



Rousing Vocabulary: A Pioneering Approach to Stimulate Learners to Acquire EFL

Dr. Mamoon Muhsin Alaraj 

Language Support Unit, Faculty of Engineering, King Abdul-Aziz University, Jeddah 21577,
Kingdom of Saudi Arabia

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Abstract:

For English as a Foreign Language students, it might be challenging to acquire vocabulary in particular. To give students a hand overcoming possible vocabulary acquisition difficulties, this study aimed at addressing the term *Rousing Vocabulary*, identifying its features and specifying its types as well. To quickly and deeply get the essential information to answer the two research questions, a questionnaire was used as a data collection tool. To design the questionnaire, the researcher held two 5-member focus groups of Saudi university students and one 4-member focus group of

specialists. The three groups were asked to specify the main potential features and types of *Rousing Vocabulary*. The items invented were assembled, constructed, and used for the required questionnaire. The survey's validity and reliability were taken into account while evaluating the questionnaire's accuracy and consistency. One main result revealed that all participants agreed with the impression of having such features of *Rousing Vocabulary*. Among 5 potential features reached, the participants have a stronger experience with "Words that learners enjoy hearing and saying" and "Words that arouse strong feelings and are highly expressive". Another main result showed that the vast majority agreed with the impression of having potential types of *Rousing Vocabulary*. Among 5 potential types of *Rousing Vocabulary* reached, the participants thought that "Words that belong to an area of interest" and "Frequently used words" had a higher potential ability to help students acquire new words easily. Some interpretations were discussed, and based on the study's findings, several recommendations were made.

Keywords: *Acquisition, EFL, Features, Methodology, Vocabulary.*

Introduction

In this chapter, a procedural definition of Rousing Vocabulary (RV) is clearly stated, a review of literature for English as a Foreign Language (EFL) vocabulary acquisition is condensed, the problem, objective, and importance of the study are obviously specified, and two research questions (RQs) are definitely expressed.

Procedural Definition of RV

For the purpose of this research, RV is defined as the types of words that have specific features and are particularly effective in inspiring or stimulating learners to easily acquire and grasp EFL vocabulary.

EFL Vocabulary Acquisition Review of Literature

Reviewing the literature of EFL vocabulary acquisition is a very extensive, intensive, and



huge topic. To go deeply and narrow this broad topic down, the subject matter of this investigation (RV) should be taken into account. Knowing that RV are words that are easier to learn for some reason and trying to discover the features and types of RV, what matters and needs to be reviewed here is to highlight the importance of vocabulary acquisition in EFL learning and to emphasize that this process is not an easy one, but continuous and difficult. Accentuating these two issues, essentiality and difficulty of vocabulary acquisition, gives this research article a strong rationale to delve deeply into such a topic. The big question this research paper struggles to answer is why it is more difficult or easier for EFL learners to learn some new words than others, and what can help learners not forget the words they learn. Understanding the significance of vocabulary in language learning and the difficulties learners face can guide effective instructional approaches. Recognizing the challenges and employing effective strategies can enhance learners' vocabulary acquisition experiences and promoting better communication and language proficiency.

The term "vocabulary" refers to a person's whole knowledge of terms in their language, as well as a group of frequently used words (Cambridge Dictionary, 2022; Vedantu, 2022; Wikipedia, 2022). Vocabulary retention and acquisition is considered one of the most powerful components of foreign language acquisition. Lexical ability is deemed as a central element of forming excellent fluency, and it plays an influential role in language acquisition (Azimova & Surmanov, 2020). That is why the National Institute of Child Health and Human Development (2000) emphasizes vocabulary instruction as an essential element of the literacy program. Vocabulary understanding is considered a necessary component of language ability, as it enables learners to express their thoughts and ideas appropriately and accurately. EFL beginners should acquire a considerable number of words to achieve communicative competence in the target language. Studies have shown that there is an effective connection between language proficiency and lexicon

knowledge (Qian, 2002). However, acquiring massive vocabulary is one of the heaviest tasks in learning and teaching a foreign language (Afzal, 2019; AlQahtani, 2015). To deal with these problems, English teachers should provide their students with practical and self-independence techniques for learning vocabulary (Sanusi, 2009). To put it simply, vocabulary is crucial since it forms the foundation of all languages. It is the fundamental material from which humans construct thoughts and ideas, knowledge, and interpersonal interactions (Text Inspector, 2020). There are several factors that influence EFL vocabulary acquisition. These include learners' prior knowledge, their exposure to the language, the frequency and intensity of their vocabulary practice, and the instructional strategies used by teachers. Learners with prior knowledge of a language similar to English have been found to acquire vocabulary more quickly than those who do not (Schmitt & Schmitt, 2014). Additionally, exposure to the language through reading, listening, and speaking activities has been found to be a critical factor in vocabulary acquisition (Nation, 2013).

The frequency and intensity of vocabulary practice also play a crucial role in EFL vocabulary acquisition. Studies have shown that learners need to encounter new words multiple times to learn them (Coxhead, 2000). Repeated exposure to words in different contexts and activities can facilitate retention and retrieval of new words (Soleimani, Mohammaddokht & Fathi, 2022). Moreover, explicit vocabulary instruction and practice can also be effective in promoting vocabulary learning (Laufer & Nation, 1999). Finally, instructional strategies used by teachers can significantly impact EFL vocabulary acquisition. Research has shown that teaching vocabulary in context and using activities that promote active engagement, such as games and word puzzles, can enhance vocabulary learning (Ellis, 1997). Additionally, the use of multimedia resources, such as videos and images, can provide a rich and authentic context for vocabulary learning (Chen, 2014).

In conclusion, vocabulary acquisition is a critical aspect of EFL that affects learners'

communicative competence. The importance of vocabulary awareness in language proficiency has been well-established, and several factors, including learners' prior knowledge, exposure to the language, frequency and intensity of vocabulary practice, and instructional strategies, influence its acquisition. Teachers and learners should, therefore, focus on developing effective strategies that facilitate vocabulary learning and practice to enhance their communicative competence.

Problem of the Study

Acquiring a new language generally and its vocabulary specifically can be quite difficult. Therefore, students always try to look for ways to make it easier. Vocabulary retention and acquisition is deemed one of the most significant qualities of language acquisition. However, there are several features that prevent language beginners from better vocabulary retention and acquisition. Saudi university students find it difficult to acquire and grasp EFL vocabulary. Having such difficulties might slow students' progress or at least allow work to pile up. So, to give students a hand overcoming these difficulties, this research study aims at addressing the term RV, identifying its features and specifying its types as well. Highlighting the essentialness and complexity of vocabulary acquisition gives this investigation a solid justification to deeply explore RV. The big problem this report battles to solve is why it is easier to learn some new words than others and what can help students be able to remember the words they learn.

Objective of the Study

Facing this problem will be the objective of this study. This research aims at figuring out what RV really means, identifying its types and specifying its features. This can help curriculum designers better build EFL textbooks in a way that can enable students understand how to effectively acquire and grasp new vocabulary, and therefore make learning English for EFL students easier. One of the most important reasons why this study is carried out is EFL students really find adding new and advanced

vocabulary to their personal dictionaries quite difficult.

Importance of the Study

As a researcher who has been learning and teaching EFL for more than thirty years, I have noticed that some words are easier to grasp and memorize than others. Delving into this phenomenon requires investigating the features and types of what I call RV. Researching this topic could be considered as an attempt to seek answers that might help EFL learners easily memorize and grasp more new words and as a result take EFL learners' personal dictionaries to an advanced level. This could also make EFL learning much easier and help students practice a more interesting learning experience.

Questions of the Study

Proceeding from what has previously been said, the following research questions (RQs) could be stated:

- 1- What are the main features of "Rousing Vocabulary"?
- 2- What are the most rousing types of EFL vocabulary that stimulate Saudi university students to acquire new words?

Methodology

Data Collection Tool

To quickly and deeply get the essential information about what stimulates EFL learners to acquire vocabulary and to reach an appropriate sample size, a questionnaire survey was used as a data collection tool to answer the two RQs of this study.

Focus Groups

To design the questionnaire, the researcher held two 5-member focus groups of Saudi university students, who are interested in improving their EFL, and one 4-member focus group of EFL specialists. These three groups were given the two RQs and asked to invent related items to each RQ, namely, to specify the main features of RV and to identify the most rousing types of vocabulary. The items invented by these three

focus groups were assembled, constructed, and used as a first draft for the required questionnaire.

Survey

As with technical measurement tools, two significant values of surveys are consistency and accuracy. These are assessed by taking into consideration the survey’s reliability and validity.

Survey Validity

Validity is the level to which a tool, a survey, determines what it is assumed to determine: validity is an estimation of its precision. Questionnaire surveys regularly determine participants’ self-conveyed opinions, behaviors or views. They are applied repeatedly in community science. Sharp subject validity reveals that the experiment completely covers the subject for the target audience. Additionally, evaluating validity involves determining whether the instrument measures the correct characteristic. To establish a validity for the first draft of the questionnaire, the technique of content validity was used. That draft was pre-tested with experts in the respective field for the content validity. A panel of three experts was asked to comment on and provide suggestions about the usefulness of the questionnaire items, their likely influence on the students' vocabulary learning, and their possible capacity to respond

to the two RQs. After considering their comments and recommendations a new version of the survey was created.

Survey Reliability

The consistency of the measurement is referred to as reliability. With reliability, only consistency of the measurements throughout time, inside the instrument, and among observers is evaluated by the researcher. High reliability reveals that the measurement system gives comparable conclusions under the equivalent circumstances. A group of 20 college undergraduates were given the last version of the questionnaire. The unclear items were revised and changed to make them clearer and more useful after considering the college students replies (See Appendix A). In a pilot testing a sample size of 25 Saudi university students was given the survey to check the reliability of the scale. After 2 weeks they were given the same survey again. After comparing their responses, the survey reliability was established by finding its internal consistency using Kuder Richardson 20 formula. The test total consistency was (0.94)

Results

RQ1 Results

The first RQ was: **What are the main features of “Rousing Vocabulary”?**

1- Upon holding two focus groups of Saudi university students and one focus group of specialists to specify the main features of “rousing vocabulary”, the following aspect...1 is the least experiential & 5 is the most experiential.)

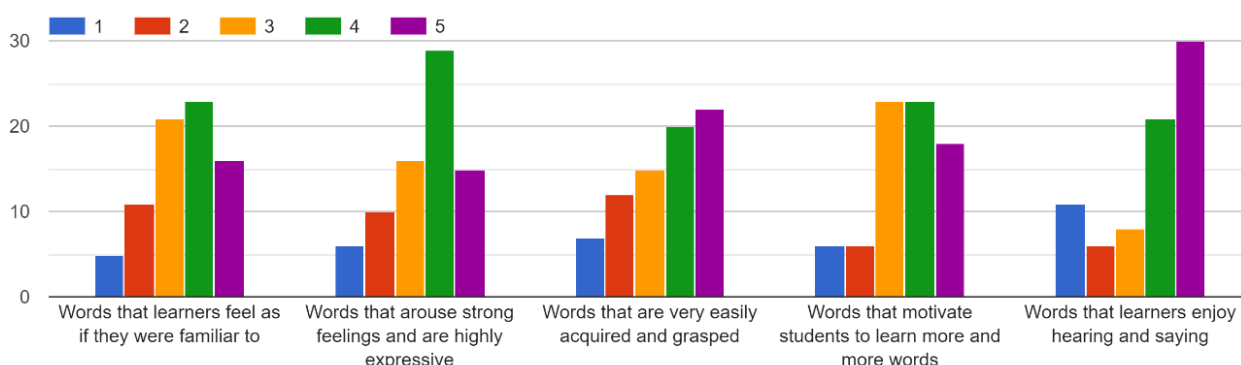


Figure 1. Rating Potential Features of “Rousing Vocabulary”

Upon holding two focus groups of Saudi university students and one focus group of specialists to specify *the main potential features of “rousing vocabulary”*, the aspects shown in figure 1. below were reached. The participants were asked to rate each feature according to their EFL learning experience from 1 to 5, where 1 is the least experiential and 5 is the most experiential.

The column chart in figure 1 shows the rating of the 5 potential features of RV according to the participants’ EFL learning experience. Starting from the lowest rates (1 and 2 out of 5) together, all features got very comparable rates, ranging between 16 and 19 out of a total of 72 voters, except for “Words that motivate students to learn more and more words” which got a little bit lower (12 out of 72) but inconsiderable difference. Considering rating a feature 5 and 4 out of 5, as it can be easily seen “Words that

learners enjoy hearing and saying” and “Words that arouse strong feelings and are highly expressive” outperformed the other features, respectively 30 and 28 students out of 72 gave these features the highest levels. However, collecting 3, 4 and 5 levels together revealed very comparable results, ranging between 57 and 62 out of a total of 72 respondents.

In conclusion, an average of 15 out of 72 participants (about 20%) considered the above potential features of RV ineffective. On the other hand, an average of 60 out of 72 participants (about 80%) considered these features effective. So, four-fifths away outperformed one fifth.

In figure 2 below, the respondents were required to give an overall impression about how strong they experienced all potential features rated in figure 1 above.

2- As an EFL learner I experience such features of “rousing vocabulary”. (Circle one answer.)
76 responses

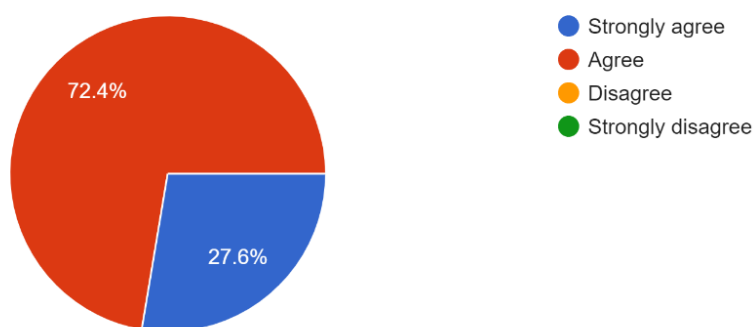


Figure 2. Overall Percentage of All Features of “Rousing Vocabulary”

The pie chart in figure 2 displays how strong the participants experienced all features of RV. Since this time the participants were asked to judge the idea of the features of RV in general, not judging each separate feature, the result was different, namely, the one-fifth who gave 1 or 2 rates to some features disappeared. All participants

agreed and strongly agreed with the idea of having such features of RV.

In conclusion, the idea of RV was a strong and real feeling according to the participants’ opinion.

RQ2 Results

The second RQ was: **What are the most rousing types of EFL vocabulary that stimulate Saudi university students to acquire new words?**

Upon holding two focus groups of Saudi university students and one focus group of

specialists to specify *the most potential rousing types of vocabulary* that stimulate Saudi university students to acquire new words, the types shown in figure 3 below were reached. The participants were asked to rate each type according to their EFL learning experience from 1 to 5, where 1 is the least rousing and 5 is the most rousing.

3- Upon holding two focus groups of Saudi university students and one focus group of specialists to specify the most rousing types of vocabulary that stimulate Saudi unive... 1 to 5, 1 is the least rousing & 5 is the most rousing.)

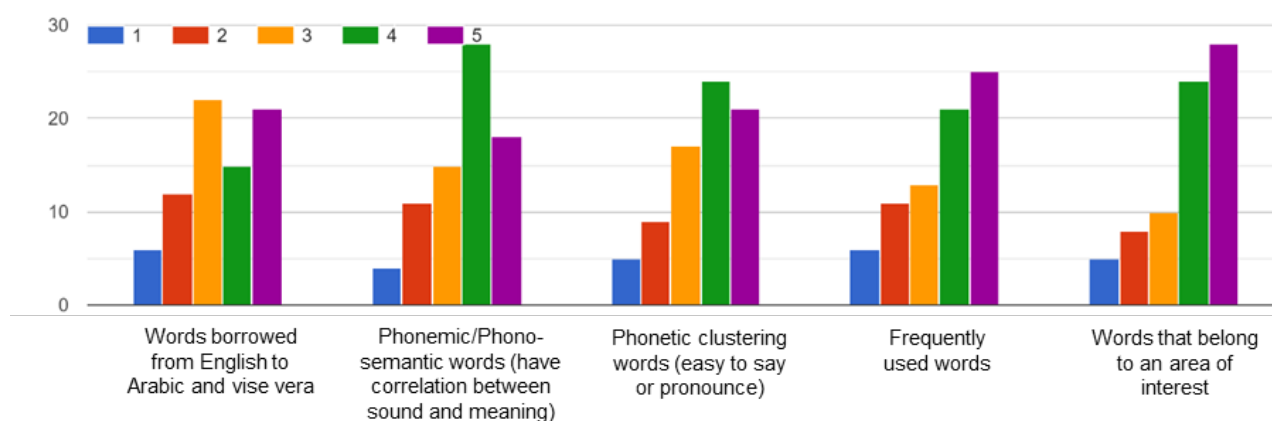


Figure 3. Rating Potential Types of “Rousing Vocabulary”

The column chart in figure 3 illustrates the rating of the 5 potential types of RV according to the participants’ EFL learning experience. Starting from the lowest rates (1 and 2 out of 5) together, all types got very comparable rates, ranging between 14 and 18 out of a total of 72 voters, except for “Words that belong to an area of interest” which got a little bit lower (12 out of 72) but inconsiderable difference. Considering rating a type 5 out of 5, as it can be easily seen again that “Words that belong to an area of interest” got the highest level, 28 students out of 72, followed by “frequently used words” with 25 out of 72. However, collecting 3, 4 and 5 levels together revealed very comparable results, ranging between 58 and 62 out of a total of 72 respondents.

In conclusion, an average of 15.2 out of 72 participants (about 20%) considered the above

potential types of RV ineffective. On the other hand, an average of 60.4 out of 72 participants (about 80%) considered these types effective. So, four-fifths away outperformed one fifth.

In figure 4 below, the respondents were required to give an overall opinion about how strong they feel the potential types rated in figure 3 can help EFL learners acquire new words easily.

The pie chart in figure 4 displays how strong the participants feel all types of RV can help students acquire new words easily. Since this time the participants were asked to judge the idea of the types of RV in general, not judging each separate type, the result was different, namely, the one-fifth who gave 1 or 2 rates to some types almost disappeared. The vast majority agreed and strongly agreed with the idea of having such

types of RV and their potential ability to help learners acquire new words easily.

In conclusion, the idea of having potential types of RV that can affect acquiring new words easily was a strong and real emotion according to the participants' opinion.

4- I think that such types of vocabulary can help EFL learners acquire new words easily. (Circle one answer.)

76 responses

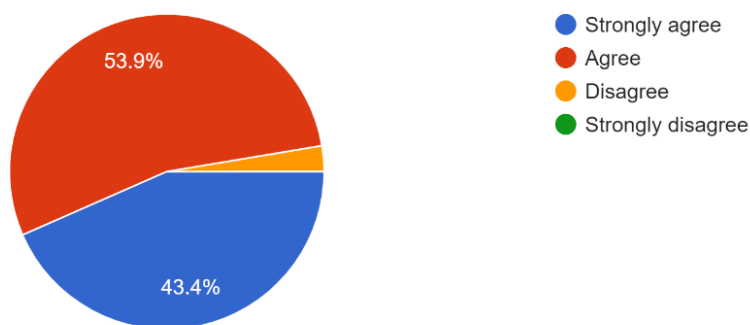


Figure 4. Overall Percentage of All Types of “Rousing Vocabulary”

Summary of the results

The following are the potential **features of RV**: 1- words that learners feel as if they were familiar to, 2- words that arouse strong feelings and are highly expressive, 3- words that are very easily acquired and grasped, 4- words that motivate students to learn more and more words and 5- words that learners enjoy hearing and saying.

Judging the whole idea of the features of RV in general, not judging each separate feature, all participants agreed and strongly agreed with the impression of having such features of RV. It was a real and strong feeling according to the participants' opinion.

Separately comparing these five features, an average of about 80% considered the above potential features of RV effective. On the other hand, an average of about 20% considered these features ineffective. The participants had a stronger experience with “Words that learners enjoy hearing and saying” and “Words that arouse strong feelings and are highly expressive” than the other three features.

The following are the potential **types of RV**: 1- Words borrowed from English to Arabic and vice versa, 2- Phonemic/Phono-semantic words (have correlation between sound and meaning), 3- Phonetic clustering words (easy to say or pronounce), 4- Frequently used words and 5- Words that belong to an area of interest.

Judging the whole idea of the types of RV in general, not judging each separate type, the vast majority agreed and strongly agreed with the impression of having such types of RV and their potential ability to help learners acquire new words easily.

Separately comparing these five types, an average of about 80% considered the above potential types of RV effective. On the other hand, an average of about 20% considered these types ineffective. The participants thought that “Words that belong to an area of interest” and “frequently used words” had a higher potential ability to help students acquire new words easily.

Discussion

The results of this study provide valuable insights into the main features and types of RV that can stimulate Saudi university students to acquire new words in EFL. The focus groups held come up with 5 potential features and 5 probable types of RV, some of which are suggested by EFL students and the others by EFL experts. The study participants are greatly affected by this idea and that is why they all strongly agree and agree with the features (See figure 1) and very few participants disagree with the types (See figure 4).

The ratings and opinions of the participants in this study provide evidence for the effectiveness of RV in EFL learning. The vast majority of the participants (about 80%) agree that the potential features and types of RV are effective in helping learners acquire new words. Furthermore, participants who have a stronger experience of features and types of RV believe that “Words that arouse strong feelings and are highly expressive” and “Words that are enjoyable to hear and say” have higher potential to positively affect EFL learner’s vocabulary acquisition, while types of RV that “Belong to an area of interest” and “Frequently used words” have a higher potential to help learners acquire new words easily.

RV is a real and strong feeling according to the participants’ opinion. They agree that there are some features and types of RV that have the potential to help learners acquire new words easily. It could be noticed that there is some kind of interaction between language learners and language itself. Language is probably like a living thing which lives inside its learners. Its vocabulary has potential features and types that make one word different from other words. Maybe learners feel that these features and types give a stronger spirit to a word than to other words. Because of that, learners like or dislike or maybe even hate some words and behave and interact in a different way with some other words. To achieve better learning and teaching outcomes, it is recommended that language scholars, teachers, educators, specialists and curriculum designers must consider the learners’

sense of language and its nature, for example the potential features and types of vocabulary, when introducing a language to learners specially in the early beginning of learners’ journey of language acquisition.

The participants reveal a stronger experience to “Words that learners enjoy hearing and saying” and “Words that arouse strong feelings and are highly expressive” than the other three features. To benefit from such result, EFL researchers should intensively and extensively conduct a series of studies to specify what makes words arouse students’ feelings and why some words are more communicative and expressive than others. Reaching lists of words with such potential features could be considered the ultimate goal of such studies. Introducing such words in EFL curriculum especially for beginners can help learners like language, feel motivated and acquire new words easily. When EFL learners are motivated and have a passion to learn, they naturally have a greater ability to acquire and absorb information and have better concentration as well. Studies have shown that the more the love for learning the better the concentration and motivation will be, and therefore the better the learning outcome, which in this case learning more words easily, will be. The other three features of RV, which the participants believe they have less potential ability to help in acquiring new words compared to the above two, also seem they have special aspects of learning easiness.

The participants believe that “Words that belong to an area of interest” and “Frequently used words” have a higher potential ability to help students acquire new words easily. It is in our nature as human beings to explore and find answers to the unknown. Once learners have something they are interested in they tend to have better concentration and passion for it. As a result, they learn so much more compared to learning without an interest in the matter. Putting interest first when introducing new vocabulary to learners helps guarantee a better outcome eventually. “Words that learners use frequently” are also very easy to learn and memorize as repetition steadily helps store these words in learners’ memory. The other three

types of RV, which the participants believe they have less potential ability to help in acquiring new words compared to the above two, also seem they have special aspects of learning easiness. “Phonemic/Phono-semantic words” which have correlation between sound and meaning tend to be easier to comprehend and absorb. “Words borrowed from English to Arabic and vice versa” are easy to remember since the learner can memorize the same word but in a different form. “Phonetic clustering words” which are easy to say or pronounce need less effort from learners to deal with.

Conclusion

The results of this study have realistic suggestions for EFL curriculum designers and teachers as they can use these findings to develop strategies and resources that incorporate RV. The findings of this study can also inform future research in EFL vocabulary acquisition and contribute to the development of effective teaching methodologies that enhance vocabulary learning. In conclusion, this study sheds light on the main potential features and types of RV that can stimulate Saudi university students to acquire new words in EFL. The evidence suggests that RV is an effective strategy for enhancing EFL vocabulary acquisition, and this study provides valuable information for EFL teachers and curriculum designers who seek to implement effective vocabulary teaching methodologies.

To recommend, more intensive and extensive studies are needed to make sure of the reliability and validity of the results of this study, namely, the 5 types and 5 features of RV and to reach the right types and features that are easy enough to introduce to beginners so that we facilitate the process of EFL acquisition.

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Appendix A

Rousing Vocabulary: A Pioneering Approach to Stimulate Learners to Acquire EFL

Hello! I am Dr. Mamoon Alaraj, an associate professor at King Abdulaziz University. The objective of this research is to scrutinize the main features of “rousing vocabulary” and the most rousing types of vocabulary that can stimulate Saudi university students to acquire new English words. After specifying the main aspects of “rousing vocabulary” by holding guided focus groups, choosing the most rousing types of vocabulary was the subject of this survey. Please take a moment and answer the following questions.

1- Upon holding two focus groups of Saudi university students and one focus group of specialists to specify the main features of “rousing vocabulary”, the following aspects were reached. (Which feature do you experience the most? Rate each feature 1 to 5, 1 is the least experiential & 5 is the most experiential.)

Feature	Rate				
	1	2	3	4	5
Words that learners feel as if they were familiar to					
Words that arouse strong feelings and are highly expressive					
Words that are very easily acquired and grasped learners					
Words that motivate students to learn more and more words					
Words that learners enjoy hearing and saying					

2- As an English as a Foreign Language learner I experience such features of “rousing vocabulary”. (Circle one answer.)

- Strongly agree - Agree - Disagree - Strongly disagree

3- Upon holding two focus groups of Saudi university students and one focus group of specialists to specify the most rousing types of vocabulary that stimulate Saudi university students to acquire new words, the following types were reached. (Rate each type 1 to 5, 1 is the least rousing & 5 is the most rousing.)

Type	Rate				
	1	2	3	4	5
Words borrowed from English to Arabic and vice versa					
Phonemic/Phono-semantic words (have correlation between sound and meaning)					
Phonetic clustering words (easy to say or pronounce)					
Frequently used words					
Words that belong to an area of interest					

4- I think that such types of vocabulary can help in acquiring new words easily. (Circle one answer.)

- Strongly agree - Agree - Disagree - Strongly disagree

Thank you.