Chapter 2

Review of Literature

2.0 Introduction

In this chapter, we look at different aspects of vocabulary: meaning and nature, theories related to vocabulary learning, testing and vocabulary testing as discussed in the literature.

2.1 Vocabulary

The fourth edition of *Oxford Advanced Learners' Dictionary of Current English* defines vocabulary as the total number of words that make up a language. It further states that the term vocabulary can be used to refer to the number of words known to a person or used in a particular book. That means, when words are looked at as individual entities, the term *word* is used. But, when a group of words are looked at in their totality, the term *vocabulary* is used. For example, if one is shown the particular arrangement of letters *term* and asked what it is, the response always is that it is a ‘word’. One can never get a response that it is ‘vocabulary’. But, one sees expressions like ‘vocabulary’ used in a book, nature of vocabulary, technical vocabulary etc. For example, *diode* is a technical word. A list of such words becomes technical vocabulary.
2.1.1 Word

The term *word* is always defined with respect to the individual language in question. In English, an item is called a word, if it fulfils six criteria. They include orthographical representation of the word, phonological and morphological possibility, meaning, indivisibility and independence (Mallikarjun, 2002).

In the written form of the English language, words are spaced on either side. For example, *Tom and Jerry* are considered to be three different words because they are properly spaced. *Tom and Jerry* would not be considered a word because of lack of space.

If a group of letters has a meaning attached to it, then, the group can be called a word. Words like *use, soap, here, small, coffee* etc. have meanings of their own.

Words like *blen, timp, reeb* are not considered words. These are called non-words in English. Non-words are those whose arrangement of letters is possible according to the morphological structure of the language; but, no meaning has been attached to them yet.

The next point deals with fulfilling the phonological criterion. Items such as *mkus, ndet* are not considered words because these structures are impossible in the English language because they cannot be pronounced at all given the phonological structure of the language. (Sailaja, 2004)

The next concept discusses the point indivisibility. If an item is a word, it is not possible to insert another linguistic unit into the word. If such insertion is possible, the item under consideration is not a word. For example, take the following unit.
This is the test used by Meara (1986, cited in Schmitt, 2000) in an early experiment to study the recognition speed of L2 readers. This is a string of characters where the word *simple* is embedded or inserted which means that the other characters surrounding *simple* are not words. So, the word *simple* could be inserted. One can even change the place of insertion like

weolsusimplelutggiga

But, one cannot insert another character into *simple* which confirms that *simple* is a word.

The last aspect deals with the concept of independence. If a unit can stand on its own, it is a word. Prefixes and suffixes are not words because they cannot occur individually in a sentence.

### 2.1.2 Lexical Unit

We have seen that a word has a meaning. In many cases, a word has many meanings. For example, the word *bank* has many meanings. In some other cases, a group of two or more words has one meaning. In most of the cases, these words individually have one meaning and together they form another meaning. For example, *run into* means *meet*. In the same way, *throw in the towel* is *to accept defeat*. These phrasal verbs and idioms are also called lexical units.
2.1.3 Estimating the Size of English Vocabulary

We have seen that words and lexical units form a part of the broader term ‘vocabulary’. We have also seen that vocabulary is the total number of words in a language or in a book or the number of words that are known to a person. There are different ways of counting the number of words. They are tokens, types, lemmas and word families (Nation, 2001).

**Tokens**

One way to count the number of words is to simply count every word in an utterance or a book irrespective of the number of times some of these words occur. For example, the sentence, *we should not end a sentence with because because because because is a conjunction* has 13 words in it even though *because* and *a* are repeated. Words counted in this way are called tokens. For instructions like *write an essay using not more than 500 words*, it is the token count of vocabulary that is considered.

**Types**

Another way of counting the number of words is to count every word omitting repetition. So, the sentence, *we should not end a sentence with because because because because is a conjunction* has 10 words. Words which are counted in this way are called types. Words are counted in this way to answer questions like *how many words do you know in this passage?*

But, this is not possible always. Take for example, the sentence *I walk for two hours daily; but, today I walked for only one hour*. Sentences like these raise doubts
about whether *walk* and *walked* are considered two words. Similarly, *hour* and *hours* raise the same doubt. To solve this problem, the concept of counting lemmas came into existence.

**Lemma**

A lemma consists of a head word and some of its inflected and reduced forms (Nation, 2001). Usually, all the items included under a lemma are of the same part of speech. Hence, in the sentence, *I walk for two hours daily; but, today I walked for only one hour,* *walked* comes under the head word *walk* and both belong to the same lemma.

Lying behind the use of lemmas as the unit of counting is the idea of learning burden (Swenson and West, 1934, cited in Nation, 2001). The learning burden of an item is the amount of effort required to learn it (Nation, 2001).

For example, once a word *book* is learnt, learning *books* becomes very easy. Similarly, learning verb forms like *talk-talked, form-formed* becomes simple.

But, this is not always the case. Learning the plural form of *child* is different from that of *book*. In the same way, *bring-brought* does not follow *talk-talked*. In these examples, *children* and *brought* have to be learnt as individual words which makes it clear that all lemmas do not ease the learning burden. Let’s look at another example.

*I walk regularly because walking is good for health.*

In this sentence, *walk* and *walking* do not come under the same lemma because *walk* is a verb and *walking* is used as a noun.
To solve these problems, counting word families came into existence.

**Word Family**

A word family usually includes the base word, all of its inflections and derivations. The term ‘word family’ has larger scope than the term ‘lemma’ which includes only the base word and its inflections. So, when researchers count the number of words in a dictionary or in any selected book or the number of words known to a person, they generally count word families as single units. Thus, *deny, deniable, undeniably* are counted as one word family. Knowledge of word families is important because there is evidence that the mind groups members of a word family together (Nagy et al., 1989). These word families help us in estimating the size of English vocabulary.

**2.1.4 The Size of English Vocabulary**

Estimating the size of English vocabulary is an ambitious task. The oft-cited study is done by Goulden, Nation and Read (1990). They considered word families as single units and counted the number of word families in the *Webster's Third New International Dictionary*. They found that the dictionary contains 114,000 word families excluding proper nouns. It is difficult for the native speaker also to learn all these words. It is not even necessary, nor possible to learn all the words in any language. In fact, we learn only those words which help us in giving or receiving information. There is a high degree of individualism involved in learning a language (Mobarg, 1997). But, as lexical competence is at the heart of communicative competence (Long & Richards, 1997), it is always
advisable for learners who aspire for higher education and/or growth in career to learn as many words as possible. Some of these words form a part of an individual's receptive vocabulary and others forma part of productive vocabulary.

2.1.5 Receptive and Productive Vocabulary

Words which are used for receiving information constitute receptive vocabulary. The latter is also called passive vocabulary. Words which are used for giving information are called productive vocabulary or active vocabulary. An individual's receptive knowledge of a word includes the ability to recognize the word when it is heard, being familiar with its written form, knowing the connotative and denotative meanings of the word, knowing the words which are synonymous with the word, understanding its grammatical behaviour, knowing its collocational use, and knowing the frequency of the word. In addition to the above-mentioned types of knowledge, productive knowledge of the word includes an understanding of the phonological and orthographic nature of the word, using the word in a sentence which is correct both grammatically and contextually, being able to produce synonyms and antonyms for the word, using the word with proper / appropriate collocations (Nation, 2001).

But, these distinctions are not hard and fast ones. Those words which were part of passive vocabulary of an individual at one time may become part of his/her active vocabulary afterwards. In the same way, one's productive words may become inactive and remain passive. So, this active - passive distinction is treated as a scale of knowledge
(Melka, 1982). It is a continuum on which an individual's knowledge of words moves back and forth according to the necessity of the use of words. As the individual goes on learning new words, or new uses of the already learned ones, one's active vocabulary may become passive and vice-versa.

**Incremental nature of vocabulary growth**

Many aspects of the words should be learnt for a word to become part of either receptive or productive vocabulary of an individual. All these different kinds of word knowledge cannot be learnt at one go. Every one of the word knowledge types is likely to be learned gradually over a period of time based on the type of encounters with the words as vocabulary acquisition is incremental by nature. Some aspects may be developed more quickly than others. Which aspects are learnt first and which are learnt later is not easy to assess (Schmitt, 2000). A high level of individualism is present here. Learning vocabulary is not a totally volitional process. Some words and expressions are learnt consciously and some others are acquired unconsciously. In other words, words are learnt either through explicit vocabulary instruction or incidental vocabulary acquisition.

### 2.2 Incidental Vocabulary Acquisition

Individuals possess a very large stock of vocabulary, be it receptive or productive. In an L1 context, most of the vocabulary is learnt through repeated exposure to words in different contexts. In an L2 context, learners start with learning by direct instruction and slowly and gradually move towards learning from context. As vocabulary learning is
incremental in nature, every encounter with a known word either adds strength to the existing knowledge of the word or provides additional information about the word. This is called incidental vocabulary acquisition. Vocabulary acquisition takes place in learners when they are engaged in meaningful and / or meaning focused communication through formal and informal sources. This is also called incidental learning of vocabulary where vocabulary growth is a by product of something else - comprehending a lecture or a text or a conversation.

N. Ellis (1994) talks about incidental learning as learning without any intention to learn. *Intention* seems to be the operative word here. This does not mean that the learner does not notice the word in question, but, his / her attention is on comprehending or understanding something and memory for the new word comes as a natural result of the process, a conscious effort to learn being unnecessary. Ellis differentiates this from implicit learning which suggests that "the meaning of a new word being acquired totally unconsciously as a result of abstract action from repeated exposures in a range of activated contexts" (N. Ellis, 1994, p. 219, cited in Gass, 1999, p. 321).

Schmitt (2000) observes that through exposure to language, spelling is the first aspect that is learnt. If the exposure is oral, pronunciation is what is registered in the mind. Later, meaning and word class of the word are learnt. One derivation of the target word may be learnt but not all the possible derivations. Similarly, core meaning is learnt, but not all the different meaning senses the word has. Collocations are the ones that are learnt at the advanced level.
Similarly, Paribhakt and Wesche (1999) point out that learning a word starts with the first meaningful encounter with a previously unknown word and continues through the successful integration of that word into their mental lexicon. *Meaningful* seems to be a significant word here. In a context, if the word in question does not evoke any meaning sense in the learner, the word is totally ignored because learners do not see any need to learn such a word and do not pay any attention to it. That is, if the word is salient in the context, learners use different strategies to decipher the meaning of it. Which word appears salient to the learner and which one does not, is not an easy question to answer. Smith (1993, cited in Gass, 1999) argues that input can also be made salient by external sources to provide opportunities for better acquisition. These external sources include teacher, materials, textbooks etc. Sometimes students themselves think that a particular word is salient in the context and proceed to infer its meaning through the contextual clues. As Gass (1999) points out, when talking about incidental learning, pedagogically induced attention may not fit in with learner attention. That means learning occurs when the learners perceive a need to learn. As Ellis states, “that we have not been taught vocabulary does not entail that we have not taught ourselves” (Ellis, 1994, p. 7 cited in Gass, 1999, p. 321).

In addition to learner’s attention, there are other factors that promote vocabulary growth incidentally. They are: existence of recognized cognates between the native and the target language, significant L2 exposure and existence of familiar words in the context in question.
Incidental learning of vocabulary has certain advantages. They are: a) it is contextualized, giving the learner a richer sense of a word's use and meaning, b) it is more individualized and learner based and c) it is efficient because it enables two activities - vocabulary acquisition and reading - to occur at the same time (Huckin & Coady, 1999). In spite of all the above mentioned advantages, incidental learning does have certain limitations. Even though Krashen (1989) is all in favour of vocabulary acquisition through natural exposure to comprehensible input, there are arguments against this type of acquisition. For example, it is pointed out that the richness of information which helps the reader guess the meaning of an unknown word from the context can also predict that the same reader does not try to learn the word because he / she can comprehend the text without knowing the word (Nation & Coady, 1988, cited in Huckin & Coady, 1999).

Incidental vocabulary learning presupposes that certain conditions should be met for it to occur. They are - precise interpretation, accurate word recognition, well understood context, good textual clues, substantial prior vocabulary knowledge, good reading strategies and so on (Huckin & Coady, 1999).

In addition to the existence of the above mentioned criteria, almost all of the surrounding words in the text should be known to the learner for successful vocabulary acquisition. So, knowing every word through incidental exposure is almost impossible for a second language learner. He/she should have received some amount of explicit instruction to know the very basic words, i.e. at least up to 3,000 to 5,000 word families (Laufer, 1997a) to acquire a word incidentally. Without this prior knowledge, incidental comprehension of meaning may occur, but not incidental acquisition (Lawson & Hogben,
1996, cited in Huckin & Coady, 1999). This brings us to the realm of explicit vocabulary instruction.

### 2.3 Intentional Vocabulary Learning

When compared to incidental learning, intentional learning of vocabulary is more formal in nature and presupposes that paying explicit attention to words in the classroom is beneficial for the L2 learners. It can be through providing glosses, encouraging learners to maintain vocabulary note books, providing example sentences and asking students to come up with their own sentences, discussing other words which mean more or less the same as the target words and so on. For a second language learner, explicit vocabulary instruction is a beneficial one. Nation and Newton (1997) propose that the most frequent 2000 words are essential for any real language use and so are worth the effort required to teach and learn them explicitly. The learning of these basic words cannot be left to chance, but should be taught as quickly as possible, because they open the door to further learning (Schmitt & McCarthy, 1997). Not only the first two thousand words, but, beyond that limit may also have to be taught in a second language classroom. Because, for learners who do not engage in extensive reading, who do not listen to much target language outside the classroom, and do not converse in the target language, explicit vocabulary instruction is the only way to get hold of new words. Sokmen (1997) surveys explicit vocabulary teaching and highlights some key principles that should be the components of any explicit vocabulary teaching programme. They are: to build to a large sight-vocabulary, to integrate new words with the old, to provide a number of encounters with
a word, to promote a deep level of processing, to facilitate imaging, to make new words real by connecting them to the students' world in some way, to use a variety of techniques and to encourage independent learning strategies.

While dealing with a text or a passage, sometimes, teachers explain a word by offering an LI translation, definition or synonym so that learners can go on continuing with understanding the text. Sometimes, if the word in question is very important, “rich instruction” (Beck, Mckown and Omanson, 1987, cited in Nation, 2001) is provided by paying elaborate attention to the words, and going beyond the immediate demands of a particular context of occurrence.

Nation (2001) proposes three main advantages of direct vocabulary teaching for second language learners compared to direct vocabulary teaching to native speakers.

- Native speakers come to know around 5000 word families by the time they are five years old. This is most unlikely for a second language learner. So, at least the first 2000 words should be taught directly to the non-native speakers.

- Native speakers have a large number of opportunities to get input and to produce output. Second language learners do not enjoy these rich language learning environments.

So, maximum and qualitative input should be provided in the classroom. Direct vocabulary teaching tries to bridge the gap between second language learners' present proficiency level and the proficiency level they ought to reach.
• Second language learners have less time for learning. Direct teaching accelerates the learning speed.

In spite of the advantages, direct teaching has some limitations, the first one being the amount of time spent in the classroom. The others include the number of words to teach, the amount of time spent by the teacher prior to the class, and so on. In addition, continuous vocabulary instruction may be very laborious, tiresome and boring task for the teacher as well as the students.

2.4 Incidental and Intentional Learning of Vocabulary

Explicit learning directly focuses attention on the target words, which gives the greatest chance for its acquisition. But, it is very time consuming and is to be done in a classroom in a formal teaching / learning scenario. Incidental learning is freer in nature and it can occur at any place. But, it is slower and it lacks the focused attention of explicit leaning. The consensus is that for second language learners at least, both explicit and incidental learning are necessary, and should be seen as complementary (Schmitt, 2000). As Sokmen (1997) points out, the pendulum has swung from direct teaching of vocabulary (the grammar translation method) to incidental learning (the communicative approach) and is now combining both - implicit and explicit learning.

Certain words like high frequency words and technical vocabulary can be successfully dealt with in a teaching programme, but beyond that limit, it is better to encourage readers to learn incidentally.
As Ellis (2002) points out, even though language learning is implicit by nature, one cannot deny a role for explicit instruction.

In their study, Paribhakt and Wesche (1997) compared reading comprehension plus vocabulary enhancement exercises (RP) with reading additional texts that incorporated the same words (RO). The Vocabulary Knowledge Scale was used to elicit the subjects' knowledge about the target words. The results indicated that both instructional treatments resulted in significant gains in learners' vocabulary knowledge. But Reading plus (RP) had greater gains than Reading only (RO). Learners often ignore the meanings of unknown words, unless they are essential for text comprehension. Within a limited instructional setting, this learning strategy is not found advisable. It was concluded that "L2 vocabulary acquisition can be enhanced through instructional intervention in the context of meaningful language use" (Paribhakt & Wesche, 1997, p. 177).

Nation and Newton (1997) suggest that the teacher can follow either of the two approaches, namely, direct approach or indirect approach while providing instruction. These two approaches, the authors suggest, should be seen as complementary. In the direct approach to vocabulary teaching, explicit attention is given to vocabulary by means of word-building exercises, matching words with definitions, studying vocabulary in context, split information activities focusing on vocabulary and so on. In the indirect approach, the teachers' concern for vocabulary learning is not stated as obviously as in the direct approach. The teacher can incorporate vocabulary learning into communicative activities like listening to stories, information gap activities and group work. Whenever problems with vocabulary occur in activities, they will be dealt with in a principled way.
Tseng and Schmitt (2008) suggest that teachers should aim at helping learners become self-motivated experts in a language. They proceed to explain that self-motivated language experts should know how to change their negative attitudes into positive ones, should have a strong intention to learn and also maintain and protect that intention in order to reach their learning goals, should master a set of vocabulary learning tactics and be able to use them comfortably, spontaneously and effectively and above all, they should know that vocabulary learning is multi-dimensional and should endeavor to establish a large well-structured mental lexicon by improving both their vocabulary size and depth.

As any teaching programme should have its primary objective to make the teacher redundant at the end of the programme, explicit focus on vocabulary learning strategies seems to be a feasible option. Nation (2001) developed a taxonomy of kinds of vocabulary learning strategies.

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<thead>
<tr>
<th>General class of strategies</th>
<th>Types of strategies</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Planning: choosing what to focus on and when to focus on it</td>
<td>Choosing words</td>
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<td></td>
<td>Choosing the aspects of word knowledge</td>
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<td>Choosing strategies</td>
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<td>Planning repetition</td>
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<td>Sources: finding information about words</td>
<td>Analyzing the word</td>
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<td>Using context</td>
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<td>Consulting a reference source in L1 or L2</td>
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<td>Processes: establishing knowledge</td>
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<td>Retrieving</td>
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<td>Generating</td>
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(Nation, 2001, p. 218)
This conclusion might not have been arrived at without understanding the roles different language teaching methodologies have played in vocabulary development. The next section provides an overview of the various language teaching methodologies with regard to vocabulary growth.

2.5 Theories of Second Language Vocabulary Learning

People have attempted to learn second languages from at least the time of the Romans (Schmitt, 2000). In this period of more than two thousand years, there have been various approaches to language learning. Each of these approaches has viewed vocabulary from different perspectives. Sometimes vocabulary has been given utmost importance and some other times, it has been totally neglected. The different approaches and the place of vocabulary in them are discussed in the following sections.

2.5.1 Early Approaches

The first learners in the West who had access to a second language were the Romans when they studied Greek. They started with the alphabet and reached connected discourse via syllables, words and phrases. Vocabulary was given due importance. Some of the texts gave students lexical help by providing vocabulary that was either alphabetized or grouped under various topic areas (Bowen, Madsen, & Hilferty, 1985 cited in Schmitt, 2000). Later, in the medieval period, grammar occupied a prominent place when students studied Latin. This over-emphasis on syntax annoyed some of the
educators. William of Bath and Comenius believed in contextualized vocabulary acquisition and wrote texts suggesting an inductive approach to language learning. The seeds for vocabulary control movement were sown here. Scholars such as William and Comenius tried to give predominant focus to vocabulary while promoting translation as a means of directly using the target language, getting away from rote memorization and avoiding such a strong grammar focus (Schmitt, 2000).

Even though the focus of language instruction remained on rule oriented learning of Latin grammar, attempts were made to standardize vocabulary. The first dictionary was Robert Cawdrey's *A Table Alphabetical* produced in 1604. The most prominent was the *Dictionary of the English language* by Samuel Johnson in 1755. The modern language teaching methodologies started from the beginning of the nineteenth century with Grammar - Translation at the helm.

### 2.5.2 Grammar - Translation Method

Grammar - Translation method was also called the ‘Classic Method’ because it was used to teach Classical languages, Greek and Latin. It was also called the 'Prussian Method' as it had its origin in Prussia. This method focused on translating the sentences giving great importance to accuracy. As a mastery of vocabulary was required for translation, it was taught through bilingual word lists; dictionaries and memorization of words and their meanings. The textbooks also contained vocabulary lists. In this method,
though vocabulary was given importance, it was not for the purpose of discourse, but for the purpose of translation.

2.5.3 The Reform Movement

As the name itself suggests, the advocates of the Reform movement under the leadership of Henry Sweet were totally against the principles of Grammar-Translation method. From translating sentences, the focus was shifted to fluent speech with accurate pronunciation. Sweet developed a curriculum which was divided into five stages. Students learnt Phonetics and transcription in the Mechanical Stage, studied grammar and very basic vocabulary in the Grammatical stage and proceeded to learn vocabulary in greater depth in the Idiomatic stage. Literary and Archaic stages were more advanced in nature and were reserved for university level students. Though vocabulary was studied in two stages of this curriculum, words which were simple and useful were selected, thus giving primacy to appropriacy and reality (Zimmerman, 1997).

2.5.4 The Direct Method

The Direct method, the best known of the several natural methods, was introduced towards the end of the nineteenth century as a result of the interest shown by scholars in developing principles for second language teaching on the lines of first language acquisition (Richards and Rodgers, 1986).
The Direct method received its name from the fact that meaning was to be communicated directly using the target language without any translation (Larsen-Freeman, 1986). The target language was used in question-and-answer exchange in small, intensive classes. Vocabulary was simple and familiar. Concrete vocabulary was explained with labeled pictures and demonstrations, while abstract vocabulary was taught through the association of ideas (Richards & Rodgers, 1986).

2.5.5 The Reading Method

The Reading method, as the name itself suggests, focused on the development of reading skills in learners by improving vocabulary skills. Michael West was probably among the pioneers who understood that reading and vocabulary development are complementary in nature. The primary thing in learning a language is the acquisition of vocabulary, and practice in using it (West, 1930 cited in Zimmerman, 1997). West recommended the use of word frequency lists for the selection of vocabulary in student materials. In 1953, West published *A General Service List of English Words* which became an instant success. Even today, GSL is said to be the most used high frequency word lists. Michael West was, still is, probably the best known scholar to harness the idea of frequency with second language learning (Schmitt, 2000).

**Vocabulary control movement**

Even though West was the well known scholar to link frequency with learning, GSL was not the first word list. The tradition of forming vocabulary lists dates back to
Grammar Translation. Objecting to these archaic word lists, Thomas Prendergast, in his 1864 manual, *The Mastery of Languages or the Art of Speaking Foreign Tongues Idiomatically* listed the most common English words based solely on his intuition which surprisingly seemed to be accurate (Zimmerman, 1997). In the 1930s C.K. Ogden and I.A. Richards developed a vocabulary list with only 850 words. This word list was called as Basic English which was said to be learnt quickly, thereby communicating any message clearly. This was done by paraphrasing. For example, the words *ask* and *want* were not included in Basic English, but could be expressed as *put a question* and *have a desire for* respectively (Carter, 1988 cited in Schmitt, 2000). As one can see from the example given, Basic English shifted the emphasis from learning many words to learning many meaning senses; thereby increasing the learning burden of the second language learner. It was estimated that the 850 words of Basic English have 12,425 meanings (Nation, 1983). Learning many meaning senses could not be easier than learning many words. In the end, many teachers felt that if courses were offered which claimed to teach Basic English, they should in fact learn basic English (Howatt, 1984 cited in Schmitt, 2000).

*Basic English* was published in the 1930s while GSL was published in 1953. The *General Service List* was compiled as a reaction to the Direct Method which did not give primacy to vocabulary or reading materials. Scholars who were working on the principles of language learning came up with the 'Interim report on vocabulary selection for the teaching of English as a foreign language' which is popularly known as the Carnegie Report. The Report recommended the development of a list of vocabulary that would be useful in the production of simple reading materials (Schmitt, 2000). This list was
developed using systematic criteria in selecting the most useful words for language learning. The criteria were

- Word frequency
- Structural value (all structural words included)
- Universality (words likely to cause offence locally excluded)
- Subject range (no specialist items)
- Definition words (for dictionary making, etc.)
- Word building capacity
- Style ("colloquial" or slang words excluded)

(Howatt, 1984, p. 256)

The list had two thousand words. The advantage of the General Service List was that the different parts of speech and different meaning senses were listed which made the list more useful than a single frequency count (Schmitt, 2000).

The general opinion at that time was that vocabulary was one of the most important aspects of foreign language learning. Vocabulary was also seen as an essential component of reading proficiency (Richards & Rodgers, 1986). This period also saw the publication of The Advanced Learner's Dictionary of Current English (1953), the first Dictionary for students of English as a foreign language, developed by Hornby, Gatenby and Wakefield.

The more recent vocabulary lists are University Word List (1984) and Academic Word List (1998) developed by Xue and Nation, and Coxhead respectively. The UWL was designed to consist of words not in the GSL, but those that occurred frequently over a range of academic texts. The AWL was compiled by Averil Coxhead with range, frequency and uniformity as the criteria. The list is divided into ten sub lists with 1 being
the most frequent and 10, the least frequent. The first sub list contains words which are more frequent and the tenth sub list has words that are less frequent.

2.5.6 Situational Language Teaching

Situational language teaching grew roots almost simultaneously with the Reading method. The leaders of this approach were the British Linguists, H.E. Palmer and A.S. Hornby. They believed that language should be taught by practising basic structures in meaningful situation–based activities; speech was the basis and the structure made speech possible (Zimmermam, 1997). Similar to the Direct Method, Situational language teaching also adopted an inductive approach to language learning. Learners were expected to deduce meanings of the new words and use of new structures from the way they were used in a situation. New vocabulary was taught before students encountered them in reading. Vocabulary was chosen based on how well it could accommodate sentence structures. The whole approach was based on the principles of selection, gradation and presentation (Richards & Rodgers, 1986).

2.5.7 The Audio-lingual Method

The audio-lingual method grew into prominence during the Second World War. The rubrics of the method were based on the premise that teaching language could be as scientifically systematic as teaching linguistics. This method, which was also called the structural approach, was developed by American Structural Linguists when governmental
and institutional support was available for the teaching of foreign languages. Founded by Charles Fries, this approach suggested that many of the problems faced by foreign language learners were related to the structural system of the language and proceeded to see language as a process of habit formation. The method paid systematic attention to pronunciation and intensive oral drilling of basic sentence patterns through an intensive study of three months.

Intrinsically, this method looked at vocabulary from a completely unorthodox standpoint. As the objective of the method was to acquire structure patterns, vocabulary items were selected according to their simplicity and familiarity (Zimmerman, 1997). New words were introduced through drills. The number and nature of the new words was influenced by the drills in question (Larsen-Freeman, 1986). Fries thought that focusing on vocabulary would give students the false impression that learning vocabulary was the most important thing about learning a language with its dictionary (Fries, 1945 cited Zimmerman, 1997). Fries’ idea was that learners would often make false assumptions about learning vocabulary - to think that words have exact equivalents in different languages, to believe that a word is a single meaning unit and to think that each word has only one real meaning and all the others are figurative in nature (Zimmerman, 1997). Fries argued against these assumptions saying that words are symbols that derive their whole content and their limitations of meaning from the situations in which they are used (Fries, 1945, cited in Zimmerman, 1997).
2.5.8 Communicative Language Teaching

Communicative language teaching - CLT - is more an approach than a method which aims at helping the learner achieve communicative competence which gives emphasis to the sociolinguistic factors which in turn govern effective language use. Communicative competence is defined as the internalized knowledge of the situational appropriateness of language (Hymes, 1972 cited in Zimmerman, 1997). Vocabulary was not the focus of attention in the CLT. More attention was paid to the appropriate use of language to suit the communicative event. Since vocabulary development occurs through contextualized input in L1, the proponents thought that the same would happen in L2.

2.5.9 The Natural Approach

Designed primarily to enable a beginning student reach acceptable levels of oral communicative abilities in the classroom (Krashen & Terrell, 1983), the Natural Approach emphasizes input which may in turn result in meaningful output. For a text to become comprehensible, vocabulary plays an important role. At the same time, explicit vocabulary instruction was not the focus. Learners should acquire vocabulary and structures as they understand the meaning of the text.
2.5.10 The Lexical Approach

The lexical approach is the outcome of the COBUILD dictionary project with John Sinclair as its editor-in-chief. The project resulted in the understanding that the lexicon of English consisted of mainly multi-word items of different types that collocated in a fairly fixed way or that occurred in fixed expressions (Nagaraj, 2008). Lewis argues that lexical items are central to language use and should be central to language teaching (1993, cited in Zimmerman, 1997). Lewis (1997), one of the advocates of the lexical approach, demonstrated that language mainly consists of multi-word chunks and prefabricated units rather than single words. Lewis calls these chunks ‘lexical items’. Lexical items are socially sanctioned independent units. These may be individual words or full sentences - institutionalized utterances - that convey fixed social or pragmatic meaning within a given community. These lexical items include words (Stop, Sure!), poly words (by the way), collocations (to raise capital), institutionalized utterance (I’ll get it., There is a call for you.) and sentences frames and heads (secondly,...and finally, we come now to a number of important reservations) (Lewis, 1997). Lewis proceeds to argue that to realize the true value of the lexical approach teachers need to respect receptive practice. Harwood (2002) concludes that if a lexical approach is implemented appropriately, learners will acquire lexis suitable for their need.
2.6 Extensive Reading and Vocabulary Development

Tudor & Hafiz define extensive reading as the reading of large amounts of material in the second language (L2) over time for personal pleasure of interest, and without the addition of productive tasks or follow up language work (Tudor & Hafiz, 1989). A major benefit of extensive reading is incidental vocabulary acquisition, the ability to acquire the meaning and use of unknown words when reading, without any specific information. According to the Input Hypothesis “.....language is subconsciously acquired – while you are acquiring you don’t know you are acquiring; your conscious focus is on the meaning, not form” (Krashen, 1989, p. 440), He proceeds to explain that “good evidence exists that this assertion is also true for vocabulary and spelling: more comprehensible input, in the form of reading, is associated with greater competence in vocabulary and spelling” (Krashen, 1989, p. 441). He claims that comprehensible input coupled with a powerful internal language acquisition device results in successful language learning. Coady (1979, cited in Coady, 1997) argues that high levels of incidental vocabulary occur when the text is interesting to the learner even though the linguistic aspects of the texts are highly advanced in relation to the ability of the learner in question. Even if the subject matter is difficult, the motivation levels of the learner encourage and enable the learner to succeed in the task of comprehending the text. On the contrary, an uninteresting text does not result in effective vocabulary acquisition. In the next two sections, we discuss the positive and negative evidence for vocabulary acquisition to be the by product of extensive reading.
Negative evidence for extensive reading resulting in vocabulary acquisition

In an attempt to test the Input Hypothesis, Tudor and Hafiz (1989) set up a three month extensive reading programme using graded readers for sixteen students who were learning English as a second language. The authors claimed that the learners were free to choose any book and they were also allowed to take books home if they wished. No additional tasks were set to the learners except for an oral report on what they had read and their reactions to it. Even though dictionaries were made available, learners, in this study, preferred to learn the meanings of unfamiliar words from the experimenter. In spite of all the favourable conditions like pleasure reading, choice of books, no tasks, tension free environment and high motivational levels, there were not any significant gains in the vocabulary development of the learners. “Subjects’ vocabulary base remained relatively unchanged” (Tudor & Hafiz, 1989, p. 164). It is concluded that the “retention of word meanings in a true incidental learning task is very low indeed” (Hulstijn, 1992, p.122, cited in Coady, 1997).

Positive evidence for extensive reading resulting in vocabulary acquisition

Krashen (1989), a leading proponent of extensive reading argues that language learners acquire vocabulary and spelling while reading. One of the pioneering studies was conducted in 1970s in Nieu, a small island in the South Pacific. Grade 3 students were introduced to fifty (50) high interest, short, illustrated story books. After one year, children under the programme outperformed the others who were in the traditional audio-lingual method in all three measures that were used, that is, reading comprehension, word recognition and oral sentence repetition (De’Ath, 2001, cited in Renandya, 2007).
The oft-cited example for the benefits of extensive reading is the study conducted by Elley and Mangubhai (1983, cited in Tudor and Hafiz, 1989). The two–year study focused on the effect of extensive reading on L2 skills development. Simplified readers were given to around four hundred students in a number of Fijian primary schools. After one year, students showed significant improvement in reading and word-recognition. By the end of the second year, substantial gains were identified with respect to oral and written production.

To the best of the researcher’s knowledge, Elley and Mangubhai’s is the only study which dealt with extensive reading in its true meaning in a second language setting, yielding positive results in both receptive and productive skills.

**Conclusion**

Even though research evidence has been quite inconclusive, advantages of extensive reading cannot be totally ruled out. But, for extensive reading to result in any significant vocabulary growth, learners are expected to have in possession at least 3,000-5,000 word families (Nation and Waring, 1997, cited in Schmitt, 2000). Once the learner crosses the vocabulary threshold and becomes an independent reader, he/she will be capable of learning words through context. Nuttall (1982, cited in Coady, 1997) proposes two circles of L2 reading. They are the vicious circle and the virtuous circle. The first one is the vicious circle and the second one is the virtuous circle.
She claims that “it does not matter where you enter the circle, because any of the factors that make it up will produce any of the others” (Nuttall, 1982, p. 167). She proposes that one has to break the chain if one wants to come out of the vicious circle.

Extensive reading potentially provides learners with the opportunity to process an unfamiliar word in its various natural contexts in order to acquire the complex prospects of the lexical item (Judd, 1978, cited in Rott, 1999). Print material gives more time to
process new words, whereas the word passes ephemerally in speech (N. Ellis, 1994, cited in Rott, 1999).

But, extensive readers are an exception, not the rule. If reading for pleasure is not introduced during the individual’s childhood, there are fewer chances that he/she may become an extensive reader. Camiciottoli’s (2001) study revealed why extensive reading is considered important by some students. The reasons include: acquiring wider vocabulary, enhancing general literacy, usefulness for career, learning about other cultures, usefulness for English courses and for other courses. We can see from the above mentioned list that acquiring wider vocabulary has been placed first which makes it clear that not only teachers, but students also link vocabulary with extensive reading. The same study explored some reasons which are cited by the reluctant readers. The reasons include lack of time due to studies, lack of time in general, not knowing what to read, no access to English books, difficulty in understanding and lack of desire to read in English. These reasons hold good for any reluctant reader.

To help the reluctant readers become extensive readers, inclusion of an extensive reading programme with the following characteristics is proposed by Renandya (2007).

- Students read large amounts of material.
- Students usually choose what they want to read.
- Reading materials vary in terms of topic and genre.
- The material students read is within their level of comprehension.
- Students usually take part in post reading activities.
- Teachers read with these students, thus modeling enthusiasm for reading.
• Teachers and students keep track of student progress.

The above mentioned list is practical in nature. But, if post reading tasks are involved one has to think twice before calling it extensive reading or reading for pleasure.

Probably, the best study with respect to the implementation of extensive reading was done by Macalister (2008). The study was conducted in New Zealand in a class of 18 students who were in a 12-week university preparation EAP class. Every day, at the end of each morning, twenty minutes of sustained silent reading was practised with the teacher modeling good reading behaviour by silently reading during this time. Learners had access to the library of graded readers which had been catalogued into bands of difficulty. Learners were encouraged to choose the books from this library and read for pleasure alone. No post reading tasks were introduced. It was found that many students enjoyed this activity though some were of the opinion that they would not spend more time on reading. At the end of the course, many students reported that they found significant development in their vocabulary levels. It is concluded "that incidental learning from context during free reading is the major mode of vocabulary acquisition…and the volume of experience with written language, interacting with reading comprehension ability, is the major determinant of vocabulary growth". (Nagy, Herman & Anderson, 1985, p. 234)

2.7 Wash back of Assessment Procedures on Vocabulary Development

Learners in India, generally, judge the importance of learning material by carefully analyzing the test paper. While doing so, they consider three criteria – 1)
whether a particular aspect appears in the test paper, 2) whether the aspect yields good scoring, 3) whether it is easily learnt. That is why, in most tests, learners do not skip answering the grammar and vocabulary sections of the test paper. If vocabulary is tested in the exam, learners give importance to learning vocabulary. On the other hand, if vocabulary is not addressed during assessment, students may conclude that vocabulary does not matter (Schmitt, 2000) even though vocabulary is stressed in the class work. In a formal teaching-learning situation, students encounter two types of tests – Progress tests and Achievement tests. If vocabulary is assessed in both the tests, students are less likely to ignore it. If vocabulary is not a component in the continuous assessment programme, and is tested only in the end-examinations, students still pay attention to learning it. If vocabulary is not tested in the achievement test, but assessed in the progress tests only, there are not many chances for it to be given importance.

2.8 Testing

“Testing and teaching are so closely interrelated that it is virtually impossible to work in either field without being constantly concerned with the other” (Heaton, 1975, p. 1). There are two main facets of testing. The first one is used to reinforce learning, to make the teacher aware of individual students’ performance and to help the teacher evaluate his/her teaching process. In this case, tests are used as teaching devices. The second is used to assess an individual student’s performance and to make the students aware of their performance in relation to others' performance. In this case, the whole teaching process is determined by what is tested and how it is tested.
Any language test should indicate the learners' language ability, which consists of two components. One is language knowledge and the other one is strategic competence (Bachman & Palmer, 1996). Language knowledge is what learners know about vocabulary, grammar, spelling, sound system etc. of the target language. Strategic competence is how well a student uses his / her language knowledge for effective communication under normal time constraints (Read, 2000).

2.8.1 Purposes of Testing

Language tests are used for different purposes in an educational setting. They are:

• To determine readiness for instructional programmes
• To classify or place individuals in appropriate language classes
• To diagnose the individual's specific strengths and weaknesses
• To measure aptitude for learning
• To measure the extent of student achievement of the instructional goals
• To evaluate the effectiveness of instruction

2.8.2 Types of Tests

Based on the purpose of test, tests are divided into different categories. Heaton (1975) gives a clear picture of the nature of these different kinds of tests. They are:
**Progress tests**

Most classroom tests take the form of progress tests as they assess the progress of individual students. They are often used to motivate students. They also enable the teacher to assess his / her teaching methodology, whether the latter is successfully meeting the requirements of individual learners or not.

**Achievement tests**

Achievement tests or Attainment tests are generally conducted at the end of a teaching programme. They are generally based on a syllabus and assess whether the teaching-learning process has met the course requirements.

**Proficiency tests**

Proficiency tests are more related to assess a student's future performance in a specific task rather than his / her past achievement. Generally, they are not based on any syllabus. Students from various language backgrounds take these tests.

**Diagnostic tests**

A diagnostic test is primarily designed to measure a student's knowledge and skill before a course of study is begun and enables grouping of students. These are also called placement tests.
2.8.3 Characteristics of a Good Test

Educational programmes consist of many components - teaching materials, learning activities and tests. While the primary purpose of other components is to promote learning, the primary purpose of tests is to measure (Bachman & Palmer, 1996). The most important characteristics of any good test are Reliability and Validity.

Reliability of a test indicates how consistent the test is. “If a student takes a test at the beginning of a course and again at the end, any improvement in his score should be the result of differences in his skills and not due to inaccuracies in the test” (Harrison, 1980, p. 10).

Validity of a test is determined by taking into account whether the test has measured what it intended to measure. There are two important ways to measure validity. One is construct validity and the other is face validity. Construct validity determines whether the test assessed all the areas to be assessed in suitable proportions. Face validity is concerned with what the students and teachers think of the test. Face validity can be found out formally by means of a questionnaire or informally by discussion (Harris, 1962).

Discrimination, wash back, practicality, authenticity and interactiveness are the other characteristics of any good test.

If a test shows the differences in performance of the individual testees, then the test is said to have shown discrimination among testees as widely as possible. Progress tests and classroom tests are not generally designed to show discrimination among the learners.
They are geared towards assessing the extent to which the class has mastered the subject taught. But, achievements tests and proficiency tests are designed to show discrimination among testees.

The term backwash/washback refers to the effects of a test on teaching. If a test has good backwash effects, it will exert a good influence on the learning and teaching that takes place before the test (Harrison, 1980).

Another characteristic of a good test is its practicality or usability. If a test is economical both in terms of cost and time, if it is of sufficient length to yield dependable and meaningful results, if it is administered easily and scored comfortably and above all, if the instructions are clear so that the test taker understands what he/she is expected to do, one can say that the test is practical or useful (Harris, 1962).

Authenticity denotes the extent of relation between a test or test task and the real life language use or Target Language Use (TLU). Interactiveness is defined as the extent of the involvement that a test taker needs to complete the task. “...authenticity...pertainst to the correspondence between test tasks and the TLU tasks,...interactiveness resides in the interaction between the individual (test taker or language user) and task (test or TLU) (Bachman & Palmer, 1996, p. 41).

2.9 Testing Vocabulary

Testing vocabulary is similar to testing in other areas of language knowledge and use (Nation, 2001). What is special about vocabulary measurement is how it is tested.
Vocabulary knowledge is generally tested from two stand points. One is measuring the number of words an individual knows. This is called breadth of knowledge. The second one is measuring the extent to which an individual knows a particular word; for e.g., the word's meaning, synonyms, collocations, registral variations and so on. This is called measuring the depth of knowledge. Most vocabulary tests are designed to measure the breadth or size aspect; because they are easy to evaluate, though difficult to construct.

The next aspect in vocabulary measurement is assessing receptive knowledge or productive knowledge of words. Word recognition, match the following, multiple-choice, collocations, etc. measure a learner's receptive knowledge. Word formation, writing definitions and synonyms, cloze tests, writing sentences using the target words etc. come under measuring productive knowledge.

Another criterion in vocabulary measurement is assessing one's knowledge about a word with and without the help of a context. These are called context-dependent and context independent assessment respectively.
Read proposes three dimensions of vocabulary measurement.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Discrete</th>
<th>Embedded</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>A measure of vocabulary</td>
<td>A measure of vocabulary</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>knowledge or use an</td>
<td>which forms part of the</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>independent construct</td>
<td>assessment of some other</td>
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<td></td>
<td>large construct</td>
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<thead>
<tr>
<th>Selective</th>
<th>Comprehensive</th>
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</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>A measure in which specific</td>
<td>A measure which takes account</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>vocabulary items are the</td>
<td>of the whole vocabulary content</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>focus of the assessment</td>
<td>of the input material or the</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>test-taker’s response</td>
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</table>

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<tr>
<th>Context-independent</th>
<th>Context-dependent</th>
</tr>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>A vocabulary measure in</td>
<td>A vocabulary measure which</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>which the test-taker can</td>
<td>assesses the test-taker’s</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>produce the expected</td>
<td>ability to take account of</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>response without</td>
<td>contextual information in order to</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>referring to any context</td>
<td>produce the expected response</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

(Read, 2000, p. 9)

**Discrete – Embedded**

The first dimension focuses on construct which refers to the ability that a test intends to measure. In a vocabulary test, the construct is usually thought of as vocabulary knowledge of some kind. Construct gives meaning to the test results. Thus a discrete test is one which measures vocabulary knowledge as a distinct construct, “separated from other components of language competence” (Read, 2000, p. 8). On the contrary, an embedded vocabulary measure is one which forms part of another larger construct.

If a reading passage is given to the students for comprehension and vocabulary knowledge is also measured in addition to assessing the students’ reading comprehension
ability, then, it is an embedded vocabulary measure. Because the students' language ability is not measured solely through measuring vocabulary knowledge.

If, from the same reading passage, some content words are selected and test items are written for each of these words to assess whether the learners can comprehend the meanings of the target words with the help of the contextual clues and all the test items are designed to measure vocabulary knowledge alone, then it is a discrete vocabulary measure. In this case, a student's performance is seen from the standpoint of his/her vocabulary knowledge.

Selective – Comprehensive

This dimension indicates the range of vocabulary to be included in the measurement. If the target words are selected by the test writer from a word-list or from a passage, then it is selective vocabulary measurement. This can be done in two ways. One way is to select the target words first and then incorporate them into separate test items. The second way is to choose a text or passage and then select some target words to be assessed.

In contrast, a comprehensive measure considers all the vocabulary used in a spoken or a written test. Here, particular words or expressions are not given importance. The learners are assessed on various criteria including their range of expressions to judge the quality of the test–taker’s overall vocabulary use etc.
If the test taker can take help from the context to answer a vocabulary item, then the measure is context-dependent. Traditional view on context-dependent measure is to present a word in a sentence rather than in isolation. But, of late, the notion of concept has become broad to include whole texts. In fact, context-dependent measures should assess the test-taker's ability to make use of the context. In other words, if the students have to understand the context in which the target word is presented to answer the item, then it is context-dependent. Read gives an example:

Humans have an innate ability to recognize the taste of salt because it provides us with sodium, an element which is essential to life. Although too much salt in our diet may be unhealthy, we must consume a certain amount of it to maintain our wellbeing.

What is the meaning of consume in this text?
- use up completely
- eat or drink
- spend wastefully
- destroy

The point about this test item is that all four options are possible meanings of the word consume. Thus, the test-takers need some understanding of the context in order to be confident that they have chosen the correct option rather than simply relying on the fact that they have learned 'eat and drink' as the meaning of consume.
Read (2000, p.12)

On the other hand, if the target word is presented in isolation, or if the context does not help the learner in any way about the meaning sense in which the target word is used, then, the vocabulary measure is context-independent in nature.
The committee endorsed the proposal
a. discussed
b. supported
c. knew about
d. prepared

Another example is taken from Harris (1969).

nap
a. a brief sleep
b. a happy song
c. a sharp rock
d. a short meeting

Now, we look at four standard vocabulary tests.

2.9.1 The Eurocentres Vocabulary Size Test

The Eurocentres Vocabulary Size Test (EVST) is developed by Paul Meara. The EVST estimates the vocabulary size of a learner by using a sample of words from different frequency levels. The EVST is primarily a check-list test. It presents a list of words to the learners and asks the latter to indicate the target words they know. The list also contains non-words to adjust the score. Here is an example from Meara (1989, cited in Nation, 2001).

Tick the words you know
adviser
ghastly
contord
implore
morlorn
moisten
pitiful
profess
stourge
discard
Another important feature of this test is that it is administered by a computer even though a paper-and-pen format is not unavailable. A series of words is presented on the screen, each appearing one by one. The word and the question, “Do you know the meaning of this word?” appear on the screen. If the test-taker knows the meaning, he/she presses Yes and, No, if the meaning is not known. The test-taker is warned in advance that all the words are not real English words.

This test samples words from every 1000-word band up to 10,000 word level. From each 1000-band, the computer presents twenty words at random to the test-taker. If the test-taker's responses meet certain levels, the programme proceeds to the next 1000-word band. If the test-taker's performance is not up to the mark, then the computer programme understands that the test taker has come to the maximum limit of his/her vocabulary knowledge. Then, the programme presents another fifty words from the same level to estimate the person's vocabulary level more closely and effectively.

The EVST is a good placement test. It does not take much time, gives instant results and it is easy to interpret. One drawback with this test is that it does not measure whether the test-taker really knows the meaning of the word.

2.9.2 Vocabulary Levels Test

The Vocabulary Levels Test (VLT) was developed by Paul Nation in the early 1980s. It was developed for classroom use which helps the teachers to prepare a suitable vocabulary teaching programme. Meara calls this test “the nearest thing we have to a
standard test in vocabulary” (1996, cited in Read, 2000). The test is divided into five parts, representing five levels of word frequency in English: the first 2000 words, 3000, 5000, University word level i.e. beyond 5000 words and 10,000 words. Like EVST, VLT is also based on frequency counts. According to Nation (1990), the 2000-and 3000- word levels contain the high frequency words which are expected to be known by all second language learners for smooth and effective functioning in English. The 5000 – word represents the upper limit of the high frequency words. Words from the university word level are those that form part of academic reading material. Finally, the 10,000 word level covers the common low-frequency words in English.

The test is a matching item type. Six words and their meanings are given. As the test takers match the words to the definitions, Read argues that “the definitions are the test items rather than the words” (Read, 2000, p.119). An example from the 5000 word level is taken from Nation (2001).

1. analysis
2. curb ______eagerness
3. gravel ______loan to buy a house
4. mortgage ______small stones mixed with sand
5. scar
6. zeal

(Nation, 2001, p. 419)

The test is designed to require little reading, and can be quickly completed. “The option words all have different meaning senses, so learners who have even a vague knowledge of a target word's meaning sense should be able to make the correct match” (Schmitt, 2000, p. 174).
**Productive Levels Test**

Laufer & Nation (1999) have developed a productive version of the vocabulary levels test. Here, the learners are presented with sets of sentences including a blank. A variable number of initial letters is given for each blank, so that only the target word fits in the blank. An example from 5000 word level is given (Nation, 2001).

Do not pay attention to this rude remark. Just ign________ it.
The management held a secret meeting. The issues discussed were not disc________ to the workers.
We do not have adeq________ information to make a decision.  
(Nation, 2001, p. 427)

**2.9.3 Vocabulary Knowledge Scale**

The Vocabulary Knowledge Scale (VKS) was developed by Paribhakt and Wesche (1997). Unlike the other two tests discussed, VKS measures the depth of vocabulary knowledge. It uses a five point scale to elicit knowledge of specific words in written form. The scale ratings range from total unfamiliarity of the target word to the ability to use the word accurately in a meaningful sentence. An example is taken from Paribhakt and Wesche (1997).

Retaliation

<p>| | |</p>
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th></th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>I</td>
<td>I don't remember having seen this word before.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>II</td>
<td>I have seen this word before, but I don't know what it means</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>III</td>
<td>I have seen this word before, and I think it means __________. (synonym or translation)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>IV</td>
<td>I know this word. It means __________ (synonym or translation)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>V</td>
<td>I can use this word in a sentence: __________. (Write a sentence.)</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

(If you do this section, please also do Section IV.)

(Paribhakt & Wesche, 1997, p. 180)
2.9.4 Word Associates Test

The Word Associates Test was developed by Read (2000). It uses collocations to measure associative and collocational word knowledge. In the test, the target word is followed by eight options. Of these eight, only four options have some relationship with the target word. The options are related paradigmatically and syntagmatically to the target word. An example is taken from Read.

*sudden*

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>beautiful quick surprising thirsty</th>
<th>change doctor noise school</th>
</tr>
</thead>
</table>

(Read, 2000, p. 184)

Another format for word associations was developed by Vives Boix (1995, cited in Schmitt, 2000). In her format, sets of three words are given. Of these three, two words are associated and one is not. The learners have to choose the unrelated word.

2.10 Vocabulary Learning and Acquisition

As Meara noted way back in 1987, the field of vocabulary studies is now anything but a neglected area. So, only a sample selected from different aspects is presented here
The effect of post-reading tasks on incidental word learning and retention

The work was done by Ahmadi (2005). The objective of the study was to investigate the effect of three different post-reading tasks – paraphrasing a text, answering reading comprehension, making questions from a text, on incidental word learning and retention. The study was conducted in Iran. One hundred and twenty eight pre-university students were selected based on their performance on the Oxford placement test. Five (5) target words were selected from a passage of approximately 250 words. A definition task was used to gain insight into the participants' word knowledge. Students were supposed to write a definition of each of the target words or to give a synonym for it; and if they could not do so they were asked to use it in a sentence. A vocabulary pre-test was conducted. Two weeks after the pre-test, students were given the passage to read. They were randomly assigned to one of the conditions; that is, reading the text and paraphrasing it, reading the text and making as many questions as they could within the time limit, reading the text and answering the comprehension questions, and just reading the text (control group). The definition task was again given to the students. It was found that paraphrasing a text was a more effective way of incidental vocabulary learning and retention followed by making questions and answering the reading comprehension.

Vocabulary notebooks: implementation and outcomes

This study was done by Fowle (2002). The objective of the study was to introduce vocabulary notebooks to the students to increase their lexical competence and to assist them in developing autonomous modes of learning. In the context of the study,
'vocabulary notebook' refers to a notebook kept by each learner solely for the purpose of recording new and useful lexical items.

At first, discussions were held and a workshop conducted among the teachers to discuss how best the concept of vocabulary notebooks could be presented to the students. It was decided to choose an A-Z format to organize the notebook. It was also decided to expose learners to different aspects of vocabulary like definitions, explanations, L1 translations, pronunciation information, collocations, synonyms and antonyms, and example sentences.

The concept was presented to the students as maintaining a ‘personal dictionary’. The teacher used a model vocabulary notebook to introduce the concept assisting the learners in organizing the notebook. Published materials were also used to help learners deal with a new word. Learners were asked to be responsible for deciding which words to include based on whether the word was new, useful or interesting to them to ensure that the acquisition of meaning is a process of discovery that enhances learner independence. After the vocabulary notebooks had become a key part of the programme, it was decided to include them in the continuous assessment of the students.

Though the outcomes in terms of vocabulary acquisition were not measured rigorously, it was observed that the students became more actively involved in the learning of vocabulary as a result of the notebooks. A questionnaire survey concluded that all the students liked the concepts of vocabulary notebooks. The teachers also responded positively and agreed on the effectiveness of the project.
**L2 Vocabulary learning from context; strategies, knowledge sources, and their relationship with success in L2 lexical inferencing**

The study was conducted by Nassaji (2003). The objective of the study was to examine the use of strategies and knowledge sources in L2 lexical inferencing and their relationship with inferential success. 21 intermediate ESL learners who represented five different language backgrounds participated in the study. Data consisted of introspective and retrospective think-aloud protocols. A panel of three ESL teachers helped the researcher in selecting a suitable reading passage. Data was collected in individual sessions in which the researcher met each learner in a quiet room for about 45-60 minutes. Initially, the learners were given some practice in the think-aloud procedure and were given training in verbalizing their thoughts. Then, the reading passage was presented and the learners were asked to read it aloud. As they encountered each italicized word, they were asked to try to infer its meaning from the context, all the while verbalizing their thoughts. They were also told that they could come back to the target word at any time they wished to infer its meaning again or to modify what they have already inferred. After they finished reading, they were asked to review the passage to make any additional comments about the new words or their thinking processes. Results indicated that intermediate-level ESL learners were not very good at inferring word meanings from context in a reading text. Coming to the strategies and knowledge sources, it was found that the learners used grammatical knowledge, morphological knowledge, knowledge of L1, discourse knowledge and world knowledge, the latter
being used most frequently. Strategy types included repeating, verifying, analyzing, monitoring, self-inquiry, and analogy. Repeating was the most used strategy type.

Coming to the relationship between successful inferencing and the strategies and knowledge sources used, it was found that morphological knowledge and verifying and self-inquiry led to successful inferencing.

**The effect of type of written exercise on L2 vocabulary retention**

The study was conducted by Folse (2006). 154 ESL students representing 14 different native languages took part in this study. Students' proficiency levels ranged from lower intermediate to upper intermediate to advanced level. The objective of the present study was to examine the effect of the type of written exercise on L2 vocabulary retention. Three types of written exercises were tested: one fill-in-the-blank sheet, three fill-in-the-blank sheets, and writing original sentences. All 154 participants practised the same 15 target words. The words were divided into three groups of five words each. Participants practised each group of words under one of the three exercise conditions. In condition 1, students were given six words and five unrelated sentences with blanks. Students had to fill in the blanks with the words given. One word was given as a distractor. In condition 2, target words were practised in three different exercises which were similar to the one used in condition 1. In condition 3, students had to write an original sentence with the given word. Input for the target words was provided by a mini-dictionary which was created especially for this study. A modified version of the vocabulary knowledge scale was used for both the pre-test and post-test. It was found
that multiple sentence-completion exercises could produce better vocabulary retention than single sentence-completion exercise or writing original sentences.

**Derivative word forms: what do learners know?**

The study was conducted by Schmitt and Zimmerman (2002). This study examined the ability of 106 graduate and under graduate non-native speakers of English to produce appropriate derivatives in the four major word classes i.e. noun, verb, adjective and adverb. 20 target words were selected from the Academic Word List. The students were first asked to rate their knowledge using a slightly revised version of the Test of Academic lexicon. Next, the participants were presented a series of four similar contextualized sentences with blanks and they were asked to fill in the blank using the appropriate derivative form of the target word. This was done to elicit a demonstration of the participants' productive knowledge of the derivative forms of a word family. The number of students who showed total unfamiliarity of the derivatives of the target words or full mastery of the word family was less. It was found that students knew some word classes better than the others. They were verbs, nouns, adjectives and adverbs in the same order. At the end teachers were asked to present derivative forms also while presenting a new word, to instruct learners in English affixes, to emphasize adjectives and adverbs as needed and to suggest academic reading when appropriate.

**Receptive and productive vocabulary sizes of L2 learners**

The study was conducted by Webb (2008) to investigate the relationship between receptive and productive vocabulary size of the learners. The experimental design used
equivalent receptive and productive test formats with different receptive and productive target words to provide accurate results. The participants in this study were 83 native speakers of Japanese whose proficiency levels varied from beginner to intermediate to advanced. One hundred and eighty target words were selected from the COBUILD dictionary for the study. Two instruments – receptive and productive translation tests – were used to measure the participants’ vocabulary size at three word frequency levels. In the receptive test students were asked to produce the L1 translation of the target word. In the productive test the target word was to be written beside its L1 translation. Two versions of the test were prepared to ensure that there would not be any learning effect from seeing the same words in both the receptive and productive tests. The results indicated that a learner's receptive vocabulary is larger than his or her productive vocabulary. It was also found that both receptive and productive scores decreased as word frequency decreased. It was also found that one's receptive vocabulary size might give some indication of productive vocabulary size. Learners who have a larger receptive vocabulary are likely to know more of those words productively than learners who have a smaller receptive vocabulary.

*Deriving unknown word meaning from context: is it reliable?*

The study was conducted by Kaivanpanah and Alavi (2008) to investigate how accurately EFL learners assess their understanding of unknown words. 110 undergraduate university students took part in the study. Three short passages containing frequent words were given to a group of 25 EFL learners who were not part of the main study. They were asked to underline the unfamiliar words in the texts. On the basis of their responses, a
total of 40 vocabulary items was selected as items that would be unfamiliar to university students of a similar proficiency level.

Three short texts in which 40 items were highlighted were distributed among the participants. They also received a self-assessment sheet and were asked to read the texts and assess their understanding of the meaning of the highlighted words on a scale ranging from 0 to 3. Then, a vocabulary test was administered to the participants. They were asked to provide a translation, synonym, antonym, or explanation of the highlighted words to demonstrate their understanding. The self assessment sheets were again given to the participants to examine whether learners' initial assertions concerning the meaning of words were influenced by the presence of a vocabulary test. It was found that learners could not accurately identify words they did not understand. Furthermore, their assessments did not change considerably even after they had been tested on the items which would mean that participants significantly over-estimated their understanding of vocabulary items.

**Vocabulary growth in a second language – Instruction versus facilitation of acquisition**

This study was done by Abhra Jana (2001). The purpose of the study was to test the hypothesis that incidental learning from context during free reading is the major mode of vocabulary acquisition during school years. The study aimed at finding whether students acquire measurable knowledge about unfamiliar words while reading authentic texts. The study also looked at whether a certain level of proficiency in the language is a pre-requisite in order to guess meaning of new words successfully from context and whether vocabulary acquisition from context proceeds in terms of small increments.
First, a checklist vocabulary test was administered to students for finding their prior knowledge of the target words. Students then were asked to read a newspaper extract. They were then asked to answer a multiple-choice test where test items were constructed for the target words at each of three levels of difficulty. The research found that learning from context did take place for all the students irrespective of their prior knowledge of vocabulary and also of their general academic performance. The research also shows that word knowledge is incremental in nature.

2.11 Conclusion

Having seen the relation between receptive and productive vocabulary knowledge (Webb, 2008), factors that affect incidental learning and retention of word knowledge (Ahmadi, 2005; Folse, 2006), strategies used for effective inferencing (Nassaji, 2003), effect of vocabulary notebooks, (Fowle, 2002), learners’ knowledge of the derivative forms of a word family (Schmitt & Zimmerman, 2002) and reliability of inferencing (Kaivanpanah & Alavi, 2008), we will move on to the next chapter which discusses the methodology for the current study.