L2 Vocabulary Acquisition of Dutch Pupils in Group 8 (Grade 6): Differences Between Late and Early Starters

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Abstract

The study at hand presents the outcomes, as examined, of the L2 vocabulary knowledge of Dutch pupils in their last year of primary school. Special focus was granted to the difference in level between pupils attending an Eibo school (English in the last two years of primary school) and pupils attending an EarlyBird school (Early English language programme starting in the first year). This study also examines whether the vocabulary knowledge of future pupils at vmbo-level differs from that of pupils at havo-level and vwo-level. On average, pupils attending an EarlyBird school attained higher results for the vocabulary-related parts of the testing than did those attending Eibo schools. In addition, the results showed that future havo/vwo pupils had a higher score than future vmbo pupils. Future havo/vwo pupils possess a broader knowledge of vocabulary than future vmbo basis, vmbo kader and vmbo tl pupils.

Key words: Dutch primary education, vocabulary knowledge, Eibo, EarlyBird, pupils, vmbo, havo, vwo

Introduction

In the Netherlands, teaching English as a foreign language is compulsory in groups 7 and 8 (cf. grades 5 and 6) at primary schools. The teaching of English in these schools is referred to as Eibo (*Engels in het basisonderwijs* / English in primary education). However, there are also primary schools that start teaching their pupils English as early as group 1, when they are four years old. One of the teaching methods available to such primary schools is called EarlyBird, which is specifically aimed towards teaching English to young learners. The EarlyBird method has been used since 2003 and was developed by EarlyBird, a national centre of knowledge concerning early teaching of a foreign language (English) at primary schools (*vroeg vreemdetalenonderwijs Engels* / vvtoE). In 2013, there were more than 1000 vvtoE schools in the Netherlands. Over a quarter of these schools use the EarlyBird teaching approach. Nevertheless, actual research into the hypothesis that the English proficiency level of EarlyBird pupils is higher than that of pupils from EIBO schools had yet to be conducted. It was therefore decided to conduct a research investigation in order to estimate the level of proficiency in English of pupils at EarlyBird schools and that of pupils at Eibo schools. A total of 19 schools participated in the research. At ten EarlyBird schools, group 5 and group 8 pupils were tested; at nine EIBO schools, only group 8 pupils were tested. Four tests were offered to the group 8 pupils, namely: a listening test, a use of English test, a reading test and a spelling test (dictation). In addition, speaking skills were tested for a subgroup of pupils. The tests that were used for the research were developed in cooperation with Anglia Network Europe, which is an English proficiency teaching and examination company. Approximately 150 primary schools in the Netherlands administer Anglia tests (Anglia Network Europe & EarlyBird, 2012-2013).

Alongside Anglia, Early Bird cooperated closely with Utrecht University for this research. Students of the MSc Programme in Education, Master English Language and Culture, were approached to administer the tests at the differing primary schools. In addition, within this research initiative each student was assigned with a different and specific focus to look into for their Master's thesis. My focus in this research is on the vocabulary knowledge of group 8 pupils at Eibo schools compared to that at EarlyBird schools.

In group 8, schools are expected to administer the Cito-test (a national examination that is developed by the *Centraal Instituut voor Toetsontwikkeling* / Central Institute for Test-Development) as a general test of academic achievement. Based on the results of this test and

on the group 8 teachers' recommendations, pupils continue their education at a school at either vmbo-, havo- or vwo-level[1], which are the three differing tracks of the Dutch secondary educational system. The aim of this study is to unearth whether and how future vmbo basis, kader, gemengd and theoretisch as well as havo and vwo pupils differ with respect to their command and use of vocabulary knowledge.

It goes without saying that vocabulary acquisition is an important part of foreign language acquisition. Some researchers even consider it the central and most important part in the acquisition of a foreign language (Nation 1990: 2). Research has shown that a considerable amount of time is spent on learning words in foreign language teaching (Mondria, 1996). At the same time, however, many foreign language learners have expressed that acquiring new vocabulary is in fact the most difficult part of learning a foreign language, which in fact confirms the statement by Meara (1980: 221): "…the real intrinsic difficulty of learning a foreign language lies in that of having to master its vocabulary." Most of the problems foreign language learners encounter when they try to use or understand a foreign language stem from a lack of vocabulary (Nation 1990: 2).

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[1] Vmbo, havo and vwo are the three different tracks of the Dutch secondary educational system. *Vmbo*, the pre-vocational track, lasts four years and is seen as the lowest level of secondary education. This track consists of four different levels, namely, *theoretische leerweg / vmbo-tl*, *gemengde leerweg / vmbo-gl*, *kaderberoepsgerichte leerweg / vmbo-kl* and *basisberoepsgerichte leerweg / vmbo-bb*. These levels differ in terms of extent of theoretical education and vocational training. *Havo*, which can be understood to refer to senior general secondary education, prepares pupils for higher professional education and lasts for a total of five years. *Vwo*, which is best termed as pre-university education, is the highest level of secondary school in the Netherlands and lasts for six years. It prepares students for university.

2. Theoretical framework

2.1 Vocabulary Acquisition[2]

In spite of the plethora of research done on vocabulary acquisition by linguists and psychologists of L2 acquisition, a generally accepted theory of vocabulary acquisition still does not exist (Melka, 1997). This may partly be the result of disagreement and lack of cooperation between experts (Pavičić Takač, 2008). Psychologists, for example, are interested in the development and acquisition of vocabulary but pay no attention to L2 vocabulary literature "*because* it is model-free" (Pavičić Takač, 2008: 4). Linguists, on the other hand, primarily focus on the way in which vocabulary is described and do not employ the existing psycholinguistic models of L2, even when it has direct pedagogical significance (Pavičić Takač, 2008). The consequence of this difference in focus is that the two fields have developed at differing rates, which has further widened the gap between the two. This makes it tremendously difficult to enumerate all the factors and the ways in which they influence vocabulary acquisition (Pavičić Takač, 2008). In this chapter the most important and often discussed factors affecting vocabulary acquisition will be discussed.

2.1.1 The influence of a learner's first language

The acquisition of L2 vocabulary differs from that of L1 because an L2 learner has already learned the concepts and meaning of words in his own language (Pavičić Takač, 2008). Therefore, when L2 learners learn a second language they have to match the new word with their understanding of what something means or translates to in their L1. The role of L1 in this process can differ and depends on the extent to which the two languages are related. In the process of acquisition a learner's first language can create an obstacle when a learner recalls and uses previously learnt words, or when a learner tries to create a complex word that has not been learnt as a unit. By comparing the L1 and the L2 of an L2 learner, one can predict which problems the target language is going to cause. This is due to the so-called equivalence hypothesis which learners make when they learn a new language. According to Ringbom (1987) a learner "tends to assume that the system of L2 is more or less the same as

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[2] *Whereas learning may be used to signify a conscious process and acquisition a subconscious process, no such distinction is made here between the two. Both terms are used to signify the process by which knowledge is internalised. Because all learning is to some extent cognitively controlled the dividing line between conscious and subconscious processes of learning is perceived to be one of degree rather than as an actual difference in kind.*

in his L1 until he has discovered that it is not" (Ringbom, 1987: 135). This equivalence hypothesis is influenced by the learner's perspective on the linguistic and cultural distance between L1 and L2. It also gives an L2 learner the advantage of not having to categorise the world again. However, the equivalence hypothesis does have its disadvantages because it can easily result in wrong conclusions. Swan (1997) lists the following as reasons why erroneous conclusions are drawn:

- lexical units in two languages are not exact equivalents (i.e. there is more than one translation);

- equivalent lexical units in related languages have different permissible grammatical contexts;

- equivalents belong to different word classes;

- equivalents are false friends;

- there are no equivalents at all.

Dealing with these problems can be quite strenuous for L2 learners. Therefore L2 learners often avoid the use of these difficult words in the target language, especially if there is no translation or base in the L1 on which L2 knowledge can be built (Pavičić Takač, 2008). Also an L2 learner, in contrast to a child learning L1, is hampered in the expansion of vocabulary in the target language because exposure to the target language is often limited to the classroom setting. In the Netherlands, however, L2 learners are often also exposed to English outside the classroom as English is often used in the media. Learners watch English television programmes, listen to English music and play English computer games online (Verspoor et al., 2010). English is also used for advertisements so learners are exposed to English on the streets as well (Gerritsen, Van Meurs & Gijsbers, 2000). Vocabulary can also be broadened by means of reading (cf. Ellis, 1997) or through listening activities (Rivers, 1972) in the L2. But although these activities are definitely useful, they do not promise to result in a rich vocabulary (Pavičić Takač, 2008).

2.1.2. Word knowledge

Knowledge of an L2 word consists of different elements of word knowledge (i.e. phonological and orthographic, morphological, syntactic and semantic) and the knowledge of rules that determine the position of words in our mind (Pavičić Takač, 2008). It also contains the ability to produce or recall a word for active and colloquial use. Preferably, knowledge of a word would include all of the aforementioned elements and would allow one to speak just

like an educated native speaker (Pavičić Takač, 2008). However, knowledge of a word is not to know everything or nothing but should be considered as the gradual acquisition of knowledge on the intended meaning and possible applications of a word (Pavičić Takač, 2008).

Nation (1990, 2008) speaks of the so-called "learning burden" of a word which refers to the amount of effort a learner has to exert in order to learn a word. Some words have a heavier learning burden than others, depending on the language background(s) and the language knowledge of the learner. The more a word corresponds with the patterns and knowledge of a learner's first language, the lighter the learning burden will be (Nation, 1990, 2008). Learner may have gained this knowledge from their first language and/or from other languages they have learned. The learning burden of a word will not be very heavy and the word will not be hard to learn if a certain word has the same sounds as in a learner's first language, is a loan word in the learner's first language, has more or less the same meaning, has a regular spelling pattern and similar grammatical patterns as in the learner's first language. So, for learners whose first language is closely connected to their second language, the learning burden will be lighter than for learners whose first language is not connected to the second language.

2.1.3. Receptive/productive distinction

When the terms receptive and productive are applied to vocabulary, they involve all the features of what it means to fully know a word. As has been discussed before: *words are not isolated units of language, but fit into many interlocking systems and levels* and, therefore, there are many things to know about any given word and in fact, many degrees of knowing. In table 2, a list is presented of all the differing aspects involved in knowing a word. At the most basic level, knowing a word includes form, meaning and use (Nation, 1990). For example, from the vantage point of receptive word knowledge and usage, knowing the word 'underdeveloped' would involve the following aspects:

- being able to recognise the word when it is heard

- being familiar with its written form so that it is recognised when it is met in reading

- recognising that it is made up of the parts under-, -develop- and –ed and being able to relate these parts to its meaning

- knowing that underdeveloped signals a particular meaning

- knowing what the word means in the particular context in which it has just occurred

- knowing the concept behind the word which will allow understanding in a variety of contexts

- knowing that there are related words like underdeveloped, backward and challenged

- being able to recognise that underdeveloped has been used correctly in the sentence in which it occurs

- being able to recognise that words such as territories and areas are typical collocations

- knowing that underdeveloped is not an uncommon word and is not a pejorative word

(Nation, 1990: 27)

From the vantage point of productive word knowledge and usage, knowing the word 'underdeveloped' would involve the following aspects:

- being able to say it with correct pronunciation including stress

- being able to write it with correct spelling

- being able to construct it using the right word parts in their appropriate forms

- being able to produce the word to express the meaning "underdeveloped"

- being able to produce the word in different contexts to express the range of meanings of underdeveloped

- being able to produce synonyms and opposites for underdeveloped

- being able to use the word correctly in an original sentence

- being able to produce words that commonly occur with it

- being able to decide to use or not to use the word to suit the degree of formality of the situation

(Nation, 1990: 28)

Table 2 and the example of the word 'underdeveloped' together illustrate the many different aspects that are involved in receptive and productive word knowledge and use. So, when it is said that a word is part of someone's receptive or productive vocabulary knowledge, this is a rather general statement because it includes many aspects of knowledge and use, and different language skills are combined.

Table 2. *What is involved in knowing a word* (Nation, 1990)

Form			
	Spoken	R	What does the word sound like?
		P	How is the word pronounced?
	Written	R	What does the word look like?
		P	How is the word written and spelled?
	word parts	R	What parts are recognisable in this word?
		P	What word parts are needed to express meaning?
Meaning			
	form and meaning	R	What meaning does this word form signal?
		P	What word form can be used to express this meaning?
	concept and referents	R	What is included in the concept?
		P	What items can the concept refer to?
	associations	R	What other words does this make us think of?
		P	What other words could we use instead of this one?
Use			
	grammatical functions	R	In what patterns does the word occur?
		P	In what patterns must we use this word?
	Collocations	R	What words or types of words occur with this one?
		P	What words or types of words must we use with this one?
	constraints on use (register, frequency …)	R	Where, when, and how often would we expect to meet his word?
		P	Where, when, and how often can we use this word?

Note: In column 3, R = receptive knowledge, P = productive knowledge.

2.1.4. Role of memory in Vocabulary Acquisition

Memory has a vital role in language learning, especially in vocabulary learning, because word knowledge is more likely to suffer from attrition than other linguistic aspects, such as phonology or grammar (Schmitt, 2000). Pertaining to the aforementioned theory, learning words does not occur in a linear way, forgetting occurs until the word is completely learned and fixed in memory (Schmitt, 2000). When new information is acquired, most of it is lost immediately. Later on the process of forgetting slows down. Thornbury (2002) has drawn up a list of principles to help the transfer of the new lexical information into the long term memory, including: several encounters with a word, preferably at spaced intervals, retrieval and use of a word, cognitive depth, affective depth, personalisation, imaging, use of mnemonics and conscious attention that is necessary to remember a word. According to Pavičić Takač (2008) the learning and teaching of vocabulary should be planned according to the aforementioned mentioned strategies in order to be effective.

2.1.5. The mental lexicon

Another factor which influences L2 vocabulary development is the way in which the mental lexicon is organised (Pavičić Takač, 2008). The mental lexicon is "a memory system in which a vast number of words, accumulated in the course of time, has been stored" (Hulstijn, 2000: 210). This system has to be organised and structured as there is only one clarification for the fact that one has the ability to learn and store a great number of words in one's memory plus recognise and retrieve these words in order to be able to use them to express oneself. Although human memory is very flexible, it can only process a big amount of data if it is systematically organised. Due to the difficulty of gathering data on the organisation and functioning of the mental lexicon, many conclusions about the development and organisation of the mental lexicon are based on assumptions (Pavičić Takač, 2008).

Nevertheless, the few studies that have been conducted have brought forth results that considerably contribute to knowledge on the organisation of the mental lexicon. As well as the organisation and development of the L2 mental lexicon, these studies also discuss the similarities and differences between the L1 and L2 mental lexicon and the level of division or incorporation of the two systems. The debate on similarities and differences between L1 lexicon and L2 lexicon(s) can be summarised into four basic hypotheses as follows (Hulstijn, 2000):

(1) the extended system hypothesis: L1 words and L2 words are stored in a single store;

(2) the dual system hypothesis: words are stored in separate stores;

(3) the tripartite hypothesis: similar words (e.g. cognates) are stored in a common store, and language-specific words are stored in separate stores;

(4) the subset hypothesis: L1 words and L2 words are stored in two relatively separated subsets, but both subsets are stored in a common store.

However, research into the lexicosemantical relationship, i.e. the relationship between an L1 and an L2 word in the mental lexicon, conducted by different researchers, has shown that the mental lexicon is used differently by each individual. This is dependent on the way the word has been acquired, on the level of the word's acquisition, and on the perception of formal and/or semantic connection between the L1 and L2 word (Pavičić Takač, 2008).

2.1.6. Different vocabulary sources

Research on L1 vocabulary acquisition has revealed that L1 learners mainly learn

vocabulary from a wide variety of contexts (Pavičić Takač, 2008). These contexts help them to experiment, to confirm, to expand or to reduce make lexical systems. From this can be concluded that native speakers do not learn vocabulary from formal instruction but rather from incidental learning from large amounts of communicatively relevant language input, e.g. language use in daily situations.

Learning a second language, on the other hand, is a more complex process. Some research results have shown that L2 vocabulary can also be acquired when learners are exposed to different contexts (such as reading). However, these conclusions cannot be interpreted without taking into account the aspects which have an immediate effect on the efficiency of the process. Obviously, first stage L2 learners cannot determine the meaning of a word from its context as they have not acquired enough vocabulary yet to be able to do so. In order to be successful in guessing the meaning of a word from context, learners' proficiency level (linguistic knowledge, word knowledge and strategic knowledge) has to be high enough in order for them to apply this strategy (Nagy,1997). Beginners do not have enough linguistic knowledge, so they have to learn a word by connecting it to its synonym, definition, translation into L1, or an illustration (Pavičić Takač, 2008). A great amount of vocabulary can be successfully learnt by wordlists (Carter, 1992).

However, vocabulary acquisition is not just a mental collection of the same words from L1 to L2: familiarity with a word includes more than just knowing its meaning. Vocabulary learning is "the acquisition of memorised sequences of lexical items that serve as a pattern on the basis of which the learner creates new sequences" (Pavičić Takač, 2008: 16). Therefore, the main task for a learner "is to discover the pattern in the language, starting from phonological categories, then on to phonotactic sequences (i.e. allowable arrangement of phonemes), and morphemes, to collocations and lexical phrases, and their analysis into meaningful units or chunks (which are units of memory organisation)" (Pavičić Takač, 2008: 16). An L2 learner, therefore, has to acquire these language aspects. To be able to do this effectively, an adequate amount of exposure to understandable L2 input and explicit teaching is required. A large spectrum of contexts is highly essential in L2 vocabulary learning. According to Nagy (1997) an average L2 learner can learn to recognise approximately 1000 words per year from written materials. The role of context in the first stages of vocabulary learning is not very big, but as a learner acquires more word knowledge, written materials increase in importance. Ellis (1997) claims that the perfect source for L2 vocabulary learning is reading. Low frequency words can be found more often in written than in spoken language.

In addition, reading gives learners more time to analyse and guess the meaning of a word and this lends understanding of morphological rules, collocations, additional meanings etc.

However, being exposed to words during reading does not automatically result in a rich vocabulary. Learners need to have good strategic skills to help them transfer their incidental learning into an explicit learning process (Pavičić Takač, 2008).

2.2 Vocabulary teaching

According to Nation (2007), a balanced language course should include four strands, namely, meaning-focused input, language-focused learning, meaning-focused output and fluency development. An equal amount of time should be given to each of these four strands (Nation, 2001).

The first strand, meaning-focused input, means that learners have to be exposed to comprehensible language input. Teachers have to provide their learners with opportunities to learn new language by doing reading and listening activities. The main focus while doing these activities has to be on understanding and gaining new knowledge. Learners have to be familiar with at least 95% of the words that they are reading or listening to in order to be able to identify the main idea of the text. Also, it enables learners to guess the correct meaning of unfamiliar words and to learn new words. So, if learners fail to recognize 95% of the words in a text they will not succeed in learning new words (Nation 1997, Sedita, 2005). Examples of activities in this strand include watching TV or films, listening to stories, listening to a conversation, extensive reading and shared reading (Nation, 2007). Learners have to be interested in the input.

The second strand is language-focused learning and is sometimes referred to as form-focused instruction (Ellis, 1990). Teachers have to teach their learners language features such as vocabulary, pronunciation, grammar, discourse and spelling and learners have to study these items themselves as well. Vocabulary activities in this strand could include learning words from word cards, guessing words from their contexts, looking up words in a dictionary and translating them (Nation, 2007).

The third strand is meaning-focused output and involves language learning through speaking and writing activities. Again, it should be stressed that it is highly important for learners to be familiar with the language they have to use and that the topic they have to read or write about interests them. Speaking and writing forces learners to pay attention to words in a different way than while listening and reading. Also, writing and speaking expands learners' knowledge of previously encountered vocabulary. Examples of activities in this strand are keeping a diary, writing a letter, giving a speech or telling a story. While doing these activities the main focus lies on the message the learner is trying to bring across.

The last strand is fluency development. The main focus in this strand is on giving

learners the opportunity to use the language they already know. A learner's main goal is to give and receive new information. Fluency development activities include: repeated reading, repeated retelling, speed reading, skimming and scanning, listening to easy stories and ten-minute writing. If a language course does not include these activities, learners will not be able to use the language they have learned in the other three strands in real life (Nation, 2007).

2.2.1. Incidental and explicit approaches

Schmitt (2008) argues that both incidental and explicit approaches are necessary in vocabulary learning. In the beginning of a language course words should be explicitly taught until learners have acquired enough vocabulary to be able to understand simple sentences and can start using unfamiliar words they encounter in context. After that, incidental learning becomes important because "meeting a word in different contexts enhances what is known about it, which improves quality of knowledge, and additional exposure helps consolidate it in memory" (Schmitt, 2008). As vocabulary has an incremental nature, such enhancement and consolidation are both fundamental. Explicitly teaching words can only make learners familiar with some elements of word knowledge (Schmitt, 2008). Word knowledge such as collocation or connotation nuances can only be entirely mastered if learners have been exposed to the word in different contexts. One way to achieve this, is to ensure that learners are exposed to language as much as possible, through foreign language reading, for example.

2.2.2. Teaching strategies

Teaching strategies refer to "everything teachers do or should do in order to help their learners learn" (Hatch and Brown 2000: 401). Which teaching strategy a teacher will choose to use depends on a number of things such as on the time available, proficiency level (e.g. wordlists for beginning students, and contextualized words for more advanced students), the content (i.e. what do learners have to learn), and on its value for the learner (Pavičić Takač, 2008). Teaching strategies are also connected with other factors that influence vocabulary acquisition which were mentioned earlier in this report.

According to Seal's study (1991), there are two types of vocabulary teaching strategies: planned and unplanned (as cited in Pavičić Takač, 2008). Unplanned teaching strategies relate to: "the teacher's spontaneous reactions with the aim to help learners when the need arises, in which case teachers improvise" (Pavičić Takač, 2008: 19). So, learners ask for the meaning of words and teachers convey these by, for example, using synonyms, body

language and pictures (Sedita, 2005). Then, the teacher asks questions in order to check if the learners have understood the meaning of the words. Lastly, the teacher fixes the meaning of the words in the learner's memory by, for example, relating them to the learners' context. Planned vocabulary teaching refers to: "deliberate, explicit, clearly defined and directed vocabulary teaching" (Pavičić Takač, 2008: 19). It includes: "the use of teaching strategies, i.e. ways in which teachers introduce and present the meaning and form of new words, encourage learners to review and practice, i.e. recycle what is known, and monitor and evaluate the level of acquisition of various components of lexical knowledge" (Pavičić Takač, 2008: 19).

In order to do this effectively, teachers will have to devote a certain amount of time to vocabulary. During this time they have to explore the different aspects of word knowledge and persuade learners to actively process words (cf. Nation, 2001). A number of L2 vocabulary researchers (Hatch & Brown, 2000; Nation, 2001; Sokmen, 1997; Thornbury, 2002) have produced an extensive list of teaching strategies that fall into two main categories: (1) presentation of meaning and form of new words and (2) review and consolidation (recycling and practising) of presented words. Presentation of meaning and form of new words involve the teaching of words in the planned part of the lesson. Learners mainly have to listen to what the teacher explains, however, they might have to actively take part in some procedures. Both the meaning and the form of the word are presented, it does not matter which one of two is presented first. The meaning of words can be taught orally or non-orally. These are the most frequently mentioned ways of presentation: connecting an L2 item with its equivalent in L1, defining the meaning, presentation through context, directly connecting the meaning to real objects or phenomena and active involvement of learners in presentation (Pavičić Takač, 2008). Moreover, to be able to make a connection between meaning and form, teachers need to encourage their learners to pay attention to the orthographic and phonological form of the word as well. The following are some of the ways in which the form can be presented: oral drill, phonetic transcription and graphic presentation, presentation of the graphic form and encouraging learners to try and spell the word (Pavičić Takač, 2008).

The aim of the second category, review and consolidation of presented words, is to get learners review words as various encounters with a word are necessary to consolidate them into the long-term memory. According to Schmitt (2000) it is essential for learners to review the material directly after they just learned the word and then at slowly increasing intervals (e.g. 5-10 minutes after learning, then 24 hours later, a week later, a month later and finally 6

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months later). It is the teacher's job to give learners opportunities to practice and connect words in different ways and to encourage them to retrieve words from memory and employ them for all language skills. The activities that are mostly used in the literature are: mechanical repetition of words, copying words, word manipulation, integrating new words with words that are already known, semantic elaboration, creating mental images, personalisation, tasks for word identification, tasks for recalling words from memory, tasks for expansion of lexical knowledge, productive use of words and multiple encounters with the words Pavičić Takač, 2008: 21-23) .

However, there are more things that teachers have to take into account when they teach and plan a vocabulary lesson, such as teaching strategies, principles of planning and organising a lesson, and other important elements of the teaching process (Pavičić Takač, 2008). Just as in any language lesson, in a vocabulary lesson the teacher has to direct, evaluate, test, encourage and reward learners (Pavičić Takač, 2008). It is the teacher's duty to stimulate learners and to generate their interest in increasing their word knowledge. For this reason, teachers should do everything they can to make sure that learners continuously and systematically review and assess their vocabulary.

Vocabulary lessons should be built upon a range of teaching techniques and activities as learners have different learning styles and one should aim to meet all their needs (Pavičić Takač, 2008). It is highly essential for learners to be encouraged by their teacher to actively join in vocabulary learning and to work together with their peers and the teacher. Learners also need help to learn new words on their own, in finding ways to expand their word knowledge (by, for example, giving them confidence to look words up in a dictionary), and in systematically and constantly expanding their vocabulary outside of class (by saying how important it is to take notes, to read, watch television etc.). This is where vocabulary learning strategies become important. Even though vocabulary learning strategies are actually part of basically all objectives and principles of L2 vocabulary teaching, it is advised to include elements of explicit strategy training as well (Pavičić Takač, 2008). Learners have to be motivated to discover new, and develop the existing vocabulary learning strategies at all times so that they are also able to deal with words when they are not at school.

2.3 Vocabulary Testing

According to Nation and Chung (2008) assessing and monitoring a learners' vocabulary knowledge is essential. Testing vocabulary can serve different purposes: a diagnostic test helps learners decide what level of vocabulary they should aim for, a proficiency test enables learners to measure their vocabulary size and an achievement test allows learners to see what new vocabulary they have learned (Nation & Chung, 2008). An example of a diagnostic test is the Vocabulary Levels Test, a monolingual test, which was made for high-frequency, academic, and low-frequency vocabulary. However, as this test does not test the first acquired 1,000 words - which is such an important group of words - bilingual tests of the first 1,000 words and the second 1,000 words have been developed (Nation & Chung, 2008). In these tests, the meanings of the tested words are given in the learners' first language.

Vocabulary proficiency tests measure vocabulary size but Nation points out that "there are now innovative approaches to measuring how well vocabulary is known and how diverse a vocabulary learners actually use" (Nation, 2008). The amount of words that a learner knows is referred to as breadth of vocabulary knowledge whereas depth of vocabulary knowledge refers to how well learners know these words. Read (2004) distinguishes between three different meanings of depth, namely, precision of meaning, comprehensive word knowledge and network knowledge. An example of an approach to measure the diversity of vocabulary used in learners' writing and speech is to measure the number of different words (types or lemmas) used in connection with the number of running words (tokens) used.

Laufer and Goldstein (2004) examined four kinds of achievement tests which can be used in monolingual and bilingual versions: active recall, passive recall, active recognition and passive recognition. What Laufer and Goldstein (2004) discovered from this research for achievement testing is that different tests formats can be used with different levels of difficulty. Therefore, it is very important to take into consideration the level of knowledge learners have when deciding what format to use to test this knowledge. When choosing the most appropriate format, the following questions are important to consider:

1. What is the learner's vocabulary size? If the vocabulary size is small, bilingual items are more appropriate than monolingual items.

2. How did the learner learn his vocabulary? If the vocabulary was learned by reading or listening, then passive items are better than active items. If, on the other hand, a lot of time was spent on learning and active retrieval was used, then active items suit better.

3. When was the vocabulary learned? If word learning happened a long time ago, the item format should be easy.

4. What is the teacher's opinion on the difficulty of the test? (Nation & Chung, 2008: 556)

2.4 Previous research on English in Primary Education

In 2006, a research was conducted by the Dutch Peilingsonderzoek in het Onderwijs (PPON: periodical measurement of the level of education) to determine pupils' English proficiency level at the end of primary school (Heesters et al., 2008). The research covered an inventory of some aspects of the curriculum in group 8 and a detailed analysis of pupils' English language skills (vocabulary, reading, listening, writing and speaking).

2.4.1. Vocabulary test

In this report, only the subject of vocabulary will be discussed since this subject is relevant for the present study. When children enter grade 7 of primary school, they already understand quite a number of English words and are able to speak an arsenal of words considerably well. This knowledge is based on what they picked up from television, the Internet and computer games (Heesters et al., 2008). So, the words which children have already acquired are quite diverse. Due to this diversity it was difficult to measure the vocabulary of pupils at the end of primary school. It was therefore decided to research how well pupils acquired the vocabulary which they had been offered at primary school. The PPON developed a vocabulary test containing A1/A2 level words that could be categorized into different themes such as: weather, leisure, introducing yourself and daily care. In this vocabulary test, high frequency words and standard expressions within the aforementioned themes played a central role. Pupils were not expected to be able to read English youth literature and magazines. However, they were expected to be able to have simple conversations about daily topics and, also, to comprehend simple oral and written texts.

In previous research of pupils' English proficiency levels, a distinction was made between speaking vocabulary, reading vocabulary and word comprehension (Heesters et al., 2008) . However, the present study only consisted of a written test; oral vocabulary was not tested.

2.4.2 Pupil's ability

The results showed that the vocabulary of the average pupil was quite extensive. The average pupil mastered 103 of the 140 well (74%), 26 items sufficiently to insufficiently (19%) and the other 11 items insufficiently (8%). This pupil knows, for example, the opposite of 'slow' and 'dark' and can place the word 'road' in the right context. Furthermore, he or she can translate 'talk'. However, the average pupil may not recognize the opposite of 'wet' and

'dirty' and is unable to write down the words 'ear' and 'pig' next to the correct picture. Pupils with one foreign parent, the percentile-90 pupil, scored even higher than the average pupil: this pupil mastered 131 exercises well (94%), 8 sufficiently to insufficiently (6%) and only 1 exercise insufficiently. This pupil can, for example, translate the word 'write'. However, recognizing the opposite of 'expensive' is a problem for this pupil as well as writing down the English word 'bottle'.

2.4.3 Differences among pupils

The results presented in table 3, show that there were obvious differences between pupils' secondary school levels: pupils that went to the vmbo bb reached only 17% of the standard sufficient whereas 84% of the pupils that went to vwo reached this same standard. More than half of the vmbo bb pupils (58%) reached the standard minimum and 82% of the pupils that went to the vmbo gtl reached this standard. So, the majority of havo/vwo pupils understood high frequency words belonging to the themes: weather, leisure, introducing yourself and daily care which occur in the course books: Bubbles, Junior and Real English, The Team and Hello World. In addition, they comprehended words from the Waystage wordlist which contained words from the Waystage-level that were analogous to level A2 of the Common European Framework of Reference.

Table 3. *Percentage pupils per category who achieved the standard minimum and sufficient for the subject vocabulary* (PPON, 2006)

	Average score	Standard deviation	Standard minimum	Standard sufficient
Secondary school level				
Vmbo bb	209	43	58%	17%
Vmbo kb	223	44	70%	27%
Vmbo gtl	239	43	82%	40%
Havo	264	43	93%	63%
Vwo	290	43	98%	84%

2.4.4. Results PPON research 2012

In 2012, a follow-up-PPON research was conducted in order to determine pupils' English proficiency level at the end of primary school (Geurts & Hemker, 2013). As in the previous research, pupils' reading, listening, speaking and vocabulary skills were tested. On top of this, pupils' writing skills were tested.

Compared to 2006, pupils' achievements in English have improved only slightly.

Pupils' vocabulary knowledge has increased more than their reading skills. Pupils' listening and speaking skills, on the other hand, have not improved at all. Vvto pupils do better than Eibo pupils, in particularly in speaking. Also for writing and vocabulary, Vvto pupils score higher than Eibo pupils. For listening and reading this same result has not been confirmed. Differences in ability increase as pupils move on to higher types of secondary school levels. Moreover, the results of the research showed that exposure to English outside the classroom results in higher scores in all skills (PPON, 2013).

2.5 Anglia tests

As was mentioned in the introduction, the tests that were used for the research were designed by Anglia Network Europe, which is an English proficiency examination company. Anglia works with an incremental system, a step-by-step approach and their levels have been aligned to the CEFR levels as well as to Cambridge, TOEIC, TOEFL IBT, and IELTS (Ascentis Anglia, 2009). However, the lowest Anglia levels, which are First Step, Junior and Primary, examine skills below and leading up to A1 in the CEFR. This distinguishes Anglia from other examination systems and enables young learners to work with Anglia. The tests which Anglia adapted for the EarlyBird research were blended tests which included content, questions and vocabulary from multiple levels. The tests for group 8 contained Preliminary-Intermediate level exercises aiming at A1 to B2 level whereas the tests for group 5 covered First-Step-Elementary level exercises, aiming at pre A1 – A2 level exercises. Blended tests were used in order to determine pupils' level.

2.5.1 Vocabulary testing Anglia

Anglia does not offer separate vocabulary tests, instead vocabulary is continuously assessed throughout the speaking, listening, reading and writing tests. As all four exams are taken by students as a set, vocabulary testing is seen throughout these four tests. In the listening exam, vocabulary is tested throughout almost all tasks. For example, at Junior level (pre-A1), students listen to five words and have to put a tick in the box under the picture of the word they hear. For the writing exam, pupils taking an Elementary test (A1) or higher, are required to write a composition and vocabulary is tested in its own category. At the first level, First Step (pre A1), students do not have to write any full words but they have to indicate their understanding by matching and colouring (Anglia Ascentis). From Elementary level onwards, an article is included in the reading exam with questions requiring full answers, multiple choice, true false and one word responses. All articles at all levels have at least 2 questions that are directly vocabulary oriented. Pupils are, for example, asked to find a word in the passage that means the same/opposite as "X". For the speaking exam, Anglia uses a marking scheme that evaluates different components and one of these components is vocabulary. For

example, at First Step, the examiner points to an object in a picture and the pupil is required to say the word aloud. So, vocabulary is tested in different ways in all four tests.

2.5.2 How is vocabulary tested in the Use of English test?

As was mentioned in the introduction, the tests that were used for the research were blended tests which included content, questions and vocabulary from multiple levels. The use of English test consisted of 8 different parts and tested pupils' vocabulary knowledge as well as grammar. Pupils were given 30 minutes to finish the test. Parts 1, 2 and 7 tested pupils' vocabulary knowledge and, therefore, these 3 parts will be explained in more detail. Both parts 1 and 2 were not original Anglia material but were added to the test by Early Bird in order to determine pupils' vocabulary knowledge more specifically. Therefore, the use of English test was used for this research. Though Anglia's tests also contain vocabulary exercises, most Anglia's vocabulary does not directly connect to the vocabulary Dutch pupils learn at primary school. Part 1, consisted of 6 questions and required pupils to circle the opposite word of the word that was given. For example "What is the opposite of hot?". The second part, required pupils to decide which words go together. For example: "Which word goes with hospital?". Part 7, was a fill-in-the gap exercise in which pupils had to fill in the correct word in a sentence. For example: "You must be _____ when you are skiing". Pupils had to choose between the words: *careful*, *care* and *carefully* (see Appendix A for the Use of English test). In all three parts of the test, three different answers were offered and pupils were required to circle the right answer. Thus, pupils were not required to write the word down.

2.6 Vocabulary at A1/A2 level

In table 4 the self-assessment grid for the levels A1 and A2 of the European Framework of Reference are given. Level A1 (Breakthrough) is the lowest level of language proficiency of the Common European Framework of Reference. The grid is divided into five different skills which are: listening, reading, spoken interaction, spoken production and writing. At this level, learners have to recognise familiar words concerning themselves, their family and their "immediate concrete surroundings" when listening to someone speaking "slowly and clearly" (Common European Framework of Reference). In addition, learners have to understand familiar names and words when reading notices, posters or catalogues. Moreover, learners have to be able to write a short and easy messages on a card.

At A2 level, learners are required to understand "the highest frequency vocabulary related to areas of most immediate personal relevance, e.g. very basic personal and family information, shopping local area, employment" when listening to someone else speak in the foreign language (Common European Framework of Reference). In addition, learners are expected to understand these words on advertisements, brochures, menus and timetables and to use this vocabulary when communicating in simple and routine tasks. Moreover, learners are required to have a vocabulary which enable them to make phrases and sentences in which they describe relatives and other people, living conditions, education and job. Finally, learners have to be able to use vocabulary that can be used to write down simple notes, messages and a very simple personal letter.

Table 4. *Self-assessment grid for the levels A1 and A2 of the European Framework of Reference* (Common European Framework of Reference for Languages: Learning, Teaching, Assessment)

		A1	**A2**	**B1**
U N D E R S T A N D I N G	Listening	I can recognise familiar words and very phrases concerning myself, my family and immediate concrete surroundings when people speak slowly and clearly.	I can understand phrases and the highest frequency vocabulary related to areas of most immediate personal relevance (e.g. very basic personal and family information, shopping, local area, employment). I can catch the main point in short, clear, simple messages and announcements.	I can understand the main points of clear standard speech on familiar matters regularly encountered in work, school, leisure, etc. I can understand the main point of many radio or TV programmes on current affairs or topics of personal or professional interest when the delivery is relatively slow and clear.
	Reading	I can understand familiar names, words and very simple sentences, for example on notices and posters or in catalogues.	I can read very short, simple texts. I can find specific, predictable information in simple everyday material such as advertisements, prospectuses, menus and timetables and I can understand short simple personal letters.	I can understand texts that consist mainly of high frequency everyday or job-related language. I can understand the description of events, feelings and wishes in personal letters.
S P E A K I N G	Spoken Interaction	I can interact in a simple way provided the other person is prepared to repeat or rephrase things at a slower rate of speech and help me formulate what I'm trying to say. I can ask and answer simple questions in areas of immediate need or on very familiar topics.	I can communicate in simple and routine tasks requiring a simple and direct exchange of information on familiar topics and activities. I can handle very short social exchanges, even though I can't usually understand enough to keep the conversation going myself.	I can deal with most situations likely to arise whilst travelling in an area where the language is spoken. I can enter unprepared into conversations on topics that are familiar, of personal interest or pertinent to everyday life (e.g. family, hobbies, work, travel and current events).
	Spoken Production	I can use simple phrases and sentences to describe where I live and people I know.	I can use a series of phrases and sentences to describe in simple terms my family and other people, living conditions, my educational background and my present or most recent job.	I can connect phrases in a simple way in order to describe experiences and events, my dreams, hopes and ambitions. I can briefly give reasons and explanations for opinions and plans. I can narrate a story or relate the plot of a book or film and describe my reactions.
W R I T I N G	Writing	I can write a short, simple postcard, for example sending holiday greetings. I can fill in forms with personal details, for example entering my name, nationality and address on a hotel registration form.	I can write short, simple notes and messages relating to matters in areas of immediate need. I can write a very simple personal letter, for example thanking someone for something.	I can write simple connected text on topics which are familiar or of personal interest. I can write personal letters describing experiences and impressions.

2.7 Eibo and Early Bird

2.7.1 Eibo

As was mentioned in the introduction, English lessons are mandatory in the last two years (cf. grade 5 and 6) of Dutch primary education. The teaching of English in these primary schools is referred to as Eibo (English in primary education). The aim of teaching English in primary education is to lay a foundation for communication with native speakers or with others who speak English outside of school (Bodde-Alderlieste & Schokkenbroek, 2011). In order to actually prepare pupils to communicate with people from all over the world, a communicative approach is used. This approach teaches pupils to communicate in English with others in daily situations (Bodde-Alderlieste & Schokkenbroek, 2011). During the English lessons, pupils mainly do speaking, listening and vocabulary exercises. In addition, simple texts are read. Writing is limited to the use of a small number of common English words. Children also have to learn how to find the meaning and spelling of words in a dictionary (Bodde-Alderlieste & Schokkenbroek, 2011). Hardly any attention is paid to grammar (Bodde-Alderlieste & Schokkenbroek, 2011).

2.7.2 EarlyBird

English language learning is becoming increasingly important in the Dutch primary school curriculum (EarlyBird Curriculum, 2010). As a result, a growing number of schools now start teaching English from group 1 (cf. kindergarten) onwards. These schools are referred to as vvtoE (early foreign language teaching) schools. In 2013, more than a quarter of the vvtoE schools used the EarlyBird teaching approach. This approach is aimed at teaching young learners "in a responsible, authentic and meaningful way which fosters a positive attitude to learning" (EarlyBird Curriculum, 2010). The main aims of EarlyBird are:

• the development of fluency in English

• the enhancement of general language skills

• the use of English to learn more about the world we live in (EarlyBird Curriculum, 2010)
During the first years of primary schools the focus is on listening, understanding and on the development of speaking skills. From groups 3 till 5 (cf. grades 1-3) the emphasis is still on acquiring communicative competence. Games, songs, rhymes, picture books and TPR (total physical response) activities are used to meet this goal. During the last two years of primary school attention is also paid to literacy skills in English.

2.8 Attainment Targets for English in Primary Education

Attainment targets are the minimum goals which all pupils have to be able to reach. Over the past twenty years, these goals have changed several times in order to connect to new developments (Bodde-Alderlieste & Schokkenbroek, 2011). The first legalized attainment targets for English appeared seven years after English was implemented in primary education in 1993 (Bodde-Alderlieste & Schokkenbroek, 2011). In 1998, a revised version appeared and in 2006 the latest version of the attainment targets was presented. There are four attainment targets for English, which are:

Attainment target 13: Pupils learn to gain knowledge from easy spoken and written English texts.

Attainment target 14: Pupils learn how to ask for or how to give information in English about simple topics and they develop an attitude in which they are not afraid to express themselves in this language.

Attainment target 15: Pupils learn the spelling of several easy words about daily topics.

Attainment target 16: Pupils learn how to find the meaning and spelling of English words in a dictionary.

Schools are free to choose when and how to work on these attainment targets. Due to the fact that most schools only teach English in group 7 and 8, they just have two years (60-80 hours) to realise these goals (Bodde-Alderlieste & Schokkenbroek, 2011). Research shows that only half of the pupils reach the attainment targets for English. Therefore, schools are advised to start teaching English in group 5 or 6 so that all pupils can meet the attainment targets for English (Bodde-Alderlieste & Schokkenbroek, 2011).

2.8.1. Attainment targets and the development of lesson materials

The educational publishers of lesson materials for Eibo use the attainment targets as a starting point for developing their lesson material. Most publishers choose to use the earliest and most extensive attainment targets, those of 1993 (which include the Eibo themes) and the

description of all the skills as a basis for their lesson packages. In this way, the new and easier formulated attainments targets of 2006 have been automatically included in most of the lesson materials (Bodde-Alderlieste & Schokkenbroek, 2011).

The attainment targets for English of 2006 have been formulated more generally than those of earlier versions. No reference is made to using the target language in class. Looking up definitions of words is the only strategy that is mentioned. As a result, the communicative approach which was meant to serve as a basis for teaching English, is no longer recognizable. Also, no reference is made to coherence of the four language skills of reading, writing, listening and speaking. All of this makes it difficult for teachers to decide when the attainment targets have been met (Bodde-Alderlieste & Schokkenbroek, 2011).

2.9 The Role of Vocabulary in Eibo Lessons

Vocabulary plays an important role during the lessons because pupils need enough vocabulary knowledge in order to express themselves in English. All the latest lesson materials for Eibo use themes. New vocabulary is offered each time a theme is discussed in class (Bodde-Alderlieste & Schokkenbroek, 2011). The words are offered in chunks which pupils quickly have to use in practice. Not each lesson packet uses the same themes and topics; this does not have to be a problem as long as there is a lot of input and interaction and consolidation can take place. The themes have been developed from the Threshold level. Its fourteen themes and the subdivision in subthemes form the basis for Waystage English for young pupils. Waystage forms the basis for the attainment targets in primary education (Bodde-Alderlieste & Schokkenbroek, 2011).

Attainment targets 15 and 16 refer particularly to vocabulary. However, attainment target 15 does not indicate how many words pupils have to be able to write. It involves words which pupils have to apply in practice. The Eibo themes show which words are considered suitable (Bodde-Alderlieste & Schokkenbroek, 2011). Pupils have to be able to communicate about these daily topics. It is clear that it involves words which are frequently used and thus relevant. Attainment target 16 indicates that pupils have to learn how to find the meaning and spelling of English words in a dictionary. A wide range of material is available so that children can look up words. In fact, there are dictionaries which are especially designed for primary education. For each age group appropriate materials are obtainable (Bodde-Alderlieste & Schokkenbroek, 2011). Moreover, there are alphabetical dictionaries in print and on the Internet, CD-ROMs, digital wordlists and thematical picture dictionaries (dictionaries with themes with English words with illustrations) for each group.

2.10 Methodology for Eibo

The methodology which is used during the Eibo lessons will depend on the course book, the teacher and on the value the school places on the teaching of English. However, Barneveld and Van der Sande (1987) have designed a didactic learning phase model which is especially adapted for Eibo. This so-called four-phase-model consist of four phases:

Phase 1: the introduction phase

Phase 2: input phase or presentation phase

Phase 3: practice phase

Phase 4: transfer phase

The aim of this model is to prepare children to communicate in English (Bodde-Alderlieste & Schokkenbroek, 2011).

Phase 1: Activating prior knowledge. In the first part of the introduction phase, pupils are prepared for the new language they have to learn. This language consists of words, sentences and dialogues. Pupils have to do activities that activate their prior knowledge. They are asked which words and sentences they already know around a certain theme. The Eibo course books have thematic approaches. For example, when the theme is food and drinks, the teacher will first see what (new) words and sentences pupils have to learn in the relevant chapter. The teacher will try to estimate what words and sentences pupils already know and what words are new or difficult. During the first lesson, the teacher will activate pupils' prior knowledge by asking them what words for food and drinks in a restaurant they already know. During the second part of the introduction phase, the teacher will motivate pupils by, for example, asking them why it is important to know words for food and drinks in English. The third part of the introduction phase consists of repeating words from previous chapters which pupils need for the new theme.

The aim of the second phase, the input phase, is to offer pupils new vocabulary and for them to process this new knowledge. During this phase, pupils are doing receptive exercises which means that they do not have to reproduce language but that they have to listen, match and answer multiple choice questions and connect words with pictures. At the end of this phase, the teacher will call out words, while pupils repeat after the teacher. Then, news words are introduced to pupils which they have to use in communicative activities. Words which pupils merely have to be able to recognise, form the receptive vocabulary. Pupils will listen or

read these words but they do not have to use them when practising conversations. The words which pupils will need to use belong to the productive vocabulary knowledge. This productive vocabulary usually consists of lists of ten to fifteen words. These words are not translated into the learners' first language but there are pictures which enable them to understand the meaning of the words.

The aim of the third phase is to let pupils practice their newly learned words. Eibo uses dialogues in order to practice vocabulary. Pupils have to practise dialogues in which they use the words that they have learned during the input phase. Pupils use this list of words to practise variation in the dialogue. This will also enable them to consolidate the words. It is the teacher's job to let pupils practise the new words as much as possible and to check if the pupils understand and are able to use these newly learned words.

During the last phase, the transfer phase, pupils have to show how they can use the newly learned language. For this phase, teachers will have to design or adapt activities. In contrast to the third phase, teachers do not know what and how pupils will be using words in English. The aim of this phase is that pupils will feel free to use the words they have learned in conversation. Pupils will not be offered a ready-to-use dialogue but a description of a situation. In this way pupils are encouraged to produce language themselves during the transfer phase. The focus is on communication.

2.11 Vocabulary in the EarlyBird Programme

There are three strands in EarlyBird teaching:

1. Vocabulary

2. Different learning styles and multiple intelligences

3. Digital learning environments

As vocabulary plays such an important role in foreign language learning, teaching vocabulary is the main objective in the EarlyBird programme and is also one of its three strands. The two main objectives for vocabulary are first of all, teaching pupils a wide range of high-frequency words and, secondly, teaching pupils techniques for memorizing words and phrases (EarlyBird Curriculum, 2010).

EarlyBird pupils do not only need to have "receptive" word knowledge but they should also be able to produce words, e.g. productive word knowledge. So, pupils do not only have to learn nouns, verbs and adverbs but they should also be able to use these words. EarlyBird believes that in order to learn words effectively, learners need to hear, repeat and use them several times and in different ways. EarlyBird aims at teaching pupils words which are useful and presents these words in meaningful contexts (EarlyBird Curriculum, 2010). In addition, words are repeated until the pupil knows the word. This is partly achieved when teachers speak English in class because they often unconsciously use and repeat the most common words. As early as in groups 1 and 2, EarlyBird teachers aim at speaking solely English during the lesson. This also enables pupils to listen to the sounds and the rhythms of the language. Besides that, the teacher repeats words in class and the textbooks which are used during the lessons contain and repeat common words and in different contexts. Likewise, story books, songs, rhymes and poems contain high-frequency words. EarlyBird aims at exposing pupils to the first two thousand words during the eight years they spend at primary school. Some of these words might only be encountered receptively (EarlyBird Curriculum, 2010) .

As has been mentioned before, words have to be used in a meaningful situation. Only then will pupils be able to make sense of the language they hear. Pupils attending the first two years of primary school will not be able to understand each word they hear but they can infer meaning from pictures, objects, body language, tone of voice and facial expressions

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(EarlyBird Curriculum, 2010). There are different activities which teachers can do to achieve this. Total Physical Response (TPR) activities such as drama, songs, action rhymes, dance and mime are a good way to practice vocabulary (EarlyBird Curriculum, 2010). The words which EarlyBird pupils have to learn are related to their frame of reference.

Simple reading and writing activities are introduced in the course of group 4. Some pupils might even begin to read English texts independently. The course books take thematic approaches and include formal reading and writing activities (EarlyBird Curriculum, 2010). From group 5 onwards, pupils are encouraged to learn about other curriculum areas by using English non-fiction books, the Internet and audio-visual materials. In addition, pupils attending higher classes of primary school are stimulated to pay attention to the spelling of irregular and regular words in English (EarlyBird Curriculum, 2010). This can be achieved by drafting and editing writing and by using a dictionary. Stress is laid on writing as a means of communication. Content and Language integrated learning (CLIL) activities are a perfect way to reach this aim (EarlyBird Curriculum, 2010).

2.12 Similarities and differences between Eibo and EarlyBird

EarlyBird and Eibo both work with course books that have thematic approaches and the focus in both approaches is on communication. However, whereas the methodology for Eibo is mainly designed for the teaching of English during the last two years of primary school, EarlyBird also has a detailed methodology for teaching English to pupils in the first groups of primary school. Though both approaches aim at teaching pupils words which are useful and both present these words in meaningful contexts, EarlyBird has higher and clearer vocabulary goals than Eibo. Contrary to Eibo, EarlyBird aims at exposing pupils to the first two thousand words during the eight years they spend at primary school. Some of these words may only be encountered receptively (EarlyBird Curriculum, 2010). Due to the fact that EarlyBird pupils have been taught English from group one onwards, these pupils have had much more exposure to the English language than Eibo pupils.

During the first years of primary school, EarlyBird uses objects, body language, tone of voice and facial expressions in order for pupils to infer meaning. An important aim in both approaches is the repetition of words. However, EarlyBird attempts to achieve this goal by using English as a means of instruction, by using story books, songs, drama, rhymes, poems and TPR activities. Pupils are also taught techniques for memorizing words and phrases and the words which they have to learn are related to their frame of reference. Research has shown that Eibo schools do not use TPR activities as often as EarlyBird schools (Herder & de Bot, 2008). Teachers at Eibo schools usually offer their pupils three different kinds of vocabulary exercises which are: writing down the English word under a picture, translating Dutch words into English and answering questions about the meaning of the English word (Herder & de Bot, 2008).

At EarlyBird schools, English is used as a means of instruction from group 1 (cf. kindergarten) onwards whereas teachers at Eibo schools use a combination of Dutch and English: 56 per cent of the teachers mainly use Dutch and 44 per cent speak English during the lessons (Thijs et al., 2011).

During the last two years of primary school, the primary focus at EarlyBird schools is on English literacy and reading. In addition, the course books which are used include formal

reading and writing activities (EarlyBird Curriculum, 2010). During Eibo lessons, on the other hand, writing is limited to the writing of a small amount of words or short sentences (Oostdam, 2009). It is also noteworthy that not much time is spent on reading English texts at Eibo schools. Furthermore, only 50 per cent of the teachers offer pupils the opportunity to answer questions about a text (Oostdam, 2009).

3. Present research

3.1 Research question

Vocabulary acquisition is considered to be a highly important part of foreign language learning (Nation, 1990). In order to learn words, sufficient exposure to language input is a precondition (Pavičić Takač, 2008). Since sufficient exposure to language input is so important, EarlyBird schools, contrary to Eibo schools, start teaching their pupils English as soon as they start primary school. In the EarlyBird programme teaching vocabulary is the main objective (EarlyBird Curriculum, 2010). Though previous research has been done on English in primary education, actual research into the hypothesis that the English proficiency level of EarlyBird pupils is higher than that of pupils from Eibo schools had yet to be conducted. In addition, no research has been done on how future vmbo basis, kader, gemengd and theoretisch as well as havo and vwo pupils differ with respect to their vocabulary knowledge. Therefore, this research will examine if and to what extent pupils from Eibo and EarlyBird school differ in vocabulary knowledge and whether there are any noticeable differences between future vmbo, havo en vwo pupils. It will endeavour to answer the following research question: How does vocabulary knowledge differ between pupils with lower and upper secondary school exit level for EarlyBird and Eibo?

3.2 Sub questions

- What are the results of the vocabulary-related test-parts in the EarlyBird-Eibo research?

In 2013, a research was conducted in order to estimate the English proficiency level of Dutch pupils in their last year of primary education. Four different tests were offered to the pupils, namely: a listening test, a use of English test, a reading test and a spelling test. In addition, speaking skills were tested for a subgroup of pupils. The use of English test consisted of vocabulary and grammar exercises.

- Do EarlyBird pupils score higher on the vocabulary-related items than Eibo pupils?

In the Netherlands, teaching English as a foreign language is compulsory in the last two years of primary school. English in these schools is referred to as Eibo (English in primary education). However, there are also primary schools that start teaching their pupils English as

early as group 1, when they are four years old. One of the teaching methods available to such primary schools is called EarlyBird, which is specifically aimed towards teaching English to young learners. In this research, a distinction has been made between these two teaching approaches.

- What is the interaction between approach (Eibo/EarlyBird) and school exit level for vocabulary?
In group 8 (cf. grade 6), all schools in the Netherlands administer the Cito test (developed by the Central Institute for Test-development) as a general academic achievement test. Based on the outcome of this test and on the recommendations of the teachers, pupils are assigned to a vmbo, havo or vwo school which are the three different tracks of the Dutch secondary educational system. These levels differ in amount of theoretical education and vocational training. No research has yet been conducted which tests whether the different approaches (i.e. EarlyBird and Eibo) have an effect on pupils' vocabulary levels.

- What is the correlation between vocabulary and other skills?
Since vocabulary is not the only language component that indicates a pupil's level of English, this research also tests listening, reading, grammar and spelling. The correlation between vocabulary and these other skills gives a further indication of a pupil's level. Only one part of the test (i.e. the Use of English test) fails to provide a clear picture of a pupil's abilities. In order to get a realistic view of a pupil's level, it is necessary to look at all the different skills that were tested. A pupil who is good at one test item may not be good at another test item and vice versa.

4. Methodology

4.1 Participants

The target group in the study involved primary school learners in the Netherlands. The study was carried out in 19 primary schools of which most were located in the area of Rotterdam. Approximately 900 pupils took part: 292 EIBO pupils (153 boys and 139 girls) and 301 (140 boys and 161 girls) EarlyBird pupils from group 8 (cf. grade 6) aged 11-12. All EarlyBird pupils had learned English as a foreign language since group 3 or earlier; all EIBO pupils from group 7 (cf. grade 5) on. In 8 of the ten EarlyBird schools, pupils had been taught by a qualified English teacher. Four of these English teachers were qualified native speaker teachers. However, this does not mean that all pupils at these schools were taught by a qualified English teachers; some of the English teachers only taught some of the groups in the schools or they taught the English lessons alongside the class teacher. At the Eibo schools all English lessons were taught by the class teacher.

With the parents' consent, the anonymised data about the cito-scores and the schools' recommendations was made available by the schools. The average cito-score at both types of schools was 534. There was a high correlation between the cito-scores and the schools' recommendations (r=.83).

4.2 Materials

The Use of English test was used to test pupil's vocabulary skills and is therefore relevant for this research. This test consisted of eight parts, part 1, 2 and 7 were vocabulary-related exercises and the other five exercises were grammar-in-context exercises. For this study, there was a focus on part 1, 2 and 7 of the test. As has been explained in the introduction, Anglia works with an incremental system, a step-by-step approach and their levels have been aligned to the CEFR levels (Anglia Network Europe & EarlyBird, 2012-2013). The tests for group 8 contained Preliminary-Intermediate level exercises aiming at A1 to B2 level. Nation (2007) describes different kinds of vocabulary tests. The Use of English test is a proficiency test. One of the aims of the Use of English test was to measure pupils' vocabulary size at the end of group 8 (cf. grade 6). Therefore, vocabulary-related items with different levels were included into the test. The amount of words that a learner knows is referred to as breadth of vocabulary knowledge and depth of vocabulary knowledge refers to how well learners know these words (Nation, 2007). Part 1, which contained preliminary level

vocabulary (A1 level in CEFR), consisted of 6 questions and required pupils to circle the opposite word of the word that was given. For example "What is the opposite of hot?". The second part, a vocabulary exercise at elementary level (A1/A2 level in CEFR) contained 7 questions and required pupils to decide which words go together. For example: "Which word goes with hospital?".

As has been concluded before, beginners do not have enough linguistic knowledge in order to guess a word from context. Therefore, they have to learn words by, for example, connecting it to its synonym, definition, translation into L1, or an illustration (Pavičić Takač, 2008). Part 1 and 2 of the test required pupils to do exactly this and are therefore suitable test items. These two parts tested pupil's breadth of vocabulary knowledge. Part 7, the vocabulary related-item with the highest level (B2) consisted of five questions and required pupils to choose the right word to complete the sentence. This exercise tested how well pupils knew the words and is referred to as depth of vocabulary knowledge (Nation, 2007). Pupils had to choose between three different word classes: a noun, an adverb and an adjective. For instance, danger, dangerous and dangerously. According to Nation (2007) there are different degrees of knowing a word. This has been discussed in chapter 2.1.3. One of the things that is involved in knowing a word is to know its grammatical functions. Part 7 of the test required pupils to know exactly this as they needed to be able to use the word correctly in a sentence. So, although the exercises themselves matched the right level, there is a gap in level between vocabulary related items 1 and 2 on the one hand, and exercise 7 on the other. It would have been better if the test had included vocabulary exercises on each of the different levels as this would have given a clearer picture of the exact vocabulary level of the learner. See appendix A for the Use of English test.

For this research, the anonymised cito-scores of pupils from group 8 and the school recommendations were collected. In addition, pupils completed an online questionnaire which was developed for PPON 2012 (Geurts & Hemker, 2013). The questions related to pupils' attitudes in relation to learning and using English (8 questions); exposure to English outside school (7 questions); speaking English outside school (5 questions); English reading and listening outside school (7 questions); mother tongue and other languages which are spoken at home (3 questions). All questions were closed questions; the question about mother tongue and home languages also offered the opportunity to give more detailed answers. 92% of the participating pupils from group 8 completed the online questionnaire.

4.3 Procedure

In order to determine the procedure for the different tests (understanding of the instructions; duration of the test), the difficulty level and reliability, all tests were piloted at two EarlyBird schools and at one Eibo school (prior to the actual research). The difficulty level of some of the test parts was adapted to increase the reliability of the test. The reliability of the final written tests for group 8 lies between .82 and .89 (KR alfa). This reliability is sufficiently high.

As has been mentioned in the introduction six students of the Educational Master English Culture and Language participated in this research. These six students visited the schools in pairs and administered the tests. The four tests were taken in a predetermined order: first pupils did the listening test (45 minutes), secondly the Use of English test (30 minutes) and thirdly the reading test (30 minutes). In addition, pupils had to do a spelling test of about 20 minutes. After the lunch break, the speaking tests were conducted.

One student researcher handed out the Use of English tests and pupils were asked not to open them yet. Once all the pupils received the test, the student explained that the test consisted of 9 exercises and that the last exercise was an extra exercise which they could do in case they finished the test early. The student instructed pupils to first read the exercises carefully and to look at the examples that were given so that they knew what was expected. There were different kinds of exercises: sometimes pupils had to fill in a word, make a new sentence or circle the right answer. Pupils had to use a blue or black pen and were not allowed to talk during the test. After these instructions were given, pupils were given the opportunity to ask questions.

Once pupils had completed the test, they were marked. Each student marked the tests he or she administered and the results were entered into Microsoft Excel. Once all the data was collected, SPSS was used to produce statistical analyses. The results of pupils with vmbo-bb level, a vmbo-gl level, a vmbo-kl level, a vmbo-tl level, a havo level and a vwo level were then compared and analysed separately. A distinction was made between the EIBO and the EarlyBird pupils. For each of the different school exit levels, descriptive statistics were presented which showed the differences in results between the Eibo and the EarlyBird pupils

for each of the three parts of the test. Further analysis was carried out in order to conclude if EarlyBird pupils had significantly different English vocabulary knowledge than Eibo pupils and if there was an interaction between approach (Eibo/EarlyBird) and school exit level for vocabulary. Finally, the Pearson correlation test was used to analyse if there was a correlation between vocabulary and the three other skills that were tested: reading, listening and speaking.

5. Results

5.1 What are the difficulty levels of vocabulary-related parts 1, 2 and 7 of the Use of English test?

On average, 14.10 of the 18 vocabulary-related items of parts 1, 2 and 7 were answered correctly. 91 percent of the pupils answered all questions of part 1 of the test correctly. For part 2 this percentage is 84 and for part 7 58. The corrected item-total correlation for the test as a whole is 0.317. The average corrected item-total correlation for parts 1, 2 and 7 in comparison to the average of all test items were also calculated. For part 1 this is 0.257, for part 2 0.293 and for part 7 0.366. The reliability of the full test (N=58) is Cronbach's Alpha .87 which indicates good reliability.

Table 7. *Difficulty levels of part 1, 2 and 7 for all school levels, disaggregated by Eibo and EarlyBird pupils*

	N	Mean	Std. Deviation	No. Items
Eibo	270	13.62	2.77	18
EarlyBird	278	14.56	2.52	18

In table 7, the difficulty levels for items 1, 2 and 7 taken together are shown for pupils in all school levels, disaggregated by Eibo and EarlyBird pupils. The average score of EarlyBird pupils is higher than that of Eibo pupils; 13.62 for Eibo and 14.56 for EarlyBird. This difference is significant.

Table 8. *Difficulty levels Part 1, 2 & 7 of each school level separately, Eibo and EarlyBird*

	N	Mean	Std. Deviation	No. Items
Vmbo lwoo	17	11.67	3.44	18
Vmbo bb	23	12.42	3.07	18
Vmbo kb	51	12.83	2.79	18
Vmbo gt	35	13.48	2.81	18
Vmbo tl	124	13.40	2.85	18
Vmbo tl/Havo	53	14.58	2.63	18
Havo	96	14.09	2.35	18
Havo/Vwo	59	14.98	1.91	18
Vwo	130	15.40	1.90	18

Table 8 shows the difficulty levels of all three test items of future vmbo-lwoo, vmbo-basis, vmbo-kader, vmbo gl, vmbo tl, vmbo tl/havo, havo, havo/vwo and vwo pupils, Eibo and EarlyBird pupils together. As can been seen in the table, the highest two school levels (i.e. vwo & havo/vwo) have the highest average scores and the std. deviation for these levels are the lowest. A low std. deviation indicates that pupils' results tend to be very close to the mean and can therefore be considered reliable.

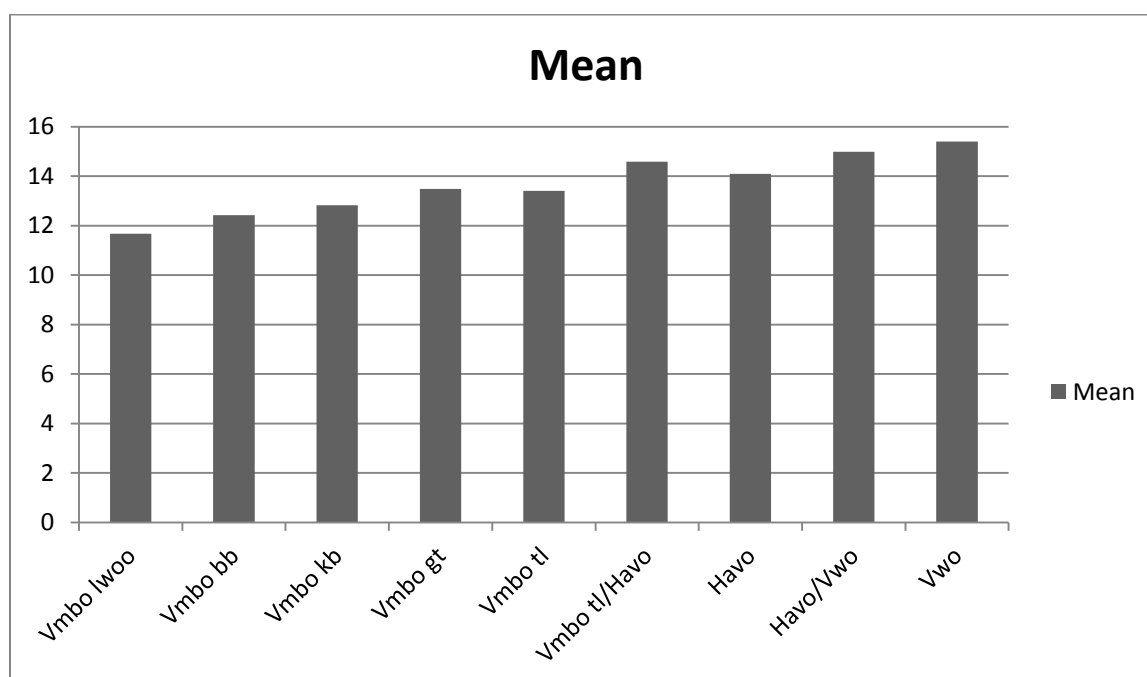*Figure 1*. Mean of all school levels (max = 18), Eibo & EarlyBird

Figure 1 shows the mean of parts 1, 2 and 7 of all school levels of EIBO and EarlyBird pupils. Vwo pupils and havo/vwo pupils have the highest mean (i.e. average score). Future vwo pupils answered, on average, 15.4 of the 18 questions correctly and havo/vwo pupils 14, 98 of the 18 questions. Vmbo lwoo pupils have the lowest mean (i.e. average score), they answered 11.67 questions of the 18 questions correctly.

Figure 2. Mean Part 1 (max = 6), Eibo and EarlyBird

Figure 2 shows the mean of item 1 of future vmbo-lwoo, vmbo-basis, vmbo-kader, vmbo gl, vmbo tl, vmbo tl/havo, havo, havo/vwo and vwo pupils disaggregated by EIBO and EarlyBird pupils. Item 1, was the easiest vocabulary exercise (preliminary level/A1) and consisted of 6 questions. EarlyBird pupils score higher than Eibo pupils at all school levels. The highest difference in average score between Eibo and EarlyBird pupils is for the vmbo tl/havo pupils. At this level, Eibo pupils have an average score of 4.1 whereas EarlyBird pupils have an average score of 5.4.

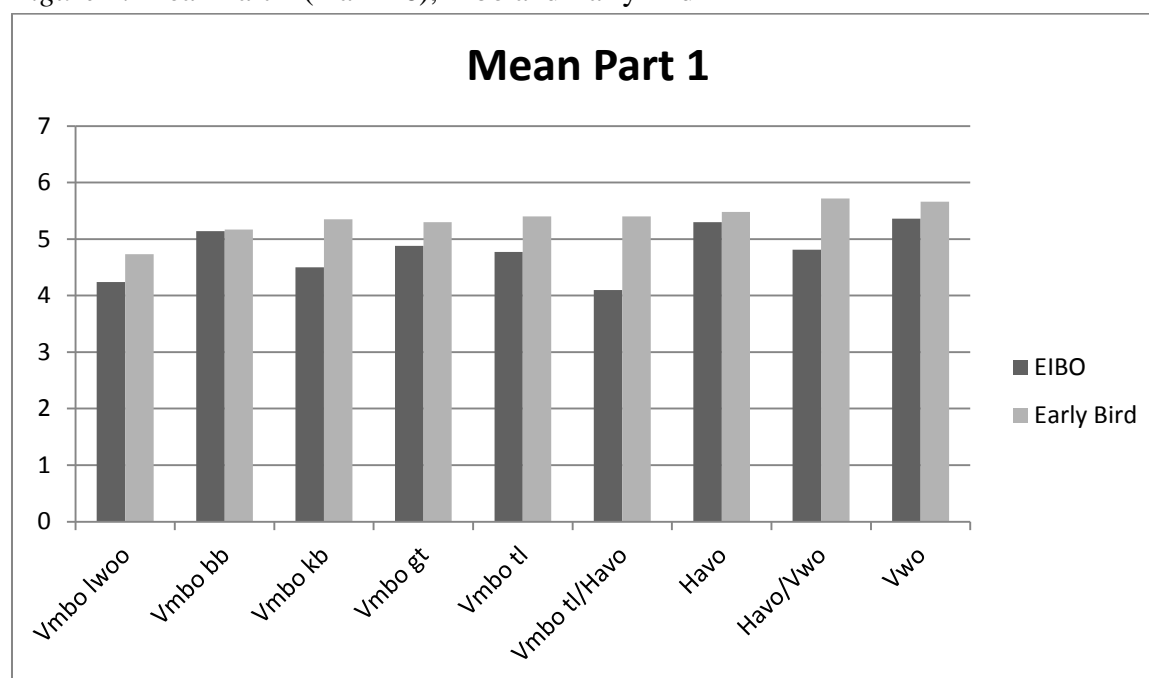*Figure 3*. Mean Part 2 (max = 7), Eibo and EarlyBird

Figure 3 shows the mean of item 2 of future vmbo-lwoo, vmbo-basis, vmbo-kader, vmbo gl, vmbo tl, vmbo tl/havo, havo, havo/vwo and vwo pupils disaggregated by EIBO and EarlyBird pupils. Item 2 consisted of 6 questions at elementary level (A1/A2 level) and again, EarlyBird pupils scored higher than Eibo pupils at all school levels. The highest difference in average score between Eibo and EarlyBird is for the vmbo tl/havo and the havo pupils. At both school levels, EarlyBird pupils have an average score of 6.22 while Eibo pupils have an average score of 4.57.

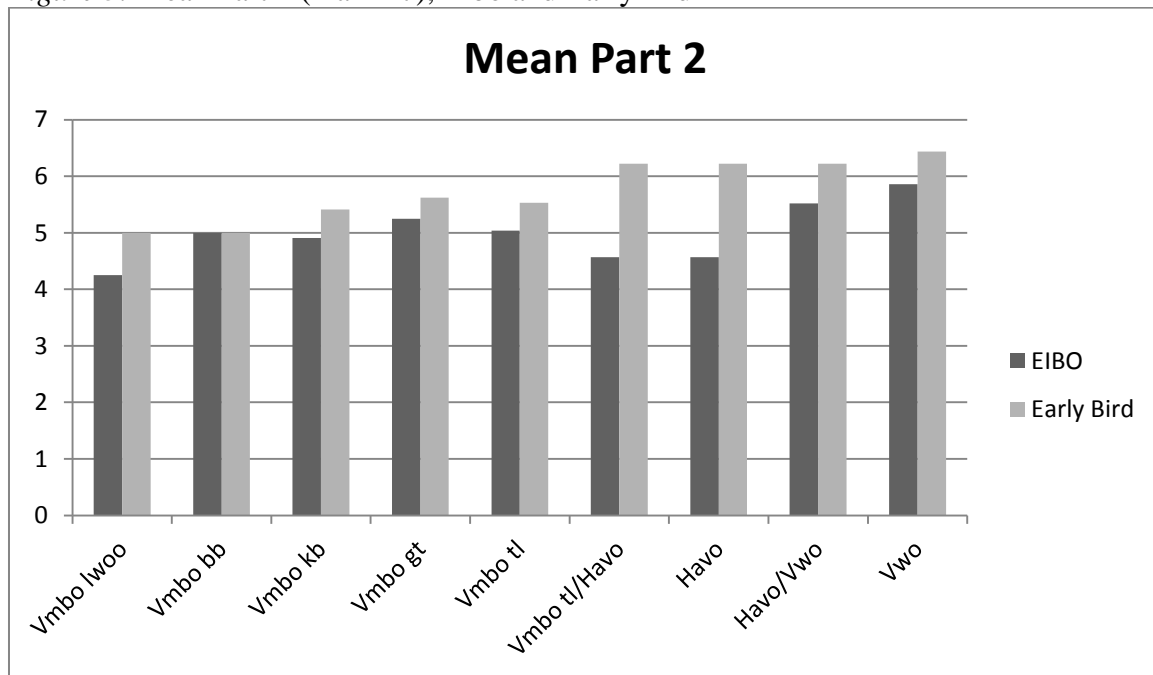*Figure 4.* Mean Part 7 (max = 4), Eibo and EarlyBird
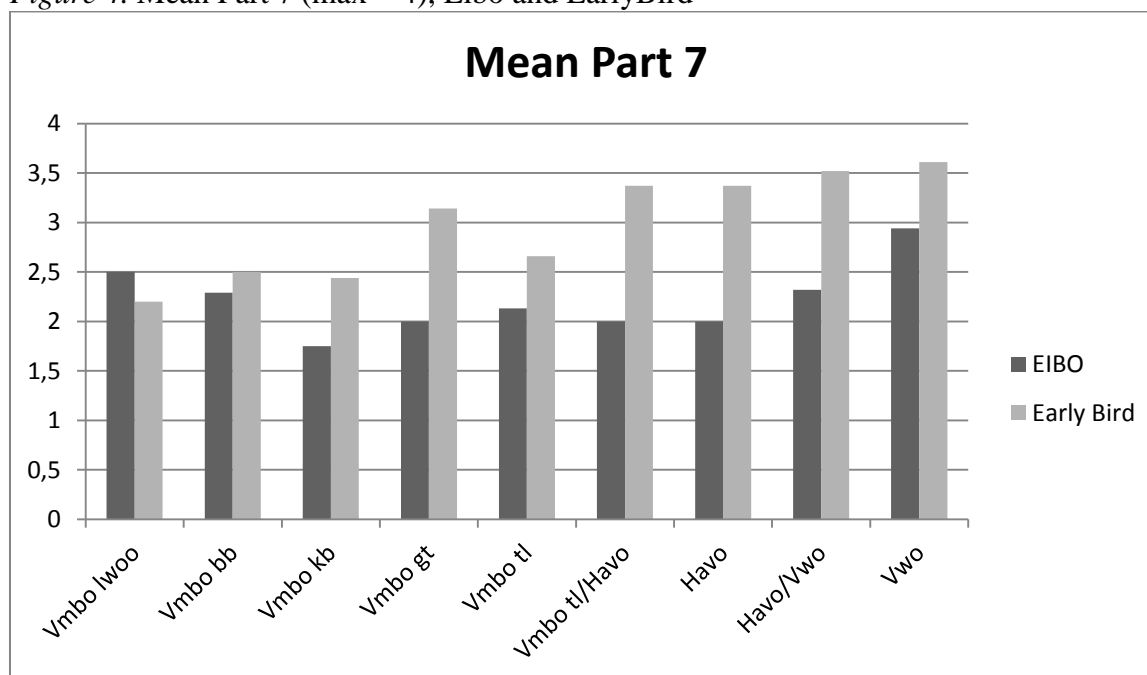
Figure 4 shows the mean of item 7 of future vmbo-lwoo, vmbo-basis, vmbo-kader, vmbo gl, vmbo tl, vmbo tl/havo, havo, havo/vwo and vwo pupils disaggregated by EIBO and EarlyBird pupils. Item 7 consisted of 4 questions and was the most difficult ~~item~~ of the three vocabulary-related items (B2 level). EarlyBird pupils scored higher than Eibo pupils at all school levels except for the future lwoo pupils (Eibo 2.5, EarlyBird 2.2). The differences in average scores between Eibo and EarlyBird are the highest for this item. This is probably due to the fact that this item was the most difficult one. Similar to item 2, the highest difference in average score between Eibo and EarlyBird is for the vmbo tl/havo and the havo pupils. At both levels, EarlyBird pupils have an average score of 3.37 while Eibo pupils have an average score of 2.

5.2 Do EarlyBird pupils score higher on the vocabulary-related items than Eibo pupils?

EarlyBird pupils score higher than Eibo pupils for almost each item. This can be seen in table 8, which shows the mean and standard deviation of all three vocabulary-related exercises for each school level, disaggregated by Eibo and EarlyBird pupils. For the vocabulary test parts (parts 1, 2 and 7 together) differences between Early Bird and Eibo are significant ($F = 6.14$, $p = .013$). Differences are also significant between the different school levels ($F = 5.61$, $p < .001$). Bonferroni Post-hoc analyses reveal that the differences on the vocabulary test parts are significant between levels 1 -5 (lwoo till vmbo gt) on the one hand, and level 9, vwo, on the other. This means that vwo pupils perform significantly better than vmbo gt pupils and below. There was no interaction effect between Early Bird /Eibo and school exit level ($F = 1.02$, $p = .415$). That is, both in Early Bird and Eibo, vwo-level pupils scored higher than vmbo-level pupils. Havo/vwo pupils did better than lwoo, vmbo basis, vmbo kader and vmbo tl pupils. Other differences are not significant.

As can been seen in table 8, the standard deviation is higher for the lower school levels. This means that at these levels, pupils' scores are more diverse and further away from the mean.

Table 8. *Mean and std. deviation of all three vocabulary exercises for each school level, disaggregated by Eibo and Early Bird*

	Eibo			Early Bird		
	N	Mean	Std. Dev.	N	Mean	Std. Dev.
Vmbo lwoo	4	11.00	4.69	11	11.90	3.11
Vmbo bb	14	12.43	3.41	5	12.40	2.20
Vmbo kb	32	12.72	3.10	17	13.10	2.28
Vmbo gl	8	12.13	3.14	21	14.00	2.57
Vmbo tl	68	13.26	3.04	47	13.60	2.57
Vmbo tl /Havo	23	14.04	2.46	27	15.04	2.72
Havo	47	13.66	2.25	43	14.56	2.40
Havo/Vwo	22	14.32	2.03	33	15.42	1.73
Vwo	51	15.03	1.79	73	15.64	1.95

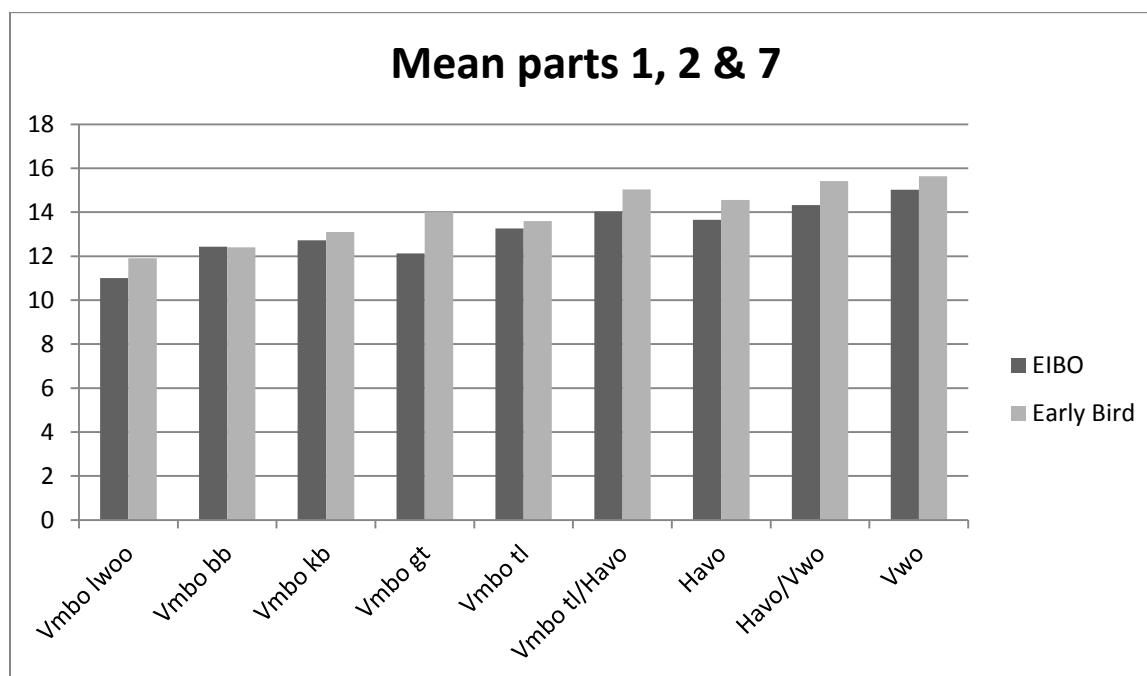*Figure 5.* Mean Parts 1, 2 and 7, disaggregated by Eibo and Early Bird

Figure 5 shows the mean of parts 1, 2 and 7 of Eibo and EarlyBird pupils. These results have just been discussed.

Also for the non-vocabulary test parts (parts 3-6 and 8 together) differences between EB and Eibo are significant (F = 14.16, p < .001). Differences are also significant between school exit levels (F = 10.17, p < .001). Bonferroni Post-hoc analyses reveal that the differences on the non-vocabulary test parts are significant between levels 1 - 5 (lwoo till vmbo gt) on the one hand, and levels 8 - 9 (havo/wo and vwo), on the other. This means that havo/vwo and vwo pupils perform significantly better than vmbo gt pupils and below. There was no interaction effect between Early Bird/Eibo and school exit level (F = 1.30, p = .241). That is, both in Early Bird and Eibo, vwo- and havo/vwo-level pupils scored higher than vmbo-level pupils. Furthermore, there is an effect for EarlyBird on the vocabulary parts (t= 4. 294, p<.001) as well as on the other parts of the test (t= 6.608, p<.001). Thus, pupils who attended an EarlyBird school, scored higher on vocabulary as well as on the other parts of the test.

5.3 What is the interaction between approach (Eibo/EarlyBird) and school exit level for vocabulary?

Both school exit level (F=5.610, p =.000), and approach (Eibo/EarlyBird) (F=6.142, p =.013) have significant effects on the scores of the vocabulary items. However, there appears to be no interaction between the two (F= 1.026, p =. *415)*. This means that approach does not have any influence on a pupil's school exit level.

Pupils with a higher school exit level score better on vocabulary than pupils with a lower school exit level. This applies for Eibo as well as for EarlyBird pupils. Therefore, it has been decided not to do further analyses to distinguish between Eibo and Earlybird.

5.4 What is the correlation between vocabulary and other skills?

The correlation between vocabulary and other skills gives a further indication of a pupil's level since only one part of the test fails to provide a clear picture of a pupil's abilities. In order to get a realistic view of a pupil's level, it is necessary to look at all the different skills and language components that were tested. A pupil who is good at one skill or language component may not be good at another skill or language component and vice versa.

Table 9. *Correlation between vocabulary and grammar, listening, reading and dictation*

	Grammar	Listening	Reading	Spelling
Vocabulary	.719	.735	.697	.547

Table 9 shows the correlation between vocabulary and other language parts which were tested. The correlation between vocabulary and the other exercises of the Use of English test is .719. So, when pupils score high on vocabulary exercises, it is quite likely that they score high on the grammar exercises of the test too. The correlation between vocabulary and listening is similarly high: .735 as well as the correlation between vocabulary and reading (.697). The correlation between vocabulary and spelling is lower (.547).

6. Conclusion/Discussion

In this report, the English vocabulary knowledge of Dutch pupils in their last year of primary school has been discussed. There has been a special focus on the difference in level between Eibo and EarlyBird pupils. This research also looked at possible differences in vocabulary knowledge in future vmbo lwoo, vmbo bb, vmbo kb vmbo gl and vmbo tl pupils. First, the answers to the sub questions will be summarized. After that the research question will be answered and discussed. In addition, suggestions will be made for further research.

Sub question 1 concerned the difficulty levels of the vocabulary-related parts 1, 2 and 7 of the Use of English test. The results showed that, on the whole, pupils did well on the test as 14.10 of the 18 vocabulary exercises were answered correctly. Pupils scored best on part 1 of the test: 91 percent of all the pupils answered all questions of this part correctly. EarlyBird pupils scored higher than Eibo pupils at all school levels. 84 percent of all pupils answered all questions of part 2 of the test correctly. EarlyBird pupils attained higher results than Eibo pupils at all school levels. 58 percent of the pupils answered all questions of part 7 of the test correctly. With the exception of the future lwoo pupils, EarlyBird pupils scored higher than Eibo pupils at all school levels.

Sub question 2 looked at the differences in scores between EarlyBird and Eibo pupils. EarlyBird pupils scored higher than Eibo pupils for almost each item. For the vocabulary test parts (parts 1, 2 and 7 together) differences between EarlyBird and Eibo are significant. The differences between the different school levels are also significant.

Sub question 3 dealt with the correlation between the different approaches and school exit level for vocabulary. The results showed that there were significant effects of school exit level as well as approach (Eibo/EarlyBird) on the scores of the vocabulary items. However, there appeared to be no interaction between the two. Both Eibo and EarlyBird with a higher school exit level scored better on vocabulary than pupils with a lower school exit level.

Sub question 4 involved the correlation between vocabulary and other skills. The correlation between vocabulary and the other exercises of the Use of English test is high. The correlation between vocabulary and listening, reading and spelling is also high.

This research has been conducted in order to answer the following research question: How does vocabulary knowledge differ between pupils with lower level and upper level secondary school exit level for EarlyBird and EIBO?

At all school levels, EarlyBird pupils attained higher results than Eibo pupils for almost each vocabulary-related item. For EarlyBird as well as for Eibo pupils, the differences on vocabulary items were significant for vmbo lwoo pupils, vmbo bb, vmbo kb, vmbo tl and for vwo pupils. So, vwo pupils scored higher than vmbo gt pupils and below and havo/vwo pupils did better than lwoo, vmbo basis, vmbo kader and vmbo tl pupils. There appeared to be no interaction effect between EarlyBird/Eibo and school exit level. So, both EarlyBird and Eibo vwo pupils scored higher than vmbo-level pupils. Havo/vwo pupils did better than lwoo, vmbo basis, vmbo kader and vmbo tl pupils. EarlyBird pupils scored higher on the other parts of the test, the non-vocabulary test items, as well. So, the richer English language input which EarlyBird pupils have been exposed to during their eight years at primary school has resulted in a higher vocabulary knowledge than that of Eibo pupils. Nevertheless, considering the fact that EarlyBird pupils received six more years of English lessons than Eibo pupils, the differences in test results are relatively small. On top of this, the first two vocabulary-related exercises contained exercises for beginners (A1-level) and were therefore quite easy. Part 7, on the other hand, was the highest-level vocabulary-related item and therefore significantly more difficult (approximately B1/B2 level). The difference in average score between Eibo and EarlyBird pupils are the highest for this part of the test. So, the more difficult the exercise, the higher the difference in score between Eibo and EarlyBird pupils.

In Anglia tests, vocabulary is not tested separately but as part of the speaking, listening, reading and writing tests. Both parts 1 and 2 were not original Anglia material but were added to the test by Early Bird in order to determine pupils' vocabulary knowledge more specifically. However, it is likely that there is correlation between exercise 1, 2 and 7 and the results of the other test parts (the non-vocabulary items in the Use of English test, Reading and Listening) as these tests also require vocabulary knowledge. Further research is needed to find this out.

For this research as a whole, not only the different school approaches were taken into account but also a pupil's attitude, exposure to language outside the classroom, language background and self-estimated language ability. 92 percent of the pupils who participated in this research completed an online questionnaire about these topics. In the Netherlands, L2 learners are often also exposed to English outside the classroom, as English is often used in the media. Learners watch English television programmes, listen to English music and play

English computer games online (Verspoor et al., 2010). In addition, English is used for advertisements so learners are exposed to English on the streets (Gerritsen, Van Meurs & Gijsbers, 2000). The results of the questionnaire showed that there was a strong relation between attitude and test results: pupils with a positive attitude to English achieved higher results on written tests, including on the Use of English test. There also appeared to be a positive correlation between language contact and test results: pupils who got a lot of exposure to English outside the classroom performed better on the written tests. There were no differences between EarlyBird and Eibo pupils: the effects of attitude and exposure to language outside of school/language contact on test results were similar for both groups. They also had the same attitude regarding the value and use of English and were equally exposed to English outside school (de Graaff, 2014). There appeared to be no interaction/relationship between exposure to language outside the classroom (buitenschools taalcontact) and school exit level (cito-score): pupils with a higher cito-score have not had significantly more exposure to language/English outside of school than pupils with a lower school exit level (cito-score). Differences in test results from the perspective of mother-tongue appeared to be due to differences in school exit levels (cito-scores). This means that a different mother tongue in itself does neither hinder nor benefit learning English in an EarlyBird or Eibo context.

So, this research has shown a positive correlation between attitude and language skills, and between exposure to language/English outside of school and language skills. It is not clear if a more positive attitude to language learning leads to better language skills or vice versa. The frequency of exposure to English outside the classroom can be a reason as well as a consequence of better language skills. Encouraging a positive attitude to language and outside of school exposure to English appear both useful: teachers can try to play an stimulating role in this. It is also highly recommendable for teachers to teach their pupils vocabulary learning strategies so that they can continue to expand their vocabulary knowledge when they are not at school. According to Pavičić Takač (2008) pupils need help in systematically and constantly expanding their vocabulary outside of class as well (by saying how important it is to take notes, to read, watch television etc.). Pupils have to be motivated to discover new and develop the existing vocabulary learning strategies at all times so that they are able to deal with words when they are not at school as well (Pavičić Takač, 2008).

In 2006 and in 2012 the PPON conducted a research in order to determine pupils' English proficiency level at the end of primary school. The results of 2006 showed that future

havo and vwo pupils possess a broader knowledge of vocabulary than vmbo pupils. The results of 2012 revealed that pupils' vocabulary knowledge had increased compared to the results of 2006. In the research of 2012, a distinction was made between Vvto pupils, including Early Bird pupils, and Eibo pupils. Similar to the results of this research, it showed that Vvto pupils, who have received between 5 and 8 years of English lessons, score higher on vocabulary than Eibo pupils. PPON shows the biggest effects on speaking skills, moderate effects on reading skills and vocabulary and small effects on reading. The present study also shows small to moderate effects at all tested skills/vocabulary. Both researches show a strong connection with school exit level: pupils with higher school exit levels score better on English than pupils with lower school exit levels.

The results of this research show that EarlyBird pupils score higher than Eibo pupils. It has not been researched if this difference is due to an early start, or due to the more extensive programme and/or the quality of the programme, i.e. the course books, the materials, language skills and didactic qualities of the teacher. Therefore, not enough information is available about these differences (*in experience and methodology between schools*) to interpret the results and further research is needed. However, when comparing the EarlyBird and Eibo approach in general, the following facts can be concluded. First of all, vocabulary teaching is considered highly important in the EarlyBird approach. Therefore, two main goals are set for vocabulary which are: teaching pupils a wide range of high-frequency words and teaching them techniques for memorizing words and phrases (EarlyBird Curriculum, 2010). Though vocabulary teaching is part of Eibo lessons as well, Eibo lacks specific goals for vocabulary. Eibo lessons mainly consist of teaching oral communication, writing a limited number of common English words and reading simple texts. It does, however, aim to meet the attainment targets set for English, which include teaching pupils how to spell simple words about daily topics and teaching pupils how to find the meaning and spelling of English words in a dictionary. The main goal of teaching English in primary education in general, is to lay the foundations for communication with native speakers or with others who speak English outside of a school context (Bodde-Alderlieste & Schokkenbroek, 2011). Nevertheless, vocabulary learning is necessary because pupils need enough vocabulary knowledge in order to express themselves in English.

Language learners have to be exposed to comprehensible language input (Nation, 2008). EarlyBird pupils have had 6 more years of exposure to English than Eibo pupils. As has been concluded earlier in this report, memory plays a vital role in vocabulary learning

because word knowledge is more likely to suffer from attrition than other linguistic aspects, such as phonology or grammar (Schmitt, 2000). In order to consolidate words into the long term memory, a lot of exposure to language is necessary. Thornbury (2002) has drawn up a list of principles to help the transfer of the new lexical information into the long term memory, including: several encounters with a word, preferably at spaced intervals, retrieval and use of a word, cognitive depth, affective depth, personalisation, imaging, use of mnemonics and conscious attention that is necessary to remember a word. Due to the fact that EarlyBird pupils have had more exposure, they have also had more opportunities to apply these principles and this could explain their larger vocabulary knowledge.

During the first years of primary school, EarlyBird uses objects, body language, tone of voice and facial expressions in order for pupils to infer meaning. These are good ways for beginners to learn words. First stage L2 learners cannot determine the meaning of a word from its context as they have not acquired enough vocabulary yet to be able to do that. In order to be successful in guessing the meaning of a word from context, the learner's proficiency level (linguistic knowledge, word knowledge and strategic knowledge) has to be high enough for him or her to apply this strategy (Nagy,1997). Therefore, beginners have to learn a new word by connecting it to its synonym, definition, translation into L1, or an illustration (Pavičić Takač, 2008).

An important aim in both the EarlyBird as well as the Eibo approach is the repetition of words. EarlyBird attempts to achieve this goal by using English as a means of instruction, by using story books, songs, drama, rhymes, poems and TPR activities. Pupils are also taught techniques for memorizing words and phrases and the words which they have to learn are related to their frame of reference. Research has shown that at Eibo schools TPR activities are not used as often as at EarlyBird schools (Herder & de Bot, 2008). Teachers at Eibo schools usually offer their pupils three different kinds of vocabulary exercises which are: writing down the English word under a picture, translating Dutch words into English and answering questions about the meaning of the English word (Herder & de Bot, 2008). Although these activities are also suitable activities for beginners, EarlyBird offers a wider range of vocabulary activities and therefore pupils are given more opportunities to consolidate their word knowledge into their long term memory.

Not only does EarlyBird offer pupils much more exposure to English, it also explicitly pursues a certain goal which Eibo does not, i.e. to expose pupils to the first two thousand words during their primary school time. This goal may be reached, among other things, by

exclusively using the target language as a means of instruction and by reading simple texts from group 4 onwards. Different linguists have emphasized that reading is an effective way to expands one's vocabulary (Ellis, 1997 & Schmitt, 2008). However, learners have to be familiar with at least 95% of the words that they are reading or listening to in order to be able to identify the main idea of the text (Nation, 2007). Also, it enables learners to guess the correct meaning of unfamiliar words and to learn new words (Nation, 2007). At EarlyBird schools simple reading and writing activities are introduced in the course of group 4. Some pupils might even begin to read English texts independently. The course books take thematic approaches and include formal reading and writing activities (EarlyBird Curriculum, 2010). According to Nation (2007) writing forces learners to pay attention to words in a different way than while listening and reading. Writing also expands learners' knowledge of previously encountered vocabulary (Nation, 2007). From group 5 onwards, pupils can also learn about other curriculum areas by using English non-fiction books, the Internet and audio-visual materials. Pupils attending higher classes of primary school are also stimulated to pay attention to the spelling of irregular and regular words in English (EarlyBird Curriculum, 2010). This can be achieved by drafting and editing writing and by using a dictionary. Stress is laid on writing as a way of communication. CLIL (Content and Language integrated learning) activities are a perfect way to reach this aim (EarlyBird Curriculum, 2010). During the last two years of primary school, the primary focus at EarlyBird schools is on English literacy and reading. In addition, the course books which are used include formal reading and writing activities (EarlyBird Curriculum, 2010). During Eibo lessons, on the other hand, writing is limited to the writing of a small amount of words or short sentences (Oostdam, 2009). It is also noteworthy to mention that not much time is spent on reading English texts at Eibo schools. Furthermore, only 50 percent of the teachers offer pupils the opportunity to answer questions that go with a text (Oostdam, 2009).

Another reason for the larger vocabulary knowledge of EarlyBird pupils could be that EarlyBird aims at relating the words to their pupil's frame of reference. Nation (2007) stresses that learning can only take place when pupils are interested in what they have to learn.

Schmitt (2008) and Carter (1992) argue that a large amount of vocabulary can be successfully learnt by wordlists. Teachers should teach words explicitly at the beginning of a language course in order for pupils to understand simple sentences. Eibo pupils nor Early Bird pupils are offered wordlists when they start learning English at school. As EarlyBird pupils cannot read or write when they start learning English, offering them wordlists is not a helpful

option. However, it could increase the vocabulary knowledge of Eibo pupils.

This research has provided evidence that EarlyBird pupils have a broader vocabulary than pupils who attended regular Eibo lessons. In addition, it showed that EarlyBird and Eibo pupils with a higher school exit level attained higher results for the vocabulary exercises than pupils with a lower school exit level. However, considering the fact that EarlyBird pupils had 6 more years of English lessons than Eibo pupils the differences in test results are not very big.

Though there is not enough information about the differences in experience and methodology between the schools to interpret the results, there are different factors which are likely to contribute to the differences in results. First of all, EarlyBird pupils have had more language input than Eibo pupils. Not only have EarlyBird pupils learnt English from group 1 onwards but the EarlyBird approach also creates richer input in the language classroom by, for example, solely using the target language, reading more texts and doing more vocabulary-related exercises. Furthermore, EarlyBird aims at reaching higher goals for vocabulary than Eibo.

It would be interesting to research the relationship between the vocabulary-related items 1, 2 and 7 and the Reading, Listening and the Use of English test (the non-vocabulary items). In addition, it would be useful to research which methodology is most effective for learning words and what role the teacher's language skills play in this as the methodology which EarlyBird and Eibo schools use differ per school.

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Anglia Examinations England in

cooperation with EarlyBird

<u>Use of English Test Group 8</u>

Time allowed: 30 minutes

	Part 1	Part 2	Part 3	Part 4	Part 5	Part 6	Part 7	Part 8
EXAMINER'S USE ONLY								

Part 1 (6 marks)

What word is the opposite? Look at the underlined word. Circle the correct answer.

There is one example.

Example: What is the opposite of **big**?

A.   loud   B.   (small)   C.   thick

---

1.   What is the opposite of **hot**?

A.   cold   B.   fat   C.   left

---

2.   What is the opposite of **early**?

A.   famous   B.   good   C.   late

---

3.   What is the opposite of **right**?

A.   quiet   B.   thin   C.   wrong

---

4.   What is the opposite of **long**?

A.   bad   B.   short   C.   wild

---

5.   What is the opposite of **dark**?

A.   broken   B.   excellent   C.   light

---

6.   What is the opposite of **empty**?

A.   full   B.   ill   C.   tall

Part 2 (7 marks)

Which words go together? Look at the underlined word. Circle the correct answer.

There is one example.

Example: Which word goes with **drink**?

A.   (glass)   B.   knife   C.   pencil

7.   Which word goes with **hospital**?

A.   ambulance   B.   birthday   C.   industry

8.   Which word goes with **picnic**?

A.   giraffe   B.   jungle   C.   sandwich

9.   Which word goes with **mile**?

A.   kilometre   B.   microphone   C.   patient

10.   Which word goes with **bathroom**?

A.   cloud   B.   menu   C.   shower

11.   Which word goes with **spoon**?

A.   fish and chips   B.   pizza   C.   soup

12.   Which word goes with **co-operation**?

A.   competition   B.   on your own   C.   teamwork

13.   Which word goes with **policeman**?

A.   cop   B.   pro   C.   MP

Part 3 (10 marks)

Look at the picture. Put the words in the right order and write the sentence. There is one example.

Example: The / is reading / book / a / woman

The woman is reading a book.

14. children / having / ~~The~~ / fun / are

The

15. has got / tent / big / family / ~~The~~ / a

The

16. next to / is / ~~There~~ / a car / the tent

There

17.   can / and a rabbit / see / a dog / ~~I~~ FOR

I

18.   and a / ~~Dad~~ / shorts / t-shirt / is wearing

Dad

Part 4 (15 marks)

Choose the correct words and circle the right answer.
There is one example.

Example:

____There is____ a very good restaurant in the town.

A. They are   B. There is   C. It has   D. There are

---

19.   We can watch the film _____ 4 o'clock.

A. at   B. to   C. in   D. on

---

20.   My brother is riding _____ bike.

A. he   B. she   C. his   D. him

---

21.   _____ is your favourite food?

A. When   B. Why   C. What   D. Who

---

22.   My brother likes _____ the guitar.

A. plays   B. playing   C. play   D. is playing

---

23.   She is a nice woman. I like _____ .

A. her   B. their   C. she   D. your

---

24.   They are playing _____ the garden.

A. at   B. to   C. in   D. for

---

25.   That is Pat. She is a friend of _____ .

A. I   B. me   C. my   D. mine

70

26. He's coming to the cinema, _____ ?

A. isn't he   B. does he   C. wasn't he

D. was he

27. Grace was _____ to her friend when a dog ranbetween them.

A. talking   B. talk   C. to talk   D. talked

28. You must_____ to bed as you are very tired.

A. going   B. went   C. to go   D. go

29. I am going _____ my house today.

A. to clean   B. be cleaning   C. cleans   D. cleaned

30. Is that the beach _____ you lost your bag?

A. who   B. what   C. where

D. which

31. The soldiers stood _____ when their captain entered.

A. on   B. after   C. up   D. off

32. My sister has _____ four centimetres in one year.

A. growing   B. grow   C. grew

D. grown

33. We _____ ran for the bus, but we were too late.

A. quick   B. quickly   C. quicker

D. quickest

Part 5 (10 marks)

Put the words in the right order and write the sentence. The first word has a capital letter. There is one example.

Example: weekend / cinema / going / at / We / the / to / are / the

> We are going to the cinema at the weekend.

34. hard / always / Freddie / works / very

> Freddie

35. have / I / been / Paris / to / never

> I

36. China / David / live / to / used / in

> David

37. Harry / football / better / than / is / at / John

> John

38. doorbell / I / when / was / the / rang / working

> I

Part 6 (10 marks)

Rewrite these sentences. Put the words in brackets in their correct place. There is one example.

Example: I have climbed a mountain. (never)

I have never climbed a mountain.

---

39.   Ellie is doing her homework.   (still)

---

40.   She has been on holiday.   (already)

---

41.   I haven't seen the new film.   (yet)

---

42.   Peter visits his uncle these days.   (rarely)

---

43.   They saw the monkeys at the zoo.   (hardly)

Part 7 (5 marks)

Choose the correct word and circle it.

There is one example.

Example:

She was ___angry___ this morning.		
(A. angry)	B. angrily	C. anger

44. The young man was driving _____ .		
A. danger	B. dangerous	C. dangerously

45. The children were very _____ about their exam results.		
A. excitement	B. exited	C. exciting

46. The doctor advised the man to eat a _____ diet.		
A. health	B. healthily	C. healthy

47. You must be _____ when you are skiing.		
A. careful	B. care	C. carefully

48. Isabelle finds science very _____ .		
A. interested	B. interesting	C. interest

5

Part 8 (10 marks)

Choose the correct answer in each sentence and write it on the line. There is one example. Example:

We saw your brother __when__ we were out on Saturday night.			
A. what	B. which	C. when	D. who

49. If I hadn't been so late, I _____ done the shopping.

   A. would have   B. had   C. have

   D. had been

50. My cousin has always been good _____ history.

   A. in   B. with   C. on

   D. at

51. After _____ late, John got home at 9 pm.

   A. works   B. working   C. work

   D. worked

52. You are coming to the party, _____ ?

   A. do you?   B. won't you?   C. will you?

   D. aren't you?

53. Until the rain _____ , I am staying inside.

   A. stops   B. stopping   C. stop

   D. stopped

54. He is so much _____ now than he was last year.

   A. good   B. well   C. better

   D. best

55. They were a very happy family _____ having no money.

A. in spite of   B. even though   C. however   D. although

56. Our family _____ in the same hotel every August for 10 years.

A. staying   B. has stayed   C. stay   D. to stay

57. They _____ to be quiet in the classroom.

A. is told   B. were telling   C. were told

D. is telling

58. If I lived near a windy coast, I would _____ to windsurf.

A. to learn   B. learning   C. learned

D. learn

Part 9

Just for fun! Fill in the form.

Karate Club Membership Form	
Please write clearly in the space provided.	
First name:	
Surname:	
Address:	
Postcode or Zip Code:	
City	
Country:	
Nationality:	
Age:	

Date of Birth:	
Interests:	