Dutch as a second language in primary schools in the Netherlands; past, present and future.

This study focused on the suitability of the vocabulary modules of three Dutch primary school language methods (Taalverhaal, Taal actief and Taal op maat) for learners of Dutch as a second language in a regular fifth form. The comparison was based on the vocabulary teaching approach by Beck et al. (2002), which divides words into three tiers. Tier one words are very basic everyday words, tier two words are more advanced and used in many different domains, tier three words are only usable within their specific domain. For vocabulary growth most attention should be paid to tier two and three words, which are not ‘picked up’. To come to a comparison a checklist based on the approach by Beck et al. was designed. The checklist contained 4 different categories. Categories 1 to 3 (exercise requirements, didactical requirements and word selection) consist out of countable statements for which their occurrence was tallied. Category 4 contained statements representing more of a helicopter view on the matter. These statements were holistically scored. The results showed that Taal actief is the best suited, which is attributed to the vocabulary book. Taalverhaal scored most consistently.

Like in any other European countries, the population in the Netherlands has changed dramatically since the Second World War. The Netherlands has seen groups of immigrants from all over the world entering the country. Citizens from former colonies, guest workers from the Mediterranean and refugees from all over the world, entered the country. As a result of these changes, many classrooms changed into multicultural environments. This change in population asked for adaptation of educational policies and language teaching materials. Especially language teaching had to be adapted. Teachers were now responsible for acquisition of Dutch as a second language on top of the normal curriculum.

This chapter deals with the various phases Dutch as a second language in primary schools has gone through. The overview given in this chapter serves as an introduction to the rest of the study on the suitability of the vocabulary modules Dutch language methods (Taal actief, Taalverhaal and Taal op maat) for second language learners of Dutch.

The seventies and eighties
Teaching Dutch as a second language in primary schools is a relatively new field. The Dutch population started to change slowly after the Second World War. The independence of Indonesia caused the first wave of immigrants to arrive in the Netherlands. These immigrants were followed by immigrants from Suriname, whose influx continued after the independence of Suriname in 1975 (Appel, 2003). The Netherlands has also welcomed several groups of immigrant workers from the Mediterranean, during these years (Appel, 2003). Because the influx of immigrants had been a gradual process, no special educational policies seemed needed until the start of the seventies. Besides many of the immigrants from Indonesia and Suriname already spoke Dutch.

The population of immigrant workers grew from the seventies onwards. Although it was believed, at the time, that many of the immigrant workers would return to their home lands, the government felt that educational policies had to be issued. The first, published in 1970, was rather contradictory (Appel, 2003). On the one hand education had to be in the mother tongue to ensure a smooth remigration. On the other hand education in Dutch was preferred, to ensure the best possible educational opportunities for these students. From this contradictory policy it becomes apparent that there was no clear vision on how to educate this new group of students.
In practice, schools were confronted with students of all ages, who needed to learn Dutch as a second language (DSL-students) in order to be able to participate in class. The first goal was to teach these students basic communication skills in Dutch. That way these students would have the best possible education. To achieve this goal various methods were developed, in which the emphasis was on daily school situations and the communication with teachers and fellow classmates (Appel, 2003).

As the immigrant workers stayed in the Netherlands and families were reunited, yet another group of students arose. Children born in the Netherlands, with immigrant parents. From the eighties onwards, Dutch primary schools were more and more confronted with this new type of students. Unlike DSL-students born in their homeland, these students had some, although limited and not sufficient, command over the Dutch language, when entering school. The rapid growth of this group led to a shift in attention to this new type of DSL-students.

Because most these students had some command of Dutch the aim was to improve their proficiency, so that they would be able to catch on. To achieve this the students received extra lessons in Dutch. For forms 1 to 3 the focus was mainly on speaking proficiency. From the fourth form onwards attention was also paid to listening and reading (Appel, 2003).

The nineties and the twenty-first century
As a result of the various efforts, a variety of methods was available by the end of the eighties. However a coherent policy was not in place. This was the result of various educational policy changes implemented during the late eighties and the early nineties. In short these changes entailed that schools, under certain circumstances, were eligible for extra funding to provide extra help to DSL-students. Another important change made during the nineties was the governmental decision to decentralise the control over the educational policies concerning special needs students. The local authorities were given management of these policies and the central body of Process Management Primary Education served as the coordinating body (Appel, 2003).

Not only in the field of policies, were the nineties a time of change. Due to the still growing number of DSL-students, the need for more structural measures became more pressing. A variety of materials developed in the eighties was available, but the growing group size led to a growing need for adaptation of the regular Dutch language textbooks. This demand led to the development of integrated Dutch language methods, which entered the market during the nineties. Through offering a range of differentiation options, these methods aimed to serve both first and second language learners of Dutch. Extra and more challenging exercises are offered to students with high language abilities. Simultaneously extra repetition and practice is offered to those that struggle. Among these integrated methods was the original version of Taalverhaal. The most recent version of this method is under investigation in this study.

Despite all the efforts and good intentions, studies (Verhallen, 1991 and 1993; Verhallen & Schoonen, 1998; Appel & Vermeer, 1993 and 1997) showed, during the nineties that DSL-students had smaller vocabularies. Not only did these students know less words, they also had less knowledge about the words. Driessen et al. (1998) suggested that this difference between the native and DSL-students expanded during primary school, others indicated that the gap

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1 Translated from Dutch. In Dutch: onderwijsachterstandenbeleid
3 Translated from Dutch. In Dutch: geïntegreerde taalmethode
became somewhat smaller (Appel & Vermeer, 1993). Driessen et.al (1998) showed that some DSL-students are two years behind on vocabulary, when entering the third form.

This led to the governmental initiative of vocabulary programmes for pre-school and kindergarten. The earlier the cognitive development and language abilities were stimulated, the bigger the change that these students were able to close the gap with their more fluent peers (Appel, 2003). New in this approach was the shared focus on DSL-students and students with a low Social Economic Status. Up to date some positive results have been reported (Appel, 2003).

This inclusion of those with a low SES indicates a change in the attitude towards vocabulary teaching. More researchers became convinced that explicit vocabulary teaching would benefit the academic results of all students, special vocabulary lessons were included into the language textbooks. Vocabulary lessons are now an integral part of all primary school language textbooks.

The position of the foreign first languages in Dutch primary education
As explained in the previous paragraph a contradictive policy formed the basis for educating the DSL-students in the early years (the seventies). In 1974 a law adaptation provided the possibility to teach Turkish and Moroccan students in their first language during regular school hours. A regulation resulting from the believe that immigrant workers and their families, would only stay in the Netherlands temporarily. So, educating these students in their first language would help a smoothen process of remigration (Appel, 2003).

During the eighties, the basis for teaching foreign first languages in primary schools changed. Two different developments contributed to this change. The first was a new theory on second language acquisition introduced by Cummins (1979). In his article Cummins looked into the matter of the fairly poor academic results of minority (non-native) students in relation to bilingualism. He compared the situation of students in an immersion programme to minority students, who are dealing with submersion. The clear difference between the two is that in an immersion situation the second language is additive and the first language is in no danger to be replaced by it (Cummins, 1979). In contrast a submersion situation occurs when the more prestigious second language slowly becomes dominant over the first language. A situation which is reality for most minority students. Cummins (1979) notes that students in an immersion programme only seem to profit from the positive effects of bilingualism on their cognitive and linguistic development. Submersion students, on the other hand do not seem to benefit from these positive characteristics associated with bilingualism. To explain this difference Cummins (1979) looked at the interaction between socio-cultural, linguistic and school programme factors (Cummins, 1979). His main finding is:

“It is clear that in minority language situations a prerequisite for attaining a higher (…)level of bilingual competencies is maintenance of L1 skills”. (Cummins, 1979, 232)

The knowledge of the first language proved to be a determining factor for their success in the second language (Cummins, 1979). This conclusion was drawn upon the fact that immersion programmes showed many positive results, like better developed cognitive and linguistic skills than their. One of the major differences between students in an immersion programme and minority students is that the former have a better developed first language (Cummins, 1979). This is only logical because the first language use of these students was not restricted
to specific situations. These conclusions led to the conviction that it was vital to continue educating DSL-students in their native languages (Appel, 2003).

As with many regulations, resistance was fierce. Those against the policies and regulations based their resistance on three major arguments (Appel, 2003). The first was that the first language taught in the programme was not the students’ real first language, Berber speaking Moroccan students received lessons in Arabic. A second point of concern was that strengthening the first language proficiency would interfere with the students’ integration into Dutch society. Thirdly, the timing of the classes was seen as an issue, because the classes were taught during regular school hours (Appel, 2003). This deprivation of the normal classes would lead to an enlargement of the academic gap between DSL-students and native students. Despite the resistance, education in the first language and culture remained unchanged until the nineties, when the name was changed into education in the first language (Appel, 2003).

In 1998 a law adaptation again changed the basis for teaching foreign the first languages (Appel, 2003). Up until the fourth form teaching in the first language was now to be used to introduce the next topic to be discussed in class. This way the students would already be familiar with the topic and this would lead to a better understanding of the classes. In the upper forms, 5 until 8, it was no longer possible to teach the first language during the regular class hours (Appel, 2003). However the possibility to educate students in their first language after school hours stayed unchanged (Appel, 2003). Education in the first language was banned from the curriculum from 2004 onwards (Appel, 2003).

Core goals of primary education and the learning continuity pathway

This chapter has so far focussed on the past. Here in this last paragraph is the current changes in Dutch primary education in relation to vocabulary teaching are discussed. This paragraph is not specifically focussed on DSL-students, but on all primary school students.

In order to get a better and clearer picture of what students should know and what skills they should possess when they leave primary school, Greven & Letschert (2006) by order of the Ministry of Education, Culture and Science, formulated a series of core goals for primary education. These goals are defined for all school subjects as well as most sub-skills of these subjects (Greven & Letschert, 2006).

The core goals are developed for all subjects relevant in primary education. Twelve of the fifty-eight core goals are related to the Dutch language. From these twelve only the last one explicitly mentions vocabulary (Greven & Letschert, 2006). This statement reads:

“De leerlingen verwerven een adequate woordenschat en strategieën voor het begrijpen van voor hen onbekende woorden. Onder ‘woordenschat’ vallen ook de begrippen die het leerlingen mogelijk maken over taal te denken en te spreken (Greven & Letschert, 2006, p19).”

The statement reads that students should acquire adequate vocabulary and strategies to be able to understand unknown words. Words facilitating thinking and speaking about language are also included. Although this statement does concern vocabulary, no goals are set as far as the quantity or quality of the vocabulary. This is explained through the fact that vocabulary is

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4 Translated from Dutch: Kerndoelen primair onderwijs
5 Translated from Dutch: Doorlopende leerlijn (http://nufficglossary.nuffic.nl/)
seen as knowledge necessary to be academically successful and not as a separate skill. The decision to include vocabulary lessons in the language methods is something that has been left up to the educational publishers. As far as teaching Dutch as a second language is concerned the goals only indicate that the didactics are different and that vocabulary growth should get more attention.

Another important feature of Dutch education in general are the learning continuity pathways. These pathways are designed in order to improve continuation of the learning process and facilitate an easy transition from form to form as well as from primary school to secondary education. For language and arithmetic/mathematics these pathways are part of a bigger referential framework (Meijerink, 2009).

**The referential framework of learning continuity pathways**

![Diagram of the referential framework of learning continuity pathways](http://nufficglossary.nuffic.nl/)

Figure 1: The referential framework of learning continuity pathways. The horizontal lines indicate transfers from one level to another. The F levels are the fundamental levels that 75% of all students should be able to accomplish (Meijerink, 2009). The S levels are the target levels. Level 1F is the fundamental level after primary school. Levels 2F, 3F and 4F represent the different fundamental levels after the different levels of secondary education. The highlighted level 1S/2F is the minimal level to fully participate in society.

As figure 1 shows, the framework differentiates between four different fundamental levels (Levels indicated with an F) and four target levels (the S-levels). The 1F level represents the fundamental level that should be reached by 75% of students when leaving primary school (Meijerink, 2009). Then there is the target level for primary school which is equal to the fundamental level for lower secondary professional education. This level is also the level needed to be functional in society. The next level is 2S/3F, which is reached by students from both the intermediate vocational education, and the higher general secondary education. The target goal for this group is the level reached by those who attended pre-university education.

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6 Translated from Dutch: Doorlopende leerlijn ([http://nufficglossary.nuffic.nl/](http://nufficglossary.nuffic.nl/))

7 Translated from Dutch: Referentiekader doorlopende leerlijnen taal en rekenen

8 Translation for the Dutch. In Dutch this level is called VMBO ([http://nufficglossary.nuffic.nl/](http://nufficglossary.nuffic.nl/)).

9 Translation from Dutch. In Dutch this level is called MBO ([http://nufficglossary.nuffic.nl/](http://nufficglossary.nuffic.nl/)).

10 Translation from Dutch. In Dutch This level is called HAVO ([http://nufficglossary.nuffic.nl/](http://nufficglossary.nuffic.nl/)).

11 Translation from Dutch. In Dutch this level is called VWO ([http://nufficglossary.nuffic.nl/](http://nufficglossary.nuffic.nl/)).
As explained, this framework is designed to further ease the transition from one school type to another. For language the framework is divided into four domains, which is a further crystallization of the three domains used in the core goals. The four domains are:

1. speaking
2. reading
3. writing
4. language observation and writing style

Although the domains here are more precise than in the core goals, vocabulary is again integrated into the bigger whole of the framework and is not seen as a separate domain.

These policies on Dutch language education and this view on vocabulary teaching contradict several vocabulary teaching studies from the United States. Both Beck et al. (2002) and Stahl & Nagy (2006) emphasize that vocabulary is such a vital part of academic success that time should be spent on teaching it (Beck et al, 2002). As Stahl & Nagy (2006) put it:

“Words divide the world; the more words we have, the more complex ways we can think about the World”. (p5)

Without these words it is not possible to think about the world in complex ways. This more elaborate vocabulary is not something students acquire automatically. It has to be taught, especially to DSL-students and those with a lower SES. According to both Beck et al. (2002) and Stahl & Nagy (2006) the best way to do this is through meaningful, ‘real’ situation. An approach to language teaching, also included in the introduction to the core goals, but not linked to vocabulary teaching.

Summary
The overview given in this chapter on the development of teaching Dutch as a second language in the Netherlands served as a first introduction to the rest of the study. Teaching Dutch as a second language went from haphazardly organized initiatives to teach basic spoken Dutch, to a well-structured system in which extra attention and materials are available to the very young in order to bridge the gap with their native peers as soon as possible.

Teaching non-native first languages in primary schools was also discussed, in the light of its possible effects on second language acquisition. Cummins (1979) argued that an elaborate knowledge in the first language including a strong vocabulary was a prerequisite for successfully learning a second language.

In the last section attention was paid to the current developments in vocabulary teaching in the Netherlands. This paragraph showed that vocabulary teaching is neither a mandatory part of the curriculum, nor is seen as a separate and vital skill. In this respect the Dutch policies differ from the believe of multiple American researchers (Beck et al, 2002; Stal & Nagy, 2006), who consider teaching vocabulary to be of vital importance.
All combined lead to my interest in the topic of the suitability of Dutch language methods for DSL-students. In this study the focus is on the vocabulary modules of three major language primary school textbooks. The next chapter will give further details on various approaches to vocabulary teaching, which approach is used for this study and the reason for using this approach.
In the introduction the position of teaching Dutch as a second language in Dutch primary schools was discussed. The next two chapters provide the theoretical background to this study on the suitability of three Dutch language methods for DSL-students. This first chapter gives a very concise overview on the general developments in second language teaching and will link these to the developments discussed in the previous chapter.

Like other fields of study the theories explaining second language acquisition have changed drastically over the years. Theories in second language acquisition have always been influenced by the theories developed for (first) language acquisition (De Bot et al., 2005). During the early twentieth century several experiments surrounding learning theory led to behaviourism theories. The basis of this theory was that learning is seen as a result of teaching (De Bot et al., 2005), which means that (second) language acquisition is nothing more than conditioning language patterns.

In contrast to this behaviourist point of view, Chomsky (1959) launched the ‘Generative Grammar’. He argued that our creative use of language, could not be explained through conditioning and habit formation. Chomsky concluded that we had to be equipped with a ‘Language Acquisition Device’, which was thought to contain the principles all languages have in common (De Bot et al., 2005). Since someone already possesses all the principles, learning a language is a matter of learning which principles are applicable. In second language teaching this leads to a very strong focus on grammar and to a lack of interest in language use.

A theory that has had influence on the situation of DSL-students in the Netherlands during the first years of mass immigration is the ‘Critical Period Hypothesis’ (Lenneberg, 1967). This hypothesis poses that the native-like acquisition of a language is not possible after the critical period, mostly associated with puberty (De Bot et al., 2005). Some students that came to the Netherlands were close to puberty or had already reached puberty. It is very well possible that the combination of this hypothesis and the belief that many would only stay for a couple of years, contributed to the initial lack of teaching Dutch as a second language.

Behaviourist views on language learning revived again during the sixties. The audio-lingual method (Lado, 1964) became the method of instruction. This method was based on the Army method developed during the Second World War, when many soldiers quickly had to be trained in a second language. Teachings were mainly focussed on listening and repeating language patterns (Schmitt, 2000). The situation for the DSL-students was somewhat comparable to the soldiers’ situation, the sooner a they would be able to communicate in the second language, the better. The primary school materials for teaching Dutch as a second language developed during the seventies reflect this view and were centred around speaking proficiency (Appel, 2003).

In the audio-lingual method students practiced speaking without opportunities for communication and the results were disappointing. At the same time immersion programmes in Canada showed positive results, a major impetus for the shift towards ‘Communicative Language Teaching’ (De Bot et al., 2005). A further push was given by Krashen in 1982. He stated that second language acquisition is not that different from first language acquisition (De Bot et al., 2005). So, language is not learned through studying the grammar or through talking about it. Language is learned through enough interaction with it as well as in it. To accomplish this meaningful communication is needed. In meaningful communication the
second language learner receives input on or just above his level. Subsequently uses this input in the output (Krashen, 1982).

In the Netherlands this approach was not only used in the materials for the DSL-students, it also formed the basis for the extra lessons in Dutch as a second language offered to the students. The principles of meaningful communication were even taken a step further with the development integrated language methods designed from the nineties onwards. These methods not only aim to provide meaningful situations for DSL-students, but also for native students. Today meaningful communication forms the basis for language methods in the Netherlands (See: method chapter).

Summary
In this chapter I presented a concise history of second language teaching, to create a better understanding of the situation described in the first chapter of this study. The various trends and approaches of this chapter are linked to the developments of teaching Dutch as a second language in the Netherlands. In addition the current chapter serves as an introduction of the next one, which deals with the more specific field of learning and teaching vocabulary in a second language.
Vocabulary from a second language acquisition perspective.

Second language acquisition theories have seen a multiple change. Here the field second language acquisition is narrowed to the field vocabulary in a second language acquisition environment. Important components are: vocabulary learning and vocabulary teaching. The latter is discussed more elaborately, as it is the subject of this study and contains past and current trends. The sub-section on current trends contains both the trends in the Netherlands and in the United States. There extra attention is paid to the approach by Beck et al. (2002) as this approach forms the theoretical background to the checklist used in the study. Other similar American approaches are also mentioned and compared to this approach.

Vocabulary learning

To successfully master a second language, learning vocabulary is essential (Schmitt, 2008). This vocabulary is not simply ‘picked up’ (incidentally and implicitly acquired) from exposure to language tasks (Schmitt, 2008). In a second language environment intentional attention has to be paid to vocabulary. Intentional attention can be either implicit or explicit. Intentional implicit attention involves repeated exposures to the vocabulary without explicitly paying attention to it, like extensive reading (Schmitt, 2008). Several reading flood studies (Nation, 2001) have reported positive results, when prolonged attention is paid to extensive reading. Explicit learning on the other hand has proved to be more efficient than any other form of vocabulary teaching and learning (Schmitt, 2008). Nevertheless the explicit approach to vocabulary learning can only provide some elements of lexical knowledge (Schmitt, 2000). Consequently Schmitt (2008) views explicit and implicit learning in a second language to be complementary.

Next to the problem of how words are learned, there is the issue of which words students should learn. According to Nation (2008) learning high frequency words is most important, consequently these words should receive the most attention in language teaching classes. To deal with infrequent words students should be given tools like word learning strategies. (Nation, 2008).

A question that arises from the above is, how to define frequency? As an answer to this question, numerous word frequency lists have been developed. A well-known English list is “The General Service List of English Words” (West 1953). This list contains 2000 highly frequent words. The most widely used frequency list in the Netherlands is: “Woorden in het Basisonderwijs; 15.000 woorden aangeboden aan leerlingen” by Schrooten & Vermeer (1994). This word frequency list is based on the material offered to primary school students in the Netherlands. Despite the fact that the use of a word frequency list seems a sensible solution to the problem, these lists are not free of problems. First, not every frequency list is suited for every goal. A list based on words offered in textbooks is not suitable for oral vocabulary growth. Secondly many highly frequent words are low in informational content. Consequently these are not the words students need to know (Richards, 1974). In Dutch for example three different articles are used, ‘de’, ‘het’ and ‘een’. However when the wrong article is used a sentence does not become unintelligible, although it is grammatically incorrect.

Another more pressing problem is that these lists are always outdated. For example the list by Schrooten & Vermeer (1994) is based on words found in primary school textbooks prior to
1994. Today this list still serves as a basis for the vocabulary modules of language textbooks in the Netherlands. These new books are based on a corpus which is over a decade old. Hence these new textbooks lack some new, important words and contain words that have become outdated and old-fashioned.

Another issue in language learning is how well students should know a word? A generally made distinction is the one between receptive (passive) and productive (active) knowledge. Perceptive word knowledge means that a student is able to recognize the word in a context, but is not able to actively use it. Active use means that a word is known productively in writing or speech. Many researchers (Melka 1997, Nation 2001, Beck et al. 2002 and Meara 2009) consider this contrast to be problematic. Nation (2001) states that this idea is not suitable because while listening and reading we produce meaning to the words. Instead of this crude distinction several solutions have been brought to bear. According to Melka (1997) receptive and productive knowledge are a continuum. An idea that is shared by Nation (2001), who proposed a system in which various aspects of word knowledge are identified. For example: the spoken form, the written form, associations and collocations. These aspects can be known in any possible combination. Someone is only able to use the word when the right combination of aspects of the word are known. Nation also argues that knowing a word involves knowing its meaning, form and use (2001).

Meara (2009) rejects the idea of a continuum. He views the distinction between active and passive as a result of different types of associations between the words. Active vocabulary is activated by other words, passive vocabulary is triggered by recognition of the word form (Meara 1990). In his view passive knowledge is a full fletched part of someone’s vocabulary. This knowledge is only differently connected to other words (Meara, 2009). Making newly learned words active is not a matter of putting them in the right place in the continuum. Rather a change in status of the word is involved, which is related to the building of new associational links from the new word to the rest of the vocabulary (Meara, 2009). In Meara’s view the interconnectedness of words in semantic networks plays a vital role.

These networks form an important ingredient for language teaching and of word learning. When learning words a student is expanding these networks (Verhallen 1993, Schmitt 2000, Nation 2001, Beck et al. 2002, Meara 2009) and constructing new ones. A semantic network surrounding a word contains various different words surrounding the central word. These surrounding words can be either associations of various types and the word family (the word + its derivates and inflections) (Schmitt, 2000). Inflections of ‘to select’ are ‘selects’ and ‘selected’. A derivate is ‘selection’. The associations are personal and vary from person to person and mostly words that are commonly used in combination with ‘select’. For example ‘to select the best products’ or ‘he selected three candidates’.

**Past trends in vocabulary teaching**

As the previous chapters have explained vocabulary has not always been considered to be an important part of second language acquisition. Until the sixties second language teaching was mainly based on the grammar-translation method, a method focused on analyzing a language instead of on using it (Schmitt, 2000). Vocabulary was only used to illustrate a grammar rule and words were learned from bilingual word lists without any context. The idea was that when a student knew the word he would be able to use it (Schmitt, 2000).

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12 See: current trends in vocabulary teaching for more details.
During the sixties the audio-lingual method (Lado, 1964) became the method of instruction. The audio-lingual method was mainly oral and focussed on drilling language patterns (De Bot et al., 2005) and did not pay specific attention to vocabulary (Schmitt, 2000).

These disappointing results contributed to a shift of focus from the language to the language learner and sociolinguistics (De Bot et al., 2005). This shift meant an interest in language as a communication tool (De Bot et al., 2005). Communicative language teaching, with Krashen (1982) as one of its first advocates, reflected this change in practice. As the focus was now on communicating, meaningful input became a requirement. Input that could be used in communication. In vocabulary teaching this input is often a story, an article or even a picture, which provides the context from which the words are learned.

**Current trends in vocabulary teaching**

In this section the current trends in vocabulary teaching are discussed. This chapter first looks at the most commonly used vocabulary approach in the Netherlands. After which the vocabulary teaching approach by Beck et al. (2002) is discussed. This approach forms the basis for the checklist used in this study. The last sub-section is devoted to other, similar approaches.

**Vocabulary teaching in the Netherlands**

Vocabulary teaching in the Netherlands is based on the vocabulary teaching approach by Verhallen (1994). Her approach to vocabulary teaching is designed for all students in primary schools and is not specifically aimed at DSL-students.

Her approach takes word learning to be more than the acquisition of isolated lexical units (Schoonen & Verhallen, 2008). When words are learned, these are connected to previous word knowledge, thus creating a semantic network. According to Schoonen & Verhallen (2008) the existence of word networks means that vocabulary is more a matter of system learning than of item learning. Verhallen therefore is an advocate of vocabulary teaching within a context (Verhallen & Schoonen 1993).

Verhallen combines the above knowledge with the four step model for vocabulary teaching by Schouten & van Parris (Appel & Vermeer, 1997) and a strong emphasis on deep word knowledge. The four step model used by Verhallen contains the following four steps:

1. Activate possible knowledge about the word.
2. Give an explanation about the word and provide its meaning in the specific context.
3. Consolidate knowledge of the word.
4. Test the word knowledge.

These four steps are not as sharply separated as it may look. Especially steps one to three can occur together and can be combined (Verhallen & Verhallen, 1994). The first step, activating possible knowledge about the word, is meant to introduce the students to the words and to activate the semantic networks surrounding the target word. Giving an explanation of the word and providing its contextual meaning, enables the students to get a better idea of the word. This can be done through explaining and acting out the word and expanding its meaning(Verhallen & Verhallen, 1994). When students have got a clear view of the word, students need to consolidate this knowledge, which is done through various types of exercises. Testing is necessary to determine whether or not teaching has been effective and can be done
at any time after the consolidation phase (Verhallen & Verhallen, 1994). So far, Verhallen’s approach fits within the communicative and usage based tradition.

Verhallen combines this four step system with an emphasis on deep word knowledge. Her vocabulary teaching approach aims to create deep word knowledge by explicitly differentiating between paradigmatic word relations and syntagmatic word relations (Verhallen & Schoonen, 1998). In Verhallen’s approach paradigmatic relations are considered to be superior to syntagmatic relations. A syntagmatic relation is a non-hierarchical association with a word. Paradigmatic relations are hierarchical and seen as indicators for deep word knowledge (Verhallen & Schoonen, 1998 and Schoonen & Verhallen, 2008). Not only are this type of word relations used to determine the depth of knowledge, they are also used to create this deep knowledge. Schoonen & Verhallen (2008) argue:

“In education paradigmatic relations are essential, because they allow for generalizations by means of coordination, subordination and superordination”. (p214)

According to Schoonen & Verhallen (2008) these paradigmatic relations are essential in a school environment, because students very often have to apply decontextualized knowledge, in which they will need their knowledge of paradigmatic relations. Another benefit of teaching this type of relations is that it supplies the students with logically organized knowledge about a word (Schoonen & Verhallen, 2008). This aspect of her framework places emphasis on learning about the language instead of learning to use it; focus on forms (Elllis, 2001). A characteristic not in line with a communicative and usage based approach.

The combination of the four steps of vocabulary teaching with the superior position of paradigmatic relations leads to a situation in which all words, taught in a certain vocabulary lesson, are hierarchically categorized. Different characteristics about the word are learned, but the effectiveness of this approach is currently debated in the Netherlands. Van de Rhoer & Vermeer (2005) indicated several problems with the explicit teaching of these paradigmatic relations. They stated that for example the word *getijde* (tide) is less frequent in Dutch than its subordinates *eb* (low tide) and *vloed* (high tide) (Van de Rhoer & Vermeer, 2005). In their study Van de Rhoer & Vermeer (2005) concluded that teaching these paradigmatic relations is no more effective than teaching other types of relations. Verhallen herself on the other hand argues on the basis of her study (Schoonen & Verhallen, 2008) that teaching this type of relations is helpful in remembering a word.

Vocabulary teaching according to Beck et al. (2002)

This sub-section is devoted to the vocabulary teaching approach by Beck, McKeown & Kucan as presented in ‘Bringing Words to Life, Robust Vocabulary Instruction’ (2002). The approach presented by Beck et al. (2002) forms the theoretical basis for the checklist used in this study. The approach presented in ‘Bringing Words to Life’ is a usage based approach to vocabulary learning and teaching, which aims to move the vocabulary use of primary school students beyond the threshold of basic words.

We learn our first words through oral interaction. When we are able to read, the environment in which we encounter most unknown words shifts from an oral one to a written one (Beck et al., 2002). Studies have proven that deducing the meaning of these unknown words from

13 According to the word list Woorden in het Basisonderwijs; 15.000 woorden aangeboden aan leerlingen by Schrooten & Vermeer (1994)
written context is in most cases difficult to do (Beck et al., 2002). Therefore Beck et al. (2002) differentiate between four types of written context: mis-directive, non-directive, general and directive contexts. Only the directive context is considered to be suitable for deducing meaning from context. This context type supplies the reader with enough useful information about an unknown word to deduce right meaning. The following quotation is a directive context.

“When the cat pounced the dog, he leapt up, yelping and knocking down a shelf of books. The animals ran past Wendy, tripping her. She cried out and fell to the floor. As the noise and confusion mounted, Mother hollered upstairs, “What is all that commotion?”” (Beck et al., 2002, p5)

The quotation above is an example of a directive context. When the reader, for example does not know the word ‘commotion’ it will be able to understand what is means. From the first, it becomes clear that the situation described is rather chaotic. A dog knocking down a shelf of books does not happen regularly and makes a lot of noise. The next two sentences are very clear. As the noise and confusion mounted, might not be clear cut, although the prior sentences have shown several unusual and noisy events happening back to back, which will help to conclude that the scene becomes more and more chaotic. From the sentence part, ‘mother hollered upstairs, “What is all that commotion?”’, it becomes apparent that mother is not walking or running up the stairs, because of her outcry within the inverted comma’s. So, mother is downstairs and wants to know what is going on upstairs. So, commotion has to mean something along the lines of chaos and noise.

Another important aspect of the approach by Beck et al. (2002) is that it does not believe in word frequency lists. In this framework the decision whether or not to pay elaborate attention to a word is not triggered by frequency, but by the tier it belongs to. Beck & McKeown, (1985 in Beck et al., 2002) constructed a division in which they recognized three different types of words which are all assigned to a specific tier. Tier one words are the most common and basic. These words are the most common- clock, baby, happy, walk and so on (Beck et al., 2002, p8). Words like these barely ever need instruction. Then there is tier three, with the most rare words. Words from tier three relate to very specific phenomena, often associated with a certain domain. These words are not of very high value outside of their specific contexts. Examples of tier three words are: peninsula, isotope, lathe, refinery (Beck et al., 2002). But also words associated with holidays and musical instruments can be considered tier three words. Tier three words are not necessarily more difficult to learn, they are just not that frequent. The last tier is tier two. Tier two words are those words that are frequently used in adult’s speech as well as in schoolbook texts. In contrast to tier three words these words are commonly found in a variety of domains. Unlike tier one words these words are not acquired implicitly, they have to be taught explicitly. These tier two words are the words, most teaching time should be spend on. Examples of tier two words are: coincidence, absurd, industrious and fortunate (Beck et al., 2002, p8)

In their approach Beck et al. (2002) also go into the matter of ‘what is it to know a word’, a question closely linked to the matter of which words to teach. Beck et al. do not consider knowing a word to be a black or white matter. There are various qualitatively different kinds of knowledge about words. According to Beck et al. the level of knowledge to aim for is the level a rich decontextualized type of knowledge. When this type of knowledge is reached not only the meaning of the word is known, also its relationship to other words and metaphorical uses are known and the network around the word is extensive. Beck et al. emphasize that this type of deep word knowledge is mainly important for tier two words, because of their relative
high frequency and their occurrence in a wide variety of domains and especially in school.

Beck et al. (2002) also indicate what they regard to be effective vocabulary teaching. First they state that words do not need to be unfamiliar, to be taught in class. A partially known word is also a good candidate for teaching. Through teaching the knowledge of a word can be deepened and students expand their knowledge of the word and the semantic network surrounding it. Within this network Beck et al. (2002) do not differentiate between different types of associations. All relations of the word included in the surrounding network are of equal importance.

Secondly Beck et al. (2002) are critical towards the use of dictionaries. They only consider the use of dictionaries justified when a word is already partially known. Looking up a word, when it is not known is not considered to be useful, because dictionary definitions tend to be vague as well as plenty. According to Beck et al. (2002) student friendly explanations should be used instead. These explanations characterize the word and how it is typically used and explain its meaning in everyday language. Another option is to use a student friendly definition; a definition in students friendly language often with an example embedded (Beck et al., 2002). In addition it is important to limit initial teaching to one meaning of the word in a specific context. When this one meaning, mostly the core meaning of a word is known, it is important to move on to other contexts in order to create students’ awareness of the various contexts in which the word can be used. This way the students will be able to make more word associations, which helps to enlarge the semantic network surrounding the new word (Beck et al., 2002). Here it is important that the students interact with examples of these new contexts or use the word in the new context themselves. The last step is make sure that the students are familiar with the pronunciation of the word (Beck et al., 2002).

Furthermore Beck et al. (2002) point out that when students are able to read the new text themselves, be aware that derivation of word meaning has proven to be extremely difficult, especially for students of low verbal ability (Beck et al., 2002). If students read the text themselves it is very important for the teacher to give sufficient hints and clues. Here again, Beck et al. offer a preferred sequence of teaching. Read the text together with the students and paraphrase where needed. Explain what the text is about and let the students give their initial notion of what it is about. Consider together with the students whether it is possible that the words have a different meaning. Summarize what was found through the dialogue. Beck et al. (2002) view this an effective way of dealing with a natural context, because it not only teaches the new words, it also raises the students awareness of and sensitivity to words in general and of unknown words in particular. This awareness sensitivity leads to more engaged learners, which means they become better word learners. Better word learners will learn more words and therefore enhance their chances of academic success (Beck et al., 2002)

On top of all this Beck et al. (2002) state that teachers should do their very best to make the classroom environment as verbally rich as possible. They emphasize, however, that it should be seen as an extra on top of the other forms and that it is not effective when used in isolation.
Other American approaches to vocabulary teaching

This sub-section discusses three other American vocabulary teaching approaches that are relevant for this thesis. These three are the approaches by Marzano (2004), Schmitt (2000, 2008, 2010) and Stahl & Nagy (2006). These three share five different characteristics with each other as well as with the approach by Beck et al. (2002).

1.) Teaching specific words
2.) A meaningful and useful context
3.) Clear explanation of the word
4.) Enough repetition in various different contexts
5.) Teaching different word meanings

All three approaches are usage-based methods in which words are learned through using them rather than learning about them. Each of the different approaches is discussed separately, but emphasis is placed on the similarities between these three approaches and the approach by Beck et al. (2002).

Marzano

Marzano (2004) looks at vocabulary from the wider perspective of knowledge of the world around us. He considers this background knowledge to be crucial to academic success. To benefit from this knowledge, the knowledge should be stored in the permanent memory. This permanent memory is one of three functions of memory. The other two are the sensory memory and the working memory (Marzano, 2004). In order to retain information in the permanent memory it has to pass the sensory and the working memory. The sensory memory registers information from our senses and selects the useful information. Next the information has to pass the working memory. For this process to succeed three demands have to be met.

First the ‘memory trace’ should be strong enough. This strength builds up after each encounter with the information. The more a student is confronted with a piece of information, the more likely this information is to be embedded in the permanent memory (Marzano, 2004). Next to the strength of the information ‘the depth’ needs to be sufficient. Depth is characterized as small parts of information that adds to the understanding of the concept (Marzano, 2004). Deep knowledge goes into detail. Related to this is ‘elaboration’ which is related to new and different connections to the new concept (Marzano, 2004).

On top of his ideas on how words are learned Marzano (2004) gives eight characteristics for effective vocabulary teaching.
1. Use description as opposed to definitions.
2. Use both linguistic and non-linguistic representations of a word.
3. Gradually shape the meanings of a word.
4. Teaching and using word parts.
5. Use different types of instruction for different word types.
6. Let students interact about the words they have learned.
7. Use games in vocabulary teaching.
8. Focus on the terms important for academic achievement.

Marzano translates these eight characteristics in six steps for effective vocabulary teaching.
1. The teacher provides description, explanation or an example of the new term.
2. The students restate the explanation of the new term in their own words.
4. Students periodically do activities to help them add to their knowledge of vocabulary terms.
5. Periodically students are asked to discuss the terms with one another.
6. Periodically students are involved in games that allow them to play with the terms.

Both the characteristics and the six steps share some similarities with the ideas by Beck et al. (2002). Like Beck et al. (2002), Marzano (2004) is an advocate of using descriptions instead of definitions. And these descriptions should gradually shape the meaning of the word. Another characteristic, also favoured by Beck et al. (2002), is the importance to first teach the contextual meaning of a word and then progress towards new contexts and new meanings of the word. To achieve this, interaction with the word is considered to be important. This can be accomplished through various types of exercises. This is encouraged by Beck et al. (2002) and Marzano (2004) alike, who both use different techniques for different word types. The last characteristic, the focus on terms important for academic achievement is paramount in the approach by Beck et al. (2002).

Schmitt

For vocabulary teaching in a second language environment, Schmitt (2000) emphasises on two components. Words should be taught as collocations or in combination with other words from its word family. Teaching words from a frequency word list is less effective because the student only remembers the meaning of the word from the list. Consequently Schmitt (2000) argues that the derivates and inflections of a word should also be taught. Through teaching the complete word family the fundaments for a more extensive semantic network are laid (Schmitt, 2000).

Alongside teaching word families Schmitt (2000) acknowledges the importance of teaching collocations. Collocations are more or less fixed word combinations, that are commonly used by native speakers and make it sound authentic. According to Schmitt (2000) the acquisition of these collocations consists of three steps. First the collocation is learned and seen as one whole. For example “How are you?” is acquired. A learner is not yet able to indicate the meanings of the separate words, but is familiar with the meaning of the sentence. Next the learner discovers possible variation on the standard sentence, “How are you, today?” In this sentence “today” is seen as a separate lexical item. During the last step, the learner analyses the complete sentence and the separate words are learned. However this last step is not needed to be able to use the collocation.

So, multiple encounters with a word are needed in order for it to be acquired. At the same time it indicates that vocabulary learning is not a matter of knowing or not knowing a word. Schmitt (2000) does not view the difference between productive and perceptive knowledge as an either/or situation. It is possible to know and be familiar with certain aspects of a word, but not with others.

These views by Schmitt are very much compatible to the views by Beck et al. (2002). Both emphasize the importance of teaching words in combinations. In contrast Beck et al. (2002) focus first on one meaning and then progress towards a wider semantic network including common word combinations. Schmitt (2000) starts with the collocation and works his way back to the meaning of the individual words. Beck et al. (2002) and Schmitt (2000) also share their views on word knowledge, they acknowledge that word knowledge is a scale on which various aspects of a word can be known.
Stahl & Nagy

The last approach to vocabulary teaching discussed here, is the approach by Stahl & Nagy (2006). They identify three components to a comprehensive approach to vocabulary growth (Stahl & Nagy, 2006). These are: teaching specific words, immersion in rich language and development of generative vocabulary knowledge. Teaching words one at a time is not effective to create substantial vocabulary growth. At the same time supplying students with meanings of words can be a part of the bigger whole of vocabulary teaching (Stahl & Nagy, 2006). Secondly immersion in rich language is needed to facilitate vocabulary growth. This can be accomplished through stimulating reading as well as exposing the students to rich oral language (Stahl & Nagy, 2006). These two components should lead to the development of generative vocabulary knowledge. According to Stahl & Nagy (2006) this is knowledge that goes beyond the knowledge of the individual words that makes the student a better word learner. Word consciousness and word learning strategies are part of this third component (Stahl & Nagy, 2006). To visualize the interaction of these three components Stahl & Nagy (2006) developed the vocabulary growth pyramid.

**Vocabulary growth pyramid by Stahl & Nagy (2006)**

![Vocabulary growth pyramid](image)

Figure 2: Vocabulary growth pyramid, displaying the interaction of the three components of a comprehensive approach to vocabulary growth (Stahl & Nagy, 2006)
As displayed above the pyramid shows the trade of between the breadth and depth of vocabulary instruction. The more intensive words are taught, the less words can be covered (Stahl & Nagy, 2006). This means that the most intensive level, level III, on the top of the pyramid, contains the least words. In contrast the bottom level (level I) contains most words. Words at this level are generally picked up incidentally. These words do not need a lot of attention. At this level it is important to promote word consciousness, which students will need when dealing with words from level II and III. At the second level of the pyramid, words are partially known. These are words that need some explanation to be clear in a specific context. Here teaching word learning strategies is important, because this way students will be able to deduce the right meaning from a context and can continue reading. Only level III aims for full ownership of the words, as a result only a small amount of words is covered at this level. Only the words in level II and III need explicit teaching.

When choosing words two factors are important (Stahl & Nagy, 2006): importance and utility. Importance reflects the function of the word in a text or passage. Only keywords should be considered for teaching explicitly. Thereafter utility should be examined. Utility has two different dimensions. First a word should be useful for the students. Secondly the word should be useful at the time of teaching, unknown and not too difficult for the students to understand (Stahl & Nagy, 2006).

Like Beck et al. (2002), Stahl & Nagy (2006) support the notion that word knowledge is a complex entity with various possible explanations. They too do not consider word knowledge to be black and white matter. The division of words into tiers and the levels in the pyramid by Stahl & Nagy (2006) shows similarities. Both only spend time on words that are not implicitly learned. The selection criteria for these words are in such a way that both approaches deem context very important. Word selection is situational in both approaches. This is combined with versatility, preferably a word can also be used outside a specific context. Both approaches also aim to make the students into better word learners.

Summary
In this chapter an overview is given of the relevant theories on vocabulary learning, past trends in vocabulary teaching and the current trends in vocabulary teaching. The first section introduced some relevant and basic terms on vocabulary learning. In the next section the past trends in vocabulary teaching were discussed. The last section dealt with the current trends in the Netherlands and the United States, with special attention for the approaches and teaching techniques of Verhallen (Verhallen & Schoonen, 1993) and Beck et al. (2002).
How the study was operationalized.

As explained in the introduction and theoretical background chapters, this study focuses on the comparison of three major Dutch language methods for primary schools. In this investigation I will use *Taal op maat*, *Taal actief* and *Taalverhaal*. In this comparison the focus is on the suitability of the vocabulary modules for DSL-students. In this chapter the target group, the three Dutch primary school methods and the checklist are discussed. The checklist section entails a deeper look into the matter of the checklist.

**Main question and sub-questions**

The main question of this study is: To what extend the vocabulary building modules in *Taal verhaal*, *Taal actief* and *Taal op maat* are suited for DSL-students in a regular Dutch fifth form?

To operationalize the main-question of this thesis three different sub-questions were formulated:

1. What are the differences between the three language methods regarding exercise requirements for vocabulary growth as defined by Beck et al. (2002)?
2. What are the differences between the three language methods regarding didactical requirements for vocabulary growth as defined by Beck et al. (2002)?
3. What are the differences between the three language methods regarding word selection for vocabulary growth as defined by Beck et al. (2002)?

**The target group**

In Dutch vocabulary research the focus has traditionally been on a comparison between Dutch students and DSL-students (Verhallen & Schoonen, 1993; Appel & Vermeer, 1994; Appel & Vermeer 1997; Driessen et al., 2002, Schoonen & Verhallen, 2008). Within this wider range of DSL-students, most studies characterized two groups: students from former Dutch colonies, Suriname and the Dutch Antilles and students from immigrants from the Mediterranean (mainly Turkish and Moroccan). Primary school students from other immigrant backgrounds have only occasionally been included into the studies (Vermeer, 2001; Schoonen & Verhallen, 2008;). In those cases no further differentiation between language backgrounds was made and the students were grouped together in a category ‘other’. All studies showed that DSL-students had smaller vocabularies and less word knowledge in comparison to their Dutch peers (Verhallen & Schoonen, 1993; Appel & Vermeer, 1994; Appel & Vermeer, 1997; Driessen et al., 2002). Especially those with a Mediterranean background showed problematically smaller vocabularies and less deep word knowledge (Verhallen & Schoonen, 1993; Appel & Vermeer, 1994; Appel & Vermeer, 1997; Driessen et al., 2002).

When examining the problems of these students, several factors play a role. One of the most salient and most influential is the different L1 spoken at home and in their direct environment (Driessen et al., 2002). As a result, these students learn Dutch as a second language and enter primary school with significantly smaller vocabularies than their Dutch peers. To allow these students to fully integrate and be successful in this second language environment, extra attention should be paid to their vocabulary size and growth, a recommendation done by all studies mentioned. In order to close the gap as early as possible, vocabulary growth programmes are now available for preschool, first and second form. However from the third form (6-7 years old) onwards no extra programmes are available and for vocabulary these students depend on the extra material from their regular language textbooks. It is because of
the rather difficult position of these DSL-students that this thesis focuses on this specific group of students.

The language methods
The language methods used in this study are: *Taal actief*, *Taalverhaar* and *Taal op maat*. Each of the Dutch language methods is published by a different educational publisher. Each of the three textbooks is a commonly used in the Netherlands. For the purpose of this study the fifth form textbooks were selected, because it is the first form in which more advanced language is used in the books. Students in this form are generally 8 or 9 years old and are already fairly competent readers.

This thesis focuses on the vocabulary modules of each of the methods and includes all the vocabulary material on paper. For each of the language textbooks the complete set of vocabulary material consist of different components. In general they included the regular vocabulary lessons, repetition materials and remedial teaching materials. On top all methods also offer software and/or extra material online. Unfortunately I was not able to access these materials and thus limited my study to the materials supplied on paper.

*Taalverhaar*
*Taalverhaar* is one of the three primary school language methods published by ThiemeMeulenhoff. According to its website this primary school language method is the only method that covers all core goals on language for primary schools in the Netherlands. *Taalverhaar* consists of a language course book, separate spelling book and a vocabulary workbook intended for weaker students. Like the other two descriptions this description is based on the teachers’ manual.

*Taalverhaar* aims to cater to all students in Dutch primary schools. According to the teachers’ manual differentiation is one of its most important characteristics. This differentiation is implemented through more challenging tasks for the more advanced students and extra repetition and additional explanation for students, who encounter difficulties. Through providing these options the method aims to be as versatile and therefore functional as possible.

This functionality is also represented in the way the chapters are build up. In each chapter students are presented with a variety of language tasks. These tasks are either listening, speaking, reading or writing tasks. All tasks are connected to a written text and share the same communicative approach. *Taalverhaar* aims to make all tasks meaningful with an authentic character. Vocabulary is incorporated within these tasks and plays a central role within the method.

This central role is proven by four vocabulary lessons in each chapter. Vocabulary lessons in *Taalverhaar* are built around three central components:

- learning words: learning new words.
- learning how to learn words: the use of word learning strategies.
- learning about words: being able to connect words.

14 [http://www.Taalverhaar.nl/Taalverhaar/marketing.asp?pagkey=97450](http://www.Taalverhaar.nl/Taalverhaar/marketing.asp?pagkey=97450) The information on the website is based on a SLO report. For more information on core goals see chapter 1
In each of the vocabulary lessons one or more of these components are used. As said each chapter contains four vocabulary lessons. These are the lessons 1, 3, 4 and 8. In lesson 1 vocabulary is embedded in a listening task. In lesson 3 vocabulary is embedded into the visual context of a written text. In lesson 4 the target words are used in exercises. In lesson 8 the relationships between the target words are discussed, here learning about words is the central topic.

*Taalverhaal* offers 600 words each year, 400 core words and 200 extra words. These 200 extra words are offered to those that struggle with vocabulary. Up until the sixth form the majority of these words are from the basic vocabulary. Some are ‘school language words’, more formal and difficult words that represent nuances on their more basic forms. For example ‘to sprint’ and ‘to jog’ as forms of running and would be considered school language words. Each year more of these school language words are offered. And from the sixth form onwards the majority of words offered are of this nature. In the fifth form 175 of the 400 words are considered school language words.

The total amount of 600 words a year are equally divided over the chapters of the book. This comes down to 30 goal words per chapter. Twenty of these are core words that all students should know and 10 are extra words offered in the extra vocabulary material. The core words are presented with the anchor story at the beginning of a chapter. The core words are divided in visual words, words represented by a picture next to the story and reading words. These reading words are abstract words that come with a written explanation. All the words offered in *Taalverhaal* are based on the word list by Schrooten & Vermeer (1994).

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15 [http://www.Taalverhaal.nl/Taalverhaal/marketing.asp?pagekey=97450](http://www.Taalverhaal.nl/Taalverhaal/marketing.asp?pagekey=97450) The information on the website is based on a SLO report. For more information on core goals see chapter 1
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**Taal actief**

*Taal actief* is one of the two Dutch language methods published by Malmberg and, according to their website, used by more than 3500 primary schools throughout the Netherlands. Taal actief consists of a course book, a spelling book and a vocabulary book. For this study both the regular course book and the vocabulary book are investigated. This decision was made based on the fact that schools can order the books separately and mix and match the books to cater their specific needs. The following description is meant to allow readers to get a better idea of the language method and is based on the teachers’ manual.

*Taal actief* considers vocabulary teaching an important part of language teaching and therefore has developed a separate vocabulary module to go with the normal textbook. This separate module contains the almost 2/3 of all words offered in *Taal actief*. In each of the 10 chapters, 75 words are offered, at least 25 of these are present in the anchor story at the beginning of each chapter. The other 50 words are made available through the separate vocabulary module. These words are offered in clusters of related words. For example in chapter five in the fourth form book, the words fear, fearful, honest, mean, jealous, stubborn, perky and sad, are offered together (*Taal actief*, 2003). *Taal actief* uses the four steps to
vocabulary teaching by Verhallen (Verhallen & Verhallen, 1994) as a teaching tool (see: previous chapter).

*Taal actief* also spends time on word learning strategies. Word learning strategies that are taught are:

- Guessing from context, deducing the meaning of a word from a picture or from written context;
- Deducing the meaning of a word through the description;
- Deducing word meaning with the help of a synonym or antonym;
- Deducing the word meaning by looking at the word structure; For example understanding what a textbook is by looking at both the components of the word (text and book). Recognizing suffixes and affixes as well as the base word in various words (to walk, the walk, walking).

*Taal op maat*

*Taal op maat* is one of the two primary school language methods published by Noordhoff publishers and, according to their website, is used by more than 1100 primary schools. Taal op maat consists of course books, A and B, as well and spelling book, which together form the curriculum for the fifth form.

The following description is based on the teachers’ manual that is provided with the method. According to this manual, the three major functions of language use are communication, conceptualisation and expression. The first function is straightforward, conceptualisation is done through a process of understanding the language. Expression in this case refers to the vocalisation of feelings and thoughts. Taal op maat aims to work on these three major functions of language use through the development of the four language skills: speaking, listening, reading and writing.

These four language skills are used in combination with four so-called language domains. These are: speaking and listening, writing, vocabulary, language observation. These domains play a central role throughout the method. Each of the 16 chapters tackled each year contains all domains. For each form the same 16 themes are depicted, each year through a different subject. Similarly, the domains occur in the same order in each of the chapters. Listening and speaking is always the first domain. This domain is always introduced through a drawing, a story or the combination of both. During the exercises in this domain the students collect words that they do not know, which are put into an hierarchical word web during the evaluation of these lessons. This word web plays an important role during the vocabulary lessons, which form the second domain.

The main goal of the vocabulary lessons is to teach the students new concepts (partially build upon the word web), although labelling, building semantic networks and word learning strategies are also considered to be important. Within this goal deep word knowledge is seen as superior to knowing more words (breadth of knowledge). To get to this deep word knowledge several characteristics are important, like the context of a word and its register. The example shows the differences between *sparen* (to save) and *verzamelen* (to collect as a hobby). The sentences below show that in Dutch, it is possible to collect both coins and

17 [http://www.noordhoffuitgevers.nl/wps/portal/bao/Taalopmaat](http://www.noordhoffuitgevers.nl/wps/portal/bao/Taalopmaat)
money, but that it is impossible to collect money as a hobby. The indicated difference is seen as a characteristic of deep word knowledge and therefore important to teach. 

*Ik verzamel geld* I collect money

In the vocabulary lessons, a series of pre-selected words is offered. A good proportion of these will be entered into the hierarchical word web. These words are repeated and their meanings and uses are extended. This is done through explanation, clarification, impersonation, offering the word in sentences and categorization. *Taal op maat* states that the hierarchical word web increases students’ ability to connect words to one another and create structured networks in their brains. This in turn aids the comprehension of the word structure, something that is considered to be vitally important in both writing, reading and thinking. 

Even though not mentioned explicitly, the way emphasis is placed on deep word knowledge in combination with the types of exercises offered indicate that the vocabulary module of *Taal op maat* is based on the vocabulary teaching strategies by Verhallen (Verhallen & Schoonen, 1993). 

Next to these vocabulary lessons *Taal op Maat* provides extra material for both more gifted students as well as for those with lower vocabulary abilities. This extra material consists of extra tips and ideas for teachers and extra material for the students. The teacher gets tips on how to explain certain words and additionally for each vocabulary lesson extra pointers on how to pre-teach the vocabulary lessons are supplied. For the students various different extra exercises are available. These partly repeat the words from the chapter and partly introduce new words.

**The checklist**

This section discusses the ins and outs surrounding the checklist which was designed for this study and based on the vocabulary teaching approach by Beck et al. (2002).

**Why a checklist?**

The goal of this thesis is to compare the vocabulary modules of three primary school Dutch language methods. To come to such a comparison, a checklist is considered a suitable measuring tool. The checklist supplies a clear overview and at the same time it allows for the detailed view needed to come to an objective and precise comparison. Since no similar study has been conducted previously I designed my own checklist. The checklist was first tested in a pilot study (see: results) and after some adaptations used in the current study.

**Why based on the framework by Beck et. al?**

As mentioned in the background chapter the framework offered by Beck et al. (2002) is a usage based approach to vocabulary teaching in regular primary schools. The approach distinguishes three different tiers (categories) of words. Tier one words are the most common and basic, tier three words are the most rare and related to a very specific context and therefore only usable in specific situations. Tier two words are the words that are neither very common nor very rare. Tier two words are commonly used by adults in spoken and written language and are not acquired implicitly.

This approach to vocabulary teaching appealed to me when I first read about it. In their book from 2002, Beck and her colleagues, explain their approach in a very clear and down to earth
manner. This usage based approach is a very practical and innovative way of vocabulary teaching. Innovative in the sense that vocabulary teaching does not stop after explicit vocabulary lessons. Vocabulary growth can be stimulated during all other activities regularly done at a primary school. This way it aims to get both students and teachers involved.

Although the approach is not aimed specifically at second language learners, this is not problematic for this thesis, based upon the following. First Beck et al. (2002) aim at an average American primary school classroom. An environment that, although the United States officially is a monolingual country, cannot said to be a monolingual one. Like many primary school classrooms in the Netherlands, an American primary school classroom will be a multilingual environment. According to Stahl & Nagy (2006) having trouble with vocabulary is not only reality for those with a different first language, but also for those whose first language is the language used in school. In their study Stahl & Nagy (2006), who promote similar ideas to those of Beck et al. (2002), state it as follows:

“The second major problem is that this vocabulary is part of a language – we’ll refer to it as literate or academic language that is likely to be a foreign language to the student whether or not the student comes from a home where English is spoken.” (p36-37)

In this quotation Stahl & Nagy (2006) refer to the vocabulary used in school as literate or academic language. A type of language, very often, far removed from the students’ reality of contextualized language. Contextualized language is language in which the meaning is supported by its (physical) context (Stahl & Nagy, 2006). In written and more academic language this context is absent, which makes it more difficult to understand. Subsequently this language is like a foreign language to many students, regardless of their language background.

Thus literate or academic language is not acquired implicitly, but has to be taught explicitly; a characteristic it shares with tier two and three words. Henceforth acquisition of tier two and tier three words can be interpreted as a process of second language acquisition for all students. Taking this into account, I do not consider it to be problematic to apply Beck’s approach to the specific situation of this study.

Sections within the checklist
Like most questionnaires and checklists, the checklist for this study was divided into various categories. This categorization was implemented in order to get a more detailed view of the situation. In this case the checklist was divided into four categories. Categories 1, 2 and 3 are each linked to one of the sub-questions of this study and focuses on exercise requirements, didactical requirements and word selection. The occurrence of each statement in these categories was tallied.

The first category, exercise requirements, focuses on the actual exercises in the language textbooks. This section is made up by statements 1 to 6 of the checklist. The following 5 questions fall into the category of didactical requirements. These are requirements for vocabulary teaching situations and include the whole process of teaching. Word selection is the third category in this study and entails the last three numbered statements. I have chosen to separate this category from the other requirements, because word selection is one of the most vital and essential parts of vocabulary teaching. In addition Beck et al. (2002) perceive this in their own distinctive way, which is one of the main characteristics of their approach.

Alongside these 3 categories containing countable statements, the checklist contains a fourth category. The statements in this category represent a helicopter view on the language methods

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are meant to give an opinion on the vocabulary components as a whole. As a result this category was holistically scored on a four point Likert-scale. Statements in this category are important in all other categories and thus in vocabulary teaching according to Beck et al. (2002).

**Determining differences**

To provide objectivity and simultaneously limit the researcher bias (Dörnyei, 2003) as much as possible, each chapter of each textbook was judged. All the printed vocabulary material was examined, which included the regular vocabulary lessons, remedial teaching for vocabulary and extra repetition materials. For each method the material was judged in the same order. First the regular vocabulary lessons were investigated, then all the other printed material was investigated.

This process used at least two checklists per language method. Scores for the applicable statement were tallied for each of the chapters. In many cases a statement would be applicable to 1 of 2 lessons in the chapter. In such cases they were only scored in 50% of occurrences. I considered this a fair way of dealing with this, since the requirements were only met 50% of the time. This method did not lead to any problems due to the predictable and structured set-up of the language methods.

After the tallying process all scores were turned into percentages. The first step was to calculate the average percentage of each methods. This allowed for a very general view. To get a more detailed view on the situation, this calculation was repeated for each of the individual sections of the checklist. In order to be able to pinpoint the differences between the methods, it was needed to calculate the percentage of occurrence for each of the individual statements.

However percentages do not allow for statistical calculations. To determine significance, a series of twelve chi-squares was conducted with the tallied scores. Three chi-squares were conducted taking the checklist as a whole. Each test compared 2 of the 3 methods to one another. As a result all methods were compared to the other 2. This procedure was repeated for the sections on exercise requirements, didactical requirements and word choice.

The last category of the checklist is the category with the overall statements. This category contains five statements and is somewhat different from the other three categories. The five statements from this category were holistically scored on a four point Likert-scale containing the options ‘disagree’, ‘somewhat agree’, ‘agree’ and ‘fully agree’. A four point Likert was chosen to avoid a neutral middle option.

Like the other categories, this category was scored per textbook. In consideration of the nature of the statements in this category, all the different vocabulary materials of one method were taken into consideration at once. This resulted in a rather small amount of answers with low frequencies. Therefore no statistical calculation are done with these results. The result section does report on the findings for this section.
Summary
In this chapter elaborated on how this study was operationalized. First the main question and sub-questions of this study were given. After which a more detailed description of the target group and the three language textbooks under investigation (Taal actief, Taal op maat and Taalverhaal) was given. The following section looked into the matter of the checklist. This checklist was especially designed for the purpose of this study and based on the vocabulary teaching approach by Beck et al. (2002). This approach to vocabulary teaching was chosen because it is a usage based approach that takes vocabulary teaching to the next level. It goes beyond the regular vocabulary classes and aims to incorporate vocabulary growth activities in as many regular primary school activities as possible. To allow for a more detailed view on the situation, the checklist was divided into 4 sections, 3 of which corresponded with one of the sub-questions. The fourth category intended to give a more overall view of the suitability of the 3 methods. The last section of this chapter described which statistical measures were used in order to find an answer to the main research question. To achieve this, 3 different methods are used: descriptive statistics, testing statistics (a series of chi-square tests) and holistically scored statements (category 4 only).
The three language methods compared: the statistics

This chapter deals with the results of this thesis. The goal of this study is to see whether the vocabulary modules of the three selected language textbooks are suitable for DSL-students. For the purpose of this study, the vocabulary module included all the printed material explicitly dealing with vocabulary. This selection contained regular lessons, pre-teaching lessons, extra exercises and remedial teaching material. For Taal actief this means that both the normal course book and the vocabulary book were investigated. From each of the methods the fifth form book was investigated. For this thesis a checklist was designed based on the vocabulary teaching approach by Beck et al. (2002). This four-category checklist was used to investigate the various parts of the vocabulary module, which resulted in multiple lists per method.\(^{18}\)

The analysis of these checklists was done in several ways. First the scores of the methods as a whole were compared, through looking at various descriptive statistics. This procedure was repeated for the categories 1, 2 and 3. To determine statistical differences, a series of twelve chi-squares was performed. Three tests to compare the methods as a whole and another three for categories 1 to 3. The last category generated too few answers to be able to perform any tests on those answers.

Before the full study, a pilot study was conducted with the fourth form Taal op maat books. This pilot was conducted to determine the suitability of the checklist. From this pilot it was concluded that the principle of the checklist and its content was suitable for the full study, some minor changes in the formulation of several statements were needed in order to get better results.

Descriptives

For each of the statements an overall score per method was tallied. This overall score consisted of the scores from the regular vocabulary lesson combined with the scores of the vocabulary materials especially aimed at students with a smaller vocabulary. In order to be able to compare the lists, all scores were converted into percentages, which resulted in the following table.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Overall descriptive of categories 1, 2, and 3</th>
<th>Taalverhaal</th>
<th>Taal actief</th>
<th>Taal op maat</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Mean</td>
<td>60.4%</td>
<td>57.6%</td>
<td>55.3%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Standard deviation</td>
<td>41.7%</td>
<td>36.6%</td>
<td>37.9%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Median</td>
<td>73.4%</td>
<td>63.3%</td>
<td>39.1%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Table 1: Descriptives of the overall scores of the three language methods Taal actief, Taalverhaal, Taal op maat.

The table shows that all 3 language methods have an average score over 50%, all with a rather large standard deviation. Furthermore the median shows a range of 34.1%. The median for Taal op maat is at 39.1%. Whereas Taalverhaal scored 73.4% and Taal actief scored 63.3%.

To determine which categories cause the differences between the statistics in table 1 a percentage score for each statement was calculated. Table 2 shows the results for the first category of the checklist; exercise requirements.

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\(^{18}\) The differences between the lists of one method are addressed in the discussion
Table 2 shows that the scores for the statements of this category are rather consistent over the 3 methods. Either all 3 score well or all score poorly. For statement 1 *Taalverhaal* and *Taal op maat* score the full 100%. *Taal actief* does not score as well (73.3%), but its score does not greatly affect the mean score for statement 1. This pattern is repeated in the scores for statement 2. No scores are found for statement 3. Statement 4 shows perfect scores for *Taal actief* en *Taal op maat*. *Taalverhaal* also performs well with a score near to perfection (96.6%), which results in a 98.9% mean score for this statement. The scores on statement 5 are rather low. *Taalverhaal* only scores 10% for this statement on offering words in new contexts. *Taal actief* and *Taal op maat* score better, but both score well below the 50% (34% and 20%). The last statement of this category, statement 6, shows the biggest variety in scores. *Taalverhaal* scores 40.7%, *Taal actief* scores 56.7% and *Taal op maat* outscores them with 77.5%. This results in a mean score of 58.3% on this statement about guessing from content. *Taalverhaal* has the best overall score (61.7%) in this category. Statement 4 is the best scoring statement. The next category is the category of didactical requirements. The results of which are summarized in the table 3 on the next page.
Percentages from the didactical requirements category (2)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Statement</th>
<th>Taalverhaal</th>
<th>Taal actief</th>
<th>Taal op maat</th>
<th>Mean score per statement</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>7. Rich information about the word is offered.</td>
<td>100%</td>
<td>100%</td>
<td>78.2%</td>
<td>92.7%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>8. Information about uses of the words are supplied.</td>
<td>0%</td>
<td>10%</td>
<td>12.5%</td>
<td>7.5%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>9. For new words there is either room for discussing the meaning of the word or the explanation is offered in the textbook.</td>
<td>100%</td>
<td>100%</td>
<td>100%</td>
<td>100%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>10. In each vocabulary component an instructional context is available.</td>
<td>100%</td>
<td>100%</td>
<td>96.9%</td>
<td>100%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>11. The right teaching order for teaching new words is applied. (strong focus on meaning, word associations, new contexts, idea completion).</td>
<td>37.5%</td>
<td>36.7%</td>
<td>28.2%</td>
<td>34.1%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mean score</td>
<td>67.5%</td>
<td>69.3%</td>
<td>63.1%</td>
<td>47%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Table 3: Percentage representing the scores of the methods in the category didactical requirements. The scores on the last row are the mean scores per method for this category. The scores in the last column are the mean percentage of each of the statements in this category.

The scores for category 2 again show that *Taalverhaal, Taal actief and Taal op maat* score similarly. Either all 3 score well or they score poorly. For statement 7 *Taal op maat* is outscored by the others. Both *Taalverhaal* and *Taal actief* score 100% and *Taal op maat* scores 78.2%. The average score is still very high at 92.7%. In contrast *Taal op maat* outscores the other two methods with 2.5% in statement 8. *Taalverhaal* performs the worst (0%), *Taal actief* reached 10%, which led to an average score of 7.5%. For statements 9 and 10 *Taalverhaal, Taal actief* and *Taal op maat* scored near perfection. Only *Taal op maat* did score less than a 100% on statement 10 (96.6%). Statement 11 on average scored 34.1%. Here *Taalverhaal and Taal actief* do better (37.5% and 36.7%) than *Taal op maat* (28.2%). *Taal actief* reached the highest mean score in this category.
The last category, discussed here is the word selection category. This category is the smallest one, with only three statements. Table 4 represents the results found for this section.

**Percentages from the word selection category (3)**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Statement</th>
<th>Taalverhaal</th>
<th>Taal actief</th>
<th>Taal op maat</th>
<th>Mean score per statement</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>12. The majority of the words in the vocabulary section are tier two words.</td>
<td>70%</td>
<td>46.7%</td>
<td>37.5%</td>
<td>51.4%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>13. Tier one words are not discussed and explained extensively.</td>
<td>25%</td>
<td>36.7%</td>
<td>37.5%</td>
<td>33.1%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>14. Tier three words make up a minority within the words offered, but are offered.</td>
<td>15%</td>
<td>33.3%</td>
<td>15.5%</td>
<td>20.3%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Table 4: Percentage representing the scores of the methods in the category didactical requirements. The scores on the last row are the mean scores per method for this category. The scores in the last column are the mean percentage of each of the statements in this category.

This third category shows more variety in scores among the language methods as well as among the three statements. Statement 11 shows a range of 42.5%. *Taalverhaal* accomplishes the best score (70%). *Taal actief* scores 46.7% and *Taal op maat* only scores 37.5%. This big range in scores results in an mean score of 51.4%. For statement 13 *Taal op maat* does the best (37.5%). *Taal actief* only scores 0.8% less (36.7%) followed by *Taalverhaal* with 25%. This results in a average score of 33.1%. *Taal actief* has the best score (33.3%) for statement 14. *Taalverhaal* and *Taal op maat* essentially score the same (15% and 15.5%). This statement overall only occurred in 20.3 % of cases. *Taal actief* shows the best mean score (38.9%).

**Testing statistics**

In order to get a picture as complete as possible, and to determine significance a series of 12 chi-squares was conducted. To make sure the requirements for a chi-square were met, the expected values were tested. These tests showed that seven tests contained expected values of less than 5. However these values never made up more than 20% of all values in that particular test. Despite these low values, the requirements for the chi-squares were met.

The chi-squares were done with the tallied scores on the checklist for categories 1, 2 and 3. The analysis eliminated statement 3, which did not receive a score. Therefore the analysis was done with a checklist of 13 statements.

The first series of three chi-squares that was conducted used the tallied scores of all three categories. The results of these tests are represented in the column ‘overall’ in table 5. This column shows that none of the possible combinations reached significance. Nonetheless the association between *Taalverhaal* and *Taal op maat* came rather close ($^2 (12)=16.29$, $p=0.09$).

Next three chi-squares were done for each of the categories individually. This series contained another nine tests. For the exercise requirements no significant associations were found, but
again the association between Taalverhaal and Taal op maat came close ($^2 (4)=18.24,$ $p=0.07$). All association failed to reach significance in the category of didactical requirements. This was also the case for the last category, word selection. Here the association between Taalverhaal and Taal op maat showed to be nearly significant ($^2 (2)=3.34,$ $p=0.08$).

**Results of the series of chi-squares**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Chi-square</th>
<th>Overall</th>
<th>Exercise requirements</th>
<th>Didactical requirements</th>
<th>Word selection</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Taalverhaal and Taal actief</td>
<td>0.3</td>
<td>0.22</td>
<td>0.38</td>
<td>0.19</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Taalverhaal and Taal op maat</td>
<td>0.09</td>
<td>0.07</td>
<td>0.14</td>
<td>0.08</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Taal op maat and Taal actief</td>
<td>0.64</td>
<td>0.22</td>
<td>0.74</td>
<td>0.22</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Table 5: The p-values of the associations between as a result of the various chi-square analyses.

**Overall statements (category 4)**

In this section the results for the fourth category are discussed. This differs from the three other categories in two aspects. First the type of statements are about more general requirements for vocabulary teaching. The second aspect is derived from the first. These variant statements called for a different investigation. Statements in this category were scored holistically. Table 6 shows an overview of the statements of this fourth category. By reason of the different character of these statements, methods were only judged once based on all the vocabulary materials. As a result the frequency of the answers was not high enough to use testing statistics. Table 7 gives an overview of the results. Taalverhaal shows to have the full range of possible answers. Taalverhaal does very well in the field of rich and lively instruction (statement A). In contrast it scored ‘disagree’ for the instructional sequence (statement C). The other three statements were rated in between. Taal actief scored either ‘somewhat agree’ and ‘agree’ which made it the most consistent of the three methods. Taal op maat lastly did very well on statements B and D. Statements A, C and E varied from ‘disagree’ to ‘agree’.

**The Statements of category 4**

<p>| | |</p>
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th></th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>A.</td>
<td>The instruction offered is rich and lively.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>B.</td>
<td>Guessing from context is only offered in a directive context.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>C.</td>
<td>The instructional sequence for teaching from a natural context is applied.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>D.</td>
<td>In exercises resulting from an natural context, the main objective is to understand the meaning of the word within this particular situation.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>E.</td>
<td>The vocabulary components supply word learning strategies.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Table 6: The statements containing the holistically scored category four.
Table 7: An overview of the result of the scoring on the four point Likert-scale, represented per method.

### Summary

In summary, the descriptive statistics showed numerous differences between the methods as a whole. A more detailed look also revealed difference between the textbooks in the categories exercise requirements (1), didactical requirements (2) and word selection (3). All three methods performed reasonably well in the first category. *Taalverhaal* reached an average score of 61.7% which made it the best performing method. Typical for this category is the homogeneity among the three methods. This homogeneity is also represented in the outcomes of the second category. The average score per method here ranged between the 63.1% for *Taal op maat* and 69.3% for *Taal actief*. The category on word selection also showed a small range in the mean scores per method. The variety here is bigger. And the highest percentage of each statement belonged to a different method.

Next a series of chi-squares was conducted. These showed no significant differences for any of the test. Yet three out of the four chi-squares conducted with *Taalverhaal* en *Taal op maat* almost reached significance (p=0.09, p=0.07, p=0.08).

The results for category 4 showed that *Taal actief* scored most consistently with ‘somewhat agree’ and ‘agree’. *Taal op maat* did better with two statements receiving ‘fully agree’. *Taalverhaal* did not do as well with one ‘disagree’ and one ‘fully agree’.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th><em>Taalverhaal</em></th>
<th><em>Taal actief</em></th>
<th><em>Taal op maat</em></th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>A</td>
<td>Fully Agree</td>
<td>Agree</td>
<td>Agree</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>B</td>
<td>Agree</td>
<td>Somewhat Agree</td>
<td>Fully Agree</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>C</td>
<td>Disagree</td>
<td>Somewhat Agree</td>
<td>Somewhat Agree</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>D</td>
<td>Agree</td>
<td>Agree</td>
<td>Fully Agree</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>E</td>
<td>Somewhat Agree</td>
<td>Somewhat Agree</td>
<td>Disagree</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
The three language methods compared: a discussion

This chapter serves as an explanation and further discussion of the results, presented in the previous chapter. To provide the clearest possible picture, this discussion will follow the same order as the checklist and the results section.

Descriptives
The results showed that all three language methods had overall score between the 55.3% (Taal op maat) and 60.4% (Taalverhaal), fairly positive results. However even for Taalverhaal over 1/3 of the material is not suited for DSL-students.

Exercise requirements
In this category scores run fairly parallel to one another. For statements 1 (multiple and varied option to use the word) and 2 (multiple options to think about the word) Taalverhaal en Taal op maat show a perfect 100%. Taal actief in contrast only scores 73% (statement 1) and 80 % (statement 2). Students using Taal actief will not always get the opportunity to think about the new word to use it. Repetition and usage in new and varied occasions are crucial and essential to vocabulary acquisition (Beck et al., 2002; Nation, 2001; Schmitt, 2000 and Marzano, 2004). It is estimated that 30% of words is forgotten right after they are learned (Nation, 2001). Taking into account that Taal actief provides a separate vocabulary book, for students struggling with vocabulary, which offers a substantial part of the words, sheds a different light on this score. During the process of scoring, it became clear that the lessons in the separate book scored much better than the course book. The relative low percentage score in combination with the knowledge on the separate vocabulary book, make it plausible that this lack of repetition is found in the normal course book. Something which is likely to cause less of a problem for most students, because most words will not be completely new to them. Unfortunately DSL-students are less likely to have prior knowledge of the words.

For native students most words in the regular programme are, most likely, not entirely new. This would make them excellent candidates to look up in a dictionary (statement 3). In neither of the language textbooks looking up exercises were provided. This led me to conclude that students in the fifth form are not yet familiar with a dictionary.

For statement 4 (student friendly explanations) Taal actief and Taal op maat score the full 100%. Only Taalverhaal does not always provide the students with a student friendly explanation, but this difference (0.4%) is negligible. The fact that all three language textbooks use the vocabulary teaching strategies by Verhallen (Verhallen & Schoonen, 1993), who emphasises the importance of a good explanation, indicates that these good scores are related to the use vocabulary teaching strategies.

The rather low scores for statement 5 can be explained through two factors. First statement 5 (exercises offering words in new contexts) is typical for the approach by Beck et al. (2002) and not used by Verhallen (Verhallen & Schoonen, 1993). According to Beck et al. (2002) offering words in new contexts is necessary to expand the semantic network surrounding a word. Through expanding this network a better understanding of the word and a deeper word knowledge is created. The second factor that played a role, is the thematic set-up of methods, which makes it considerably more challenging to implement other meanings of words into the exercises without moving away from the theme. Nonetheless all methods offer words in new contexts. It is just is not a standard component in the vocabulary lessons and in the case of Taalverhaal it is questionable whether it is helpful. Taalverhaal only offers words in a new
contexts in the extra workbook. This workbook is aimed at those who struggle with vocabulary. Offering words in new contexts contradicts the vocabulary teaching strategy by Beck et al. (2002). They propose providing students with new contexts, when the meaning in the original context is acquired. Students using the extra workbook have difficulty understanding the initial meaning and it is doubtful whether it is helpful to offer these new contexts for these students.

It is not all bad news when it comes to offering words in new contexts. Although Taal op maat did not score as well as. I would like to draw attention to two vocabulary lessons in chapter 7. These are excellent examples of offering words in a new context. Chapter 7 is about talent and the topics for the vocabulary classes are ‘gymnastics’ and ‘chess’. Through offering the names of gymnastics apparatus and the chess pieces these familiar words were offered in new contexts. These lessons also explained the links between the general use and the specific use of these words.

Statement 6 produced better scores than statement 5, but only Taal actief and Taal op maat scored above 50% (56.7% and 77.5 %). This means that in the best case 22.5% of cases help is not offered, when students have to guess from context. In my opinion this percentage is rather high. It should be taken into account here that Verhallen (1993) does not include guessing from context in her vocabulary teaching approach and techniques which likely caused these scores. This lack of help has shown to be problematic (Nation, 2001; Beck et al., 2002). Beck et al. (2002) therefore have a critical attitude towards guessing from context.

When guessing from contexts, the different methods supply help in different ways. Taalverhaal offers a combination of pictures with the words next to them and new words with a written explanation. This form of help is supplied for each anchor story at the beginning of a chapter. The written explanations were often sufficient, the pictures were often harder to get. Taalverhaal had the right intentions of offering help, unfortunately this help was in most cases not sufficient. The pre-teaching material of Taalverhaal on the other hand performed better and provided in about 50% of cases the elaborate context needed to understand the words. The better result obtained by Taal actief (56.7%) was mainly reached through the full score obtained by the separate vocabulary book. The regular textbook only reached 35% which can be contributed to the pre-teaching and remedial teaching materials.

**Didactical requirements**
Statement 7, on rich information offered about the word, did well. Taalverhaal en Taal actief both 100%, Taal op maat 78.2%. This lower score was caused by lower score from the regular vocabulary material. Despite of the lower score in comparison to Taalverhaal and Taal actief, Taal op maat suffices on this aspect. These good results are related to the emphasis Verhallen (Verhallen & Verhallen, 1994) puts on this aspect of vocabulary teaching.

In contrast for statement 8 (information about word use is supplied) all three methods scored exceptionally low. Not surprisingly but worrying at the same time. It is not surprising, because, Verhallen (Verhallen & Verhallen, 1994) does not draw any specific attention to this in her vocabulary teaching strategies. She assumes that knowledge about other aspects of the words is enough to know how to use the word (Schoonen & Verhallen, 2008). The worrying factor here is that Verhallen seems to be mistaken. Her methods for vocabulary teaching has been used for many years in the Netherlands, but no improvement on the position of DSL-students has been reported by any of the studies mentioned in the method chapter. Driessen et
al. (2002) reported again that many DSL-students suffer from a deficit in their vocabulary knowledge and that this gap does not decrease between the fourth and sixth form.

All three methods did very well for statements 9 and 10. Statement 9: For new words there is either room for discussing the meaning of the word or the explanation is offered in the textbook, was formulated rather broad. This was done because the goal of this statement clearly is to get the meaning of the word across. Whether students figure it out by themselves or it is given does not make much of a difference in the acquisition of the initial meaning of the word. Again this is not surprising, because the second step in the four steps to vocabulary used by Verhallen (Verhallen & Schoonen, 1993) places importance on supplying the students with an explanation. As for statement 10, the instructional context, was always available in all methods. This is the result of the thematic set-up of the language methods. On top of which Verhallen (1993) argues that all words should be taught in context.

The last statement (11) of this section proved to be somewhat problematic. For all three methods the problem was how to score this statement. All methods showed some of the characteristics of the right teaching order, but the full combination was present nowhere. In the right teaching order, a strong focus on meaning is the first concern, followed by word associations, offering the words in new context and idea completion. From these four characteristics only the first one was present everywhere. Word associations were used by all methods, but not on a regular basis as a standard component of vocabulary teaching. Word associations were only used very scarcely by Taalverhaal en Taal actief and were not found in Taal op maat. Offering the word in a new context posed a problem for all three methods as well. Likewise idea completion was barely found. Something not explained by the fact that all three methods are based on the same theories. Verhallen places emphasis on deep word knowledge (Verhallen & Schoonen, 1998 and Schoonen & Verhallen, 2008). She aims to create an elaborate semantic network around each word. The bigger the network the deeper and more complete the knowledge about the word. Based on these characteristics it would be expected that new contexts and idea completion would be important.

Word selection
From the scores of the textbooks it becomes apparent that word selection was not based on these tiers. All methods fail to reach the 50% as an average score for this category. Statement 12 (the majority of the words offered are tier two words) generated the highest scores for all three methods, but only Taalverhaal scored well (70%). Taal actief and Taal op maat generally focussed on the wrong type of words according to Beck et al. (2002). A trend which is also detected for statements 13 and 14. All methods pay too much attention to tier one words and too many three words are offered.

Clearly word selection is not based on the approach by Beck et al. (2002), but what is it based on? From the three methods only Taalverhaal mentions this specifically in its teachers’ manual. The words taught in Taalverhaal are based on the frequency list by Schrooten & Vermeer (1994). This list is based on words commonly used in school books. It is interesting that Taalverhaal also mentions that 225 of the 400 words offered in the fifth form are basic words. Apparently there is a discrepancy between what is considered a basic word and what is considered a tier one word. Nevertheless Taalverhaal should spend more teaching time on these words and less on tier one words. Taal actief and Taal op maat need multiple improvements in the category of word selection.
Testing statistics
Although neither one of these test reached significance, there are a few things that call for extra attention. First of all, the test including Taalverhaal and Taal op maat reached for three of the four categories (overall, exercise requirements and word selection) near significance (p=0.09, p=0.07, p=0.08). Two factors may have caused the failure of these chi-square tests to reach significance. The relatively small sample and the fact that the methods were only analyzed by one person have possibly contributed to this outcome.

Category four
The answers to the statements in this category show a similar pattern as the other categories. Especially statements C (The instructional sequence for teaching from a natural context is applied) and E (The vocabulary components supply word learning strategies) did not receive positive feedback. These two statements represent the shortcomings all textbooks in a nutshell.

Summary
This chapter has connected the results to the theories presented in the theoretical background. Overall it can be said that the language methods scored decently. However this was mainly due to some very high scores at several statements. A closer look at the results showed that in all categories there is room for improvement. Particularly the category on word selection presented low scores in the majority of the statements.
The three language methods compared: the conclusion

In this thesis I have reported on my study on the suitability of three (Taalverhaal, Taal actief and Taal op maat) regular fifth form Dutch language textbooks for DSL-students. The sub-questions focused on three aspects of suitability of exercise requirements, didactical requirements and word selection. A checklist, based on the approach for vocabulary teaching by Beck et al. (2002), was designed for this study.

In the comparison of the overall mean scores of the three methods the range was only 4.9%. Based on these overall percentages the best suited methods is Taalverhaal with a percentage of 60.4. However Taalverhaal also showed the largest standard deviation (41.7%) which points towards a larger range within the method. Thus Taalverhaal has the best score, but it is not the most consistent method. Taal actief on the other hand showed a more consistent picture. With a mean 57.6% it scored lower than Taalverhaal, but the standard deviation of 36.6% makes it the more consistent method.

A closer look at each of the 3 categories of the checklist that correspond to the sub-questions of this thesis supplies a different, but more detailed view of the situation. In category 1 (exercise requirements) Taalverhaal reached the best mean score (61.7%). Taal actief and Taal op maat followed. For the didactical requirements (category 2) the order of the mean percentages is Taal actief, Taalverhaal, Taal op maat. For the word selection category this order was repeated. Taken together, Taal actief is the most suited for DSL-students. It should be noted that this is only holds, when the separate vocabulary book is used.

Scores from all methods showed that there is room for improvement. Each category contained statements that did well and others that did poorly. In the category 1, all methods scored poorly on offering words in new contexts. New contexts are needed to offer different meanings and uses of the word. This will help create a more complete semantic network of the word. For category 2 the scores for information on word use and the use of the right teaching order were low, whereas both are vital to vocabulary teaching. Information on word usage is important, because passive knowledge of a word does not automatically lead to word use (Beck et al., 2002). This is why Beck et al. (2002) mention information on word use as one of the aspects of vocabulary teaching. Another point of improvement is the application of the right teaching order. This order contains the different stages that are needed to acquire the word. From the different stages only the strong focus on meaning is present in all methods. All the other stages are used haphazardly. The lack of this structure means that the different aspects of words might not be offered in a logical order or were not offered at all. This lack of structure will pose several problems to the DSL-students when trying to reach the goal of generative knowledge of a word (Stahl & Nagy, 2006).

Making the effort to get to this stage of word knowledge is only useful when presented with the right words, tier two words. Unfortunately the results in section three show that this is not the case. The only method that offered enough (70%) tier two words, is Taalverhaal. On the other two statements in this section Taalverhaal scored the worst of the three methods. Taal actief scored most consistently and reached the highest mean score for this category, but scores were generally low.

Next to these descriptives, testing statistics were used. These did not provide significant results. Although the test done with Taal op maat and Taalverhaal resulted in three almost significant associations (p0.07, p0.09, p0.08). From these results it can be concluded that Taal
op maat and Taalverhaal show the most similarities. With a bigger sample these associations would probably have been significant.

All in all, depending which criteria are most emphasized and on either Taalverhaal or Taal actief is most appropriate. However scores of the statements typical for Beck et al. (2002), which do not occur in strategies by Verhallen (1993), were generally low. This was to be expected, but worrying. When looking at the conclusions of the various Dutch studies on the vocabulary knowledge of DSL-students the general conclusions are all the same. Thus over the last decade or so there has not been any improvement in the vocabulary knowledge of these students. Therefore it is in my opinion to take action and take another critical look at the vocabulary teaching methods by Verhallen (Verhallen & Verhallen, 1994).

Lastly, some suggestions for further and improved research. First of all even though I did a pilot test with this checklist, several improvements could be made to it. For example the overlap within statements 7 and 8 should be taken care of. To get an better insight into the suitability of the three methods for DSL-students, a future study should look at the methods on a vocabulary lesson or even on exercise level. This would with the same sample provide more data and a more detailed view. Another option to generate more data points would be to include more language methods into the comparison, or to increase the sample from these three methods. This latter goal can be reached by including the software and internet exercises or to take multiple grade books. To improve the reliability multiple people should score the sample, so several opinions will form the basis for the final decision on the score, which will reduce the change of making the wrong decision.