuable insights, diverse perspectives, and practical recommendations concerning the effectiveness, advantages, limitations, and possible enhancements of employing gestures as a teaching method for vocabulary instruction to young EFL learners.

Upon conducting a thorough analysis of the 60 responses obtained in response to the aforementioned open-ended question concerning the employment of gestures in teaching new vocabulary to young EFL learners, we have managed to distil a diverse array of profound recommendations, nuanced viewpoints, notable advantages, discernible limitations, and practical considerations. These findings are concisely summarized as follows:

Benefits

- Gestures aid in concretizing and facilitating the understanding of abstract and complex words, making them more tangible and accessible for young EFL learners.
- Using gestures engages young EFL learners and makes the learning process more fun and effective.
- Gestures help young EFL learners with visual memory, allowing them to learn by watching and imitating.
- Gestures can be used to check young EFL learners' understanding by asking them to provide translations or equivalents in their first language.
- Gestures motivate young EFL learners and enrich their vocabulary through gesture games.

- Using gestures avoids the need for translation and creates a better English-speaking atmosphere in the classroom.
- Gestures show intonations and help explain difficult words, especially in conversations.
- Gestures save time and eliminate the need for printing flashcards and visuals.
- Gestures can be used spontaneously alongside other teaching materials like pictures and PowerPoint.
- Gestures attract young EFL learners' attention.
- Gestures enhance young EFL learners' retention and recall of new information.
- Gestures can be used as an easy and effective communication tool between teachers and young EFL learners.

Practical Considerations

- Educators underscore the significance of verifying young EFL learners' comprehension, either through the provision of translations or by requesting learners themselves to furnish the translations.
- Several respondents have observed that gestures may not be effective for conveying abstract or complex vocabulary, thereby highlighting the necessity for a diverse range of instructional methods.
- The teacher's role and flexibility, including stage performance skills, are highlighted as crucial elements in utilizing gestures effectively.
- The significance of fostering a positive learning environment and the active involvement of teachers in engaging young EFL learners through gestures is underscored.
- It is imperative for educators to carefully evaluate the appropriateness of gestures for various vocabulary items, as certain words may pose challenges in their representation through physical gestures.

- Teachers should demonstrate mindfulness and cultural sensitivity by taking into consideration the young EFL learners' cultural background and the culturally specific gestures that are relevant within their respective societies.

Recommendations and suggestions

- It is highly recommended for novice or beginner teachers to observe experienced teachers using gestures in the classroom. This can provide them with valuable insights into the importance and impact of gestures as a teaching tool.
- Respondents strongly suggest incorporating gestures alongside other teaching techniques such as pictures, flashcards, or PowerPoint presentations. This combination of methods can enhance the effectiveness of teaching and improve young EFL learners' engagement.
- It is advisable for teachers to learn and understand the gestures used in the young EFL learners' society or culture. By doing so, teachers can establish a stronger connection with their learners and ensure that the gestures they use are relevant and meaningful.
- Developing acting and stage performance skills is another valuable suggestion from respondents. By honing these skills, teachers can effectively communicate through gestures and capture the attention and interest of their young EFL learners.
- To succeed in using gestures as a teaching tool, it is recommended for teachers to be sociable and active. Creating a positive and interactive learning environment through gestures requires teachers to actively engage with their young EFL learners, fostering a sense of enthusiasm and participation.

By considering these recommendations and suggestions, novice or beginner teachers can gain a better understanding of how to effectively utilize gestures in the classroom and enhance their teaching abilities accordingly.

In a nutshell, the analysis indicates a generally positive attitude towards the use of gestures in teaching new vocabulary to young EFL learners. Gestures are seen as effective aids in comprehension, engagement, and retention. However, it is important for teachers to consider the

appropriateness of gestures for different vocabulary items and to ensure cultural sensitivity in their use.

2.2.2 Discussion of the Results

This study aims to delve into the perspectives of middle school English teachers regarding the effectiveness of incorporating gestures while instructing young English foreign language learners to acquire new vocabulary. Our specific focus is on conducting a case study that involves middle school English teachers in Jijel, Algeria. To achieve our objective, we meticulously collect and analyse data from an online questionnaire that is randomly distributed among 111 middle school English teachers. In the following sections, we present a comprehensive overview of the findings derived from our investigation.

Our findings reveal noteworthy trends. The majority of teachers wholeheartedly recognize the immense value of incorporating gestures as a teaching tool for introducing new vocabulary to young EFL learners. They not only acknowledge the importance of gestures but also demonstrate a deep understanding of their numerous benefits. Moreover, they genuinely appreciate the positive impact gestures can have on the development of vocabulary skills among young EFL learners. Furthermore, these teachers firmly assert that gestures surpass traditional instructional methods, such as word lists, repetition, and translation, in terms of efficacy for facilitating vocabulary acquisition and retention. Also, the findings strongly highlight the myriad advantages reported by the surveyed teachers when incorporating gestures into vocabulary instruction. They emphasize that gestures not only enhance learning but also foster enjoyment and engagement among young EFL learners while reducing reliance on the mother tongue. Additionally, gestures significantly improve comprehension and retention of vocabulary. Nevertheless, challenges may arise in terms of misinterpretation, individual differences, and selecting appropriate gestures for certain concepts. Therefore, it is crucial for teachers to be mindful of these challenges and address them effectively to ensure impactful and inclusive instruction. Pre-eminently, these results contribute

to the existing knowledge in the field and provide valuable insights into the use of gestures in vocabulary instruction.

To begin with, the research findings shed light on teachers' perspectives and practices regarding vocabulary instruction and the use of gestures. It is discovered that teachers employ a combination of formal and informal assessment methods to assess young EFL learners' vocabulary progress and gain a comprehensive understanding of their learning outcomes. Formal assessments, such as quizzes or tests, are commonly used, while informal assessments focus on observing learners' engagement and participation. Teachers also value learners' feedback and recognize the importance of considering learners' perspectives in evaluating lesson effectiveness. The majority of teachers perceive their young EFL learners' vocabulary proficiency to be at a medium level, indicating the need to improve vocabulary skills. To tackle this, teachers utilize various methods, including mnemonic devices, translation, flashcards, and gestures. Flashcards and gestures emerge as the primary tools due to their effectiveness in creating an engaging and dynamic learning environment.

Another notable revelation derived from our meticulous investigation highlights that a substantial portion of educators, comprising an impressive 77.5% of the entirety of surveyed teachers, deem the incorporation of gestures in the instruction of young EFL learners as an exceedingly efficacious pedagogical approach for the introduction of novel lexicon. This finding illuminates teachers' astute recognition and comprehension of the underlying rationale behind employing gestures as a powerful tool in teaching new words, as well as their profound understanding of the myriad advantages associated with this technique. The data undeniably substantiates the hypothesis that teachers hold a favourable perception regarding the effectiveness of employing gestures in guiding young EFL learners in assimilating new vocabulary. This discovery seamlessly aligns with previous inquiries conducted by Tellier (2008) and Macedonia et al. (2014), thereby furnishing empirical evidence that gesturing can enhance the acquisition of foreign language vocabulary among young EFL learners.

Moreover, in our comprehensive analysis, it comes to light that educators frequently employ three distinct types of gestures: iconic, deictic, and metaphoric. Among these, the most prevalent are the iconic gestures, as they are utilized by an astounding 90.1% of teachers. Deictic gestures are employed by an impressive 83.8% of teachers. While metaphoric gestures are preferred by 76.6% of teachers. A fascinating discovery emerges as well, with 64.9% of teachers adroitly combining all three types of gestures. This clearly signifies their astute recognition of the inherent value and efficacy of employing a diverse repertoire of gestures within their pedagogical practices. These remarkable findings align impeccably with prior scholarly investigations, including the GTT project conducted by Tellier, Stam, and Ghio in 2021. This pioneering study reveals that prospective French educators perceive gestures as invaluable tools for enriching verbal explanations, with a discernible preference for iconic and deictic gestures over metaphorical and emblematic ones. It is apparent that these future educators place great emphasis on employing visually representative gestures that are directly connected to the intended meaning of the words they explicate (Tellier, Stam, & Ghio, 2021, cited in Tellier & Stam, 2021, p. 354). Furthermore, these findings substantiate earlier research conducted by luminaries such as Allen (1995), Mori (1998), Hauge (1999), Sime (2001), and Lazaraton (2004), which corroborate the notion that educators tend to utilize a wide array of gestures, encompassing the metaphoric, iconic, and deictic, when communicating with young or novice learners (Sime, 2001; Hauge, 1999, cited in Tellier, 2008, pp. 219–220; Allen, 1995, 2000; Lazaraton, 2004; Mori, 1998, cited in Taleghani-Nikazm, 2008, p. 230). All in all, these findings underscore the astute recognition among educators of the inherent value and efficacy of employing a diverse repertoire of gestures within their pedagogical practices, as corroborated by prior research.

Furthermore, our analysis reveals that to ensure understanding, teachers employ strategies such as using universally understood gestures and encouraging young EFL learners to articulate the meaning of gestures themselves. They also find value in explaining the meaning of gestures before their utilization and demonstrating them while prompting imitation. Teachers also adopt a

comprehensive approach by combining multiple strategies to ensure young EFL learners comprehend gestures effectively. Furthermore, teachers state that they actively support the use of gestures among young EFL learners, boosting their confidence and motivation and improving their comprehension, memorization, and retention of new vocabulary.

Additionally, the survey results unequivocally indicate that educators possess a firm conviction regarding the formidable influence of gestures on young EFL learners' comprehension, retention, and recall of vocabulary. Such findings serve as a robust pillar of support for our hypothesis, positing that instructors perceive the integration of gestures as an effective stratagem for enhancing the aptitude of young EFL learners to retain and recall recently imparted lexicon. Moreover, these findings seamlessly align with a prior seminal study conducted by Tellier (2008), which also unveiled the substantive superiority of gestures in fostering memorization when compared to visual aids such as pictures (Tellier, 2008, pp. 219–235). This remarkable congruence between our own empirical discoveries and pre-existing scholarly research further bolsters the contention regarding the undeniable effectiveness of gestures in the realm of vocabulary acquisition.

The study also shows that most of teachers are comfortable using gestures for vocabulary instruction, but there is a lack of training in this area. Teachers who received training reported positive outcomes, while non-trained teachers expressed willingness to receive such training. However, comprehensive support and resources are needed to engage all teachers effectively and maximize the benefits of using gestures in instruction. It also shows that integrating gestures into vocabulary instruction for young EFL learners offers several advantages. Teachers note that gestures aid in easy comprehension, activate long-term memory, and enhance enjoyment and engagement in learning. They lead to improved vocabulary levels, comprehension, and memorization and recall. Gestures also create an immersive English environment, reduce teacher talking time, save time, attract attention, and provide multi-sensory learning experiences. However, challenges include potential misinterpretation, some learners perceiving gestures as

childish, difficulties for slower learners in finding appropriate gestures, unequal benefits for all learners, and chaos in large classrooms. Despite these challenges, teachers recognize the significant benefits of gestures and propose addressing them for successful integration into vocabulary instruction.

Finally, the analysis conclusively demonstrates that teachers firmly believe that gestures outperform traditional instructional methods, such as word lists, repetition, and translation, in terms of their effectiveness in facilitating vocabulary acquisition and retention. This discovery addresses another research question we have, which is how teachers evaluate the efficacy of gestures compared to other instructional methods when teaching vocabulary to young EFL learners. Furthermore, the validity of this discovery is reinforced by the research conducted by Allen (1995), demonstrating that employing gestures proves more beneficial than mere repetition (Allen, 1995, pp. 521–529). Additionally, Macedonia's study (2003), as cited in Macedonia and Kriegstein (2012, p. 396), further supports the notion that employing gestures offers greater advantages compared to translation. These compelling findings highlight the immense potential of integrating gestures as a potent and engaging tool in vocabulary instruction. By doing so, teachers can effectively enrich young EFL learners' vocabulary learning experiences and ultimately enhance their overall outcomes.

To conclude, the research findings strongly support the effectiveness of incorporating gestures as a method for vocabulary instruction among young EFL learners. Teachers overwhelmingly perceive gestures as a highly effective pedagogical approach, utilizing a wide range of gestures to boost engagement, comprehension, retention, and recall of vocabulary. The utilization of gestures is linked to positive outcomes, including enhanced vocabulary levels, enjoyment, and immersive learning experiences. Despite the challenges involved, teachers firmly believe that gestures surpass traditional instructional methods like word lists, repetition, and translation in terms of their effectiveness in facilitating vocabulary acquisition and retention. All

in all, the integration of gestures into vocabulary instruction proves to be a valuable and powerful tool for enhancing the learning experiences and outcomes of young EFL learners.

Conclusion

This chapter explores the practical aspect of the current study, aiming to provide a chance for middle school teachers in the province of Jijel to share their perceptions and beliefs about the effectiveness of using gestures to teach new vocabulary to young English foreign language learners. The data collected from the teachers' online questionnaire indicates that teachers consider the use of gestures an effective method for introducing new vocabulary to their young EFL learners. Gestures help students easily grasp word meanings, enhance memorization, and facilitate effortless retrieval. However, challenges may arise when employing this method in larger classes, potentially leading to disruptions. Additionally, depicting abstract and complex words solely through gestures can be challenging, and preparing lessons with appropriate gestures may require significant time and effort. Nevertheless, teachers exhibit a strong willingness to receive professional training on the proper use of gestures. They show a positive attitude towards enhancing their professional skills, gaining more knowledge about this effective method, and facilitating their young EFL learners' acquisition of new vocabulary.

General Conclusion

1. Putting It Altogether

In the realm of foreign language education, the quest for effective pedagogical approaches continually drives research efforts. Within this context, this dissertation aptly undertakes the task of exploring teachers' perceptions regarding the efficacy of incorporating gestures in the instruction of new vocabulary for young English foreign language learners. With a specific focus on middle school EFL teachers in Jijel, Algeria, this research embarks upon an investigation, delving into the attitudes, beliefs, and experiences of educators in this unique context.

By seamlessly merging data collected from an online questionnaire with an extensive review of relevant literature, this research unveils valuable insights that shed light on the intricate interplay between gestures and vocabulary instruction. It is worth noting that this dissertation represents a ground-breaking endeavour as it pioneers the examination of middle school EFL teachers' perceptions within the realm of Jijel, Algeria, thereby bridging a significant gap in the current knowledge landscape.

Through meticulous analysis, this study not only explores the broad terrain of teachers' attitudes toward gesture integration, but also unveils the multifaceted benefits associated with this pedagogical strategy. Enhanced young EFL learners' engagement, amplified comprehension of abstract concepts, and improved recall of vocabulary words emerge as some of the pivotal advantages identified by the discerning educators of Jijel.

In the broader realm of foreign language teaching, these research findings possess substantial implications. They not only validate prior research by reinforcing the efficacy of gestures in fostering vocabulary acquisition, but also provide practical insights for curriculum development and teacher training programs. By imbuing educators with knowledge of effective pedagogical practices, this research facilitates the cultivation of engaging language learning experiences within foreign language classrooms.

In essence, this dissertation endeavours to delve into middle school EFL teachers' perspectives regarding the utilization of gestures in vocabulary instruction for young English foreign language learners. The discoveries and recommendations stemming from this research not only provide valuable guidance for educators and policymakers but also make a substantial contribution to the continuous advancement of foreign language education.

2. Limitations of the Study

Although this dissertation has yielded valuable insights into middle school EFL teachers' perspectives on the efficacy of incorporating gestures in vocabulary instruction, it is essential to acknowledge and address the study's limitations. The following constraints merit recognition and careful consideration:

- We were unable to use a combination of data collection approaches in this study due to pedagogical obstacles. Specifically, our intention was to include interviews with teachers rather than solely relying on an online questionnaire. Utilizing only the online questionnaire may not provide a comprehensive understanding of teachers' perspectives regarding the effectiveness of incorporating gestures in teaching vocabulary to young English foreign language learners. Therefore, it is recommended that future researchers diversify their data collection methods in order to obtain a more comprehensive insight into teachers' opinions.
- Another barrier we experienced was a shortage of library resources, which caused us to rely heavily on online sources. Unfortunately, not all of these resources were freely accessible. Future researchers would benefit from exploring alternative methods for accessing information outside of the constraints of the library in order to circumvent this barrier. One approach could involve establishing partnerships with members of other educational institutions or organizations that possess a more extensive collection of

resources. By doing so, researchers can tap into a broader range of resources and ensure a more comprehensive investigation.

- The study focused solely on teachers' perspectives and did not consider young EFL learners' experiences or outcomes. Future research should incorporate learners' feedback and performance measures to provide a more holistic understanding of the impact of incorporating gestures in vocabulary instruction
- Another limitation of the study is the potential for response bias in the online questionnaire. Participants may have been more inclined to provide socially desirable responses or may have misunderstood certain questions, leading to inaccuracies in the data collected. To mitigate this limitation, future research could consider using a mixed-methods approach, incorporating both qualitative interviews and quantitative surveys to gather a more comprehensive understanding of teachers' perceptions. The inclusion of interviews would allow for probing questions and clarification, reducing the likelihood of misinterpretation.

3. Pedagogical Recommendations

The study's findings offer a wealth of valuable insights, giving rise to the formulation of the subsequent pedagogical recommendations:

- Providing targeted professional development opportunities for teachers to enhance their knowledge and skills in using gestures effectively in vocabulary instruction. This can include workshops, training sessions, or seminars that focus on the theory, research, and practical techniques related to gesture-based instruction.
- Teachers are ought to recognize and accommodate for individual differences among young EFL learners when incorporating gestures. Some learners may benefit more from visual cues, while others may prefer kinaesthetic or auditory cues. Teachers should vary the types of gestures used to cater to different learning styles and preferences.

- Encouraging teachers to assess young EFL learners' understanding and use of gestures in vocabulary instruction. This can be done through observation, informal assessments, or self-reflection activities. Teachers should provide constructive feedback to guide young EFL learners in improving their gesture-based vocabulary learning.
- Teachers should promote a positive and inclusive classroom environment that values and encourages active participation in gesture-based vocabulary instruction. Establish clear expectations for respectful communication and provide a safe space for young EFL learners to experiment with and explore gestures without fear of judgment.
- By implementing these pedagogical recommendations, teachers can enhance their understanding of the effectiveness of using gestures in vocabulary instruction and optimize their instructional practices to support young EFL learners in Jijel, Algeria.

Suggestions for Further Research

The findings of this study provide valuable insights and pave the way for numerous compelling avenues of further researches. Here are some suggestions:

- Future researchers should conduct studies to examine the impact of incorporating gestures in vocabulary instruction on young EFL learners' vocabulary acquisition, retention, and overall language proficiency. They can compare the performance of learners who receive gesture-based instruction with those who receive traditional instruction to determine the effectiveness of gestures in enhancing learning outcomes.
- Researchers should investigate the impact of specific teacher training programs that focus on incorporating gestures in vocabulary instruction. They can assess the effectiveness of professional development initiatives in enhancing teachers' knowledge, skills, and confidence in using gestures, and examine the subsequent impact on young EFL learners' learning outcomes.

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Appendix

Teachers Questionnaire

Dear Middle School English Teachers,

We are conducting a research study on the effectiveness of using gestures in teaching new vocabulary to young English foreign language (EFL) learners. As a teacher, your expertise and insights on this topic are highly valued, and we would greatly appreciate your participation in this study. Your responses to this questionnaire will help us gain a deeper understanding of teachers' perceptions and experiences in using gestures as a teaching tool. Your participation in this study is voluntary, and your responses will be kept confidential. Thank you for your time and contributions to this research.

N.b: Please read carefully and answer each question by ticking (√) box (es) that best describes your opinions and/or beliefs.

Section One: General Background Information

Q1 - What degree do you hold?

- a. License degree
- b. Master degree
- c. Magister degree
- d. TTS degree

Q2 - How long have you been teaching English as a foreign language to young EFL learners?

- a. Less than 5 years
- b. Between 5 and 10 years
- c. Between 10 and 15 years
- d. More than 15 years

Q3 - What is the average number of young EFL learners in your class?

- a. 20 – 25 learners
- b. 26 -30 learners
- c. 31 – 35 learners
- d. More than 35 learners

Section Two: Vocabulary Teaching and Vocabulary Learning Assessment

Q4 - How can you assess your young EFL learners' English vocabulary proficiency?

- a. Low
- b. Medium
- c. High

Q5 - What methods do you employ for instructing vocabulary?

- a. Using mnemonic devices.
- b. Guessing from context.
- c. Using flashcards.
- d. Using gestures.
- e. Translation.
- f. Not mentioned.

Q6 - How do you evaluate the effectiveness of your English vocabulary lessons in class?

- a. Through formal assessments (e.g., quizzes, or tests).
- b. Through informal assessments (e.g., observing learners' engagement and participation inclass).
- c. By asking learners for feedback on the effectiveness of your lessons.
- d. Not mentioned.

Section 3: The Use of Gestures in Teaching New Vocabulary to Young EFL Learners

According to the Longman Dictionary of Language Teaching and Applied Linguistics, gestures are physical movements or facial and bodily expressions that convey a message or meaning, such as nodding to show agreement (2002, p. 225). Hauge (2000) added that gestures can be any visible movement of the body, but they are most commonly associated with movements involving the hands, upper limbs, or head (p.29).

Q7 - As a teacher, do you use gestures when teaching new lexical items?

- a. Yes
- b. No

a) If the answer is « Yes », how often do you use gestures in your vocabulary lessons with young EFL learners?

- a. Always
- b. Very often
- c. Sometimes
- d. Rarely
- e. Never

b) If the answer is « No», why don't you use them?

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Q8 - What type of gestures do you employ?

- a. Iconic (gestures used to represent a concrete event, object, or action that is mentioned simultaneously in speech).
- b. Metaphoric (gestures used to represent an image of an abstract concept).
- c. Deictic (gestures used to point towards something).
- d. All of the above gestures.
- e. Not mentioned.

Q9 - Are there any specific types of gestures that you have found to be particularly effective in teaching English vocabulary to young EFL learners?

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Q10 - What steps do you take to make sure that your young EFL learners comprehend the significance of the gestures you employ during your lessons?

- a. I explain the meaning of the gestures before I use them.
- b. I demonstrate the gestures and ask learners to imitate them.
- c. I ask learners to explain the meaning of the gestures.
- d. I use gestures that are universal and easily understood.
- e. Not mentioned

Q11 - Do you promote the use of gestures among your young EFL learners?

- a. Frequently
- b. Occasionally
- c. Never

Q12 - How do you think gestures can help your young EFL learners in English vocabulary learning?

- a. It makes the learning process more fun and engaging.
- b. It helps learners remember the meaning of words.
- c. It helps learners associate words with actions or visuals.
- d. It facilitates understanding of abstract concepts.
- e. Not mentioned.

Q13 - What challenges, if any, have you encountered while using gestures in your vocabulary instruction?

- a. Lack of training on how to use gestures effectively.
- b. Difficulty in selecting appropriate gestures for different vocabulary items.
- c. Resistance from learners who find gestures childish or embarrassing.
- d. It may take more time to plan and prepare lessons that incorporate gestures.
- e. It may be challenging to use gestures in large classes.
- f. Not mentioned.

Q14 - Have you noticed any specific improvements in your young EFL learners' vocabulary proficiency as a result of using gestures in your lessons?

- a. Yes, always
- b. Yes, often
- c. Sometimes
- d. No, rarely
- e. No, not at all

Q15 - Do you believe that using gestures has a positive impact on your young EFL learners' understanding, memorizing, and retrieving of new lexical items?

- a. Yes
- b. No
- c. Somehow

Q16 - On a scale of comfort, how at ease are you with utilizing gestures to instruct vocabulary?

- a. Very comfortable
- b. Somewhat comfortable
- c. Not very comfortable
- d. Not comfortable at all

Q17 - Have you ever been provided with any instruction or undergone any professional growth on the proper usage of gestures while teaching English vocabulary to young EFL learners?

- a. Yes
- b. No

a) If you answered «Yes », to what extent did the training assist you in enhancing your use of gestures?

- a. Very helpful
- b. Somewhat helpful
- c. Not very helpful
- d. Not helpful at all

b) If you answered « No », are you open to the idea of getting trained or enhancing your professional skills in using gestures?

- a. Yes, definitely
- b. Yes, maybe
- c. No, not really
- d. No, not at all

Q18 - In your opinion, what are the benefits or drawbacks of using gestures in teaching new vocabulary to young EFL learners?

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Q19 - To what extent do you think that the use of gestures in teaching new vocabulary to young EFL learners is a valuable teaching method? (Obligatory)

- a. Not at all valuable
- b. Slightly valuable
- c. Moderately valuable
- d. Very valuable
- e. Extremely valuable

Q20 - What is your opinion on the effectiveness of using gestures compared to other techniques like word list, repetition or translation for teaching vocabulary?

- a. Less effective
- b. About as effective
- c. More effective

Section Four: Suggestions

Q21 - Do you have any additional comments or suggestions about the use of gestures in teaching new vocabulary to young EFL learners?

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Once again, thank you for your valuable contribution.

Résumé

Cette étude vise à élucider les perceptions des enseignants d'Anglais langue étrangère (ALE) du cycle moyen concernant l'efficacité de l'incorporation des gestes dans l'enseignement du nouveau vocabulaire aux jeunes apprenants d'anglais langue étrangère (ALE) à Jijel, en Algérie. L'objectif principal de cette étude est d'analyser et d'évaluer en profondeur les points de vue des enseignants d'ALE du cycle moyen sur l'efficacité de l'utilisation des gestes dans l'enseignement du nouveau vocabulaire. Cette étude postule que les enseignants d'ALE du cycle moyen ont une perception positive de l'efficacité de l'utilisation des gestes dans l'enseignement du nouveau vocabulaire aux jeunes apprenants d'ALE. En ce qui concerne la collecte des données nécessaires, un questionnaire en ligne a été administré à 111 enseignants d'ALE du cycle moyen à Jijel. Les résultats mettent en évidence des tendances notables, soulignant que les enseignants reconnaissent la valeur des gestes en tant qu'outil pédagogique et croient en leurs nombreux avantages. L'étude révèle également que les gestes sont perçus comme plus efficaces que les méthodes traditionnelles telles que les listes des mots, la répétition et la traduction pour améliorer le développement du vocabulaire. De plus, l'étude explore les avantages de l'utilisation des gestes, notamment l'amélioration des résultats d'apprentissage, l'augmentation de l'engagement et la réduction de la dépendance à la langue maternelle des jeunes apprenants d'ALE. Cependant, des défis tels que la mauvaise interprétation et la sélection des gestes appropriés pour des concepts spécifiques sont identifiés. Les implications de l'étude sont discutées et des suggestions pour de futures recherches sont fournies. Dans l'ensemble, les résultats contribuent aux connaissances existantes et offrent des informations aux enseignants pour améliorer leur enseignement du vocabulaire et répondre aux besoins spécifiques des jeunes apprenants d'ALE.

Mots clés : Perceptions des enseignants d'ALE du cycle moyen, efficacité de l'utilisation des gestes, enseignement du vocabulaire, jeunes apprenants d'ALE

المخلص

تهدف هذه الدراسة إلى توضيح تصورات معلمي اللغة الإنجليزية كلغة أجنبية في الطور المتوسط بشأن فعالية إدماج الإيماءات في تعليم المفردات الجديدة لدى المتعلمين الصغار الناطقين بالإنجليزية كلغة أجنبية بولاية جيجل، بالجزائر. يكمن الهدف الأساسي من هذه الدراسة في تحليل وتقييم وجهات نظر معلمي اللغة الإنجليزية كلغة أجنبية في الطور المتوسط بشأن فعالية استخدام الإيماءات في تعليم المفردات الجديدة. كما تفترض هذه الدراسة أن معلمي اللغة الإنجليزية في الطور المتوسط لديهم تصورات إيجابية اتجاه فعالية استخدام الإيماءات في تعليم المفردات الجديدة للمتعلمين الصغار الناطقين باللغة الإنجليزية كلغة أجنبية. أما من أجل جمع البيانات اللازمة، فقد تم استخدام استبيان موجه إلى 111 مدرسا للغة الإنجليزية في الطور المتوسط بولاية جيجل عبر الإنترنت. كشفت النتائج المستمدة من هذا الاستبيان عن أهمية اعتماد المعلمين على الإيماءات كأداة تعليمية بسبب المزايا العديدة التي تتمتع بها وفعاليتها في تعزيز اكتساب المفردات اللغوية الجديدة مقارنة بالأساليب التدريسية التقليدية. بالإضافة إلى ذلك، تستكشف الدراسة مزايا استخدام الإيماءات، مثل تحسين نتائج التعلم وزيادة رغبة المتعلمين الصغار في المشاركة في الفصل وتقليل الاعتماد على لغتهم الأم. ومع ذلك، تواجه الإيماءات تحديات مثل سوء تفسيرها وصعوبة الاختيار الأنسب لها من أجل شرح المفردات المعقدة والمجردة. بشكل عام، تساهم نتائج الدراسة في تعزيز المعرفة الحالية وتقديم رؤى للمعلمين لتعزيز تعليمهم للمفردات وتلبية احتياجات متعلمي اللغة الأجنبية الصغار اللازمة من أجل اكتساب مفردات لغوية جديدة. كما تناقش الدراسة التأثيرات المترتبة على الدراسة وتقدم اقتراحات للبحث في المستقبل.

الكلمات المفتاحية : تصورات معلمي اللغة الإنجليزية كلغة أجنبية في الطور المتوسط ، فعالية الإيماءات ،

تعليم المفردات، متعلمي اللغة الأجنبية الصغار