

Strategies for Dealing with Vocabulary Learning Problems by Thai University Students

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Abstract

Nowadays, vocabulary learning plays an important role in language teaching especially in the context where English is taught as a foreign language. This is because lexical competence is now seen as the heart of language learning and the ultimate goal of language teaching is to improve the language competence of learners. Additionally, vocabulary has been recognized as an important factor for language learning because insufficient vocabulary knowledge leads the learners to encounter difficulties in language learning. Learners can significantly improve their language competence by developing their ability to use vocabulary learning strategies (VLSs). The present study primarily aimed at investigating how Thai university students deal with vocabulary problems. The participants were 63 undergraduate students studying at Khon Kaen University. A semi-structured interview was used as a method of data collection. After completing the stage of data collection, the interview recordings were transcribed verbatim and then translated from Thai into English for the purpose of data analysis. The translated data was then validated and analyzed. Under the constraint of language learning, the results show two main purposes in employing strategies for dealing with vocabulary learning problems: 1) to discover the meaning of unknown words; and 2) to retain the newly learned words in long-term memory and recall them at will. Furthermore, the data indicated that there are three groups of strategies employed for discovering the meaning of new words, i.e. Discovery, Social,

and Support strategies, and the other three groups of strategies for retaining and recalling new words, i.e. Memory, Cognitive, and Metacognitive strategies.

Key Words: Vocabulary learning strategies; Vocabulary learning problems

Introduction

In recent years the English language has played an increasingly important role as the medium of communication among people from different countries; Thailand is no exception (Somsai & Intaraprasert, 2011). According to Akkakoson (2012), in Thailand where English is used as a foreign language, the ability in using English has become essential for students as it is the global language for the dissemination of academic knowledge and it helps transform the educational experience of countless students. Therefore, English is not only a subject studied in the classroom, but also a medium for social and practical use (Foley, 2005). In the case of the Thai educational system, English is a compulsory subject from the primary school onwards. At the tertiary level, university students are required to take at least four English courses, i.e. two fundamental courses and two English for academic (EAP) or specific purposes (ESP) courses (Ministry of Education 2002).

Thai students generally encounter problems or difficulties in English learning, except those who attend international programs where English is used as the medium of instruction (Somsai and Intaraprasert, 2011). Despite a regular use of the English language both inside and outside the classroom settings, the students still encounter problems in their learning and they generally see unknown words as the first problem to overcome. This may be because vocabulary has been recognized as crucial to language use in which insufficient vocabulary knowledge of the learners led to difficulties in second language learning (Asgari and Mustapha, 2011). Additionally, mastering vocabulary is one of the most challenging tasks that any learner faces while acquiring another language (Nyikos and Fan, 2007). Thus, in the case of language learning, students need to be educated with the strategies

which can help the learners acquiring the meaning of words. The particular strategies which are used by learners for the acquisition of new words in the second language are called ‘vocabulary learning strategies’ (Gu, 1994). To deal with vocabulary learning problems, vocabulary learning strategies should have been brought to the language classroom to enhance language learners’ effectiveness in language learning. According to Dóczy (2011), vocabulary learning strategies are significant because the acquisition of vocabulary is a never-ending process and can solve insurmountable difficulties for language learners. It can be said that through the use of vocabulary learning strategies, learners may be able to maximize the effectiveness of their English language learning. On this basis, it is crucial to be aware of the basics of vocabulary learning strategies and how students adopt the strategies effectively. That is to say, it is vital to gain more insights into how Thai learners perceive the use of vocabulary learning strategies to help them learn vocabulary.

Literature Review

The Meaning of ‘Knowing a word’

What does ‘knowing a word’ mean? Does ‘knowing a word’ mean being able to recognize its written form and its meaning? This definition is insufficient. This is because it refers to only form and meaning, not all the other aspects of vocabulary knowledge. Vocabulary knowledge involves more than just the link between meaning and form, it is multifaceted (Laufer and Goldstein, 2004). This idea is consistent with that of Oxford and Crookall (1990) who indicate that ‘knowing an L2 word’ involves not just the ability to recognize the word or to match it with its L1 counterpart. Ling (2005) states that words are interwoven in a complex system in which knowledge of various levels of a lexical item is required in order to achieve adequate understanding in listening and reading or produce ideas successfully in speaking and writing.. According to Richards (1976), knowing a lexical item includes knowledge of word frequency, collocation, register, case relations, underlying forms, word association, and semantic structure. Alongside form and meaning, there is a distinction between

receptive and productive knowledge that is used by researchers when investigating vocabulary learning (Milton, 2009). Nation (2001) also applies the terms ‘receptive’ and ‘productive’ to vocabulary knowledge description covering all the aspects of what is involved in knowing a word. Therefore, we can say that receptive and productive knowledge is another aspect which is useful in understanding the L2 vocabulary learning process.

Language Learning Strategies (LLSs)

The term ‘language learning strategy’ has been defined by different researchers. O’Malley and Chamot (1990, p. 1) define language learning strategies as “the special thoughts or behaviours that individuals use to help them comprehend, learn, or retain new information.” Oxford (1990, p. 8) states that language learning strategies are “specific actions taken by the learner to make learning easier, faster, more enjoyable, more self-directed, and more transferable to new situations.” Nunan (1991, p. 168) sees language learning strategies as “the mental processes which learners employed to learn and use the target language.”

The available research on LLS classifications reveals that LLSs have been classified differently. This means that there is no agreement yet for LLS types and classification. In what follows, the taxonomies of LLS classified by Oxford (1990), and Stern (1992) will be shown. Oxford groups language learning strategies into two main groups, i.e. direct and indirect, which are further subdivided into six categories—memory, cognitive, compensation, metacognitive, affective, and social strategies. Stern (1992) divides language learning strategies into five main categories. (a) management and planning strategies—relating with the learner’s intention to direct his own learning, (b) cognitive strategies—learning steps that require direct analysis, transformation, or synthesis of learning materials, (c) communicative strategies—gesturing, paraphrasing, or asking for repetition, (d) interpersonal strategies—monitoring their own development and evaluating their own performance, and (e) affective strategies.

Vocabulary Learning Strategies (VLSs)

Regarding a definition of vocabulary learning strategies, different researchers have defined VLS differently. For example, Rubin (1987, p. 29)

defines lexical strategies as “the process by which information is obtained, stored, retrieved, and used.” Takač (2008, p. 52) explains that VLSs are “specific strategies utilized in the isolated task of learning vocabulary in the target language.” Further, Catalán (2003, p. 56) sees VLSs as “knowledge about the mechanisms (process, strategies) used in order to learn vocabulary as well as steps or actions taken by students (a) to find out the meaning of unknown words, (b) to retain them in long-term memory, (c) to recall them at will, and (d) to use them in oral or written mode.” In addition, Asgari and Mustapha (2011, p.85) have defined VLSs as ‘steps taken by the language learners to acquire new English words.’ Thus, it can be said that VLSs are commonly used not only to discover the meanings of unknown words but also to retain them in long-term memory and to recall them at will. For the present investigation, the term ‘vocabulary learning strategies’ has been defined as ‘an attempt or attempts made by language learners while encountering vocabulary problems to discover the meanings of unknown words, to retain the newly learned words in long-term memory and to recall them at will.’

VLSs are commonly used by the L2 learners in language class. In classifying learning strategies, scholars have different ways of classifying them (Intaraprasert, 2000). These classification systems give a crucial contribution to the lexical knowledge. The following are some examples of vocabulary learning strategies classifications which have been classified differently according to the principles of terminology and categorization of different researchers. There is a wide-ranging inventory of vocabulary learning strategies developed by Schmitt in 1977. His taxonomy falls into two main groups of strategies: discovery strategies and consolidation strategies. There are two strategy categories emerging in the first group: determination strategies and social strategies. The latter comprises of social strategies, memory strategies, cognitive strategies, and metacognitive strategies. Rubin and Thompson (1994) introduced three main categories of vocabulary learning strategies that have been reported by language learners to be effective. They are Direct Approach, Mnemonics, and Indirect Approach. In addition, there is another accepted classification

as suggested by Lawson and Hogben (1996). They classified vocabulary learning strategies based on the information obtained through the think-aloud method and interviews provided by 15 university students learning Italian in Australia. The fifteen strategies were classified under four categories: repetition, word feature analysis, simple elaboration, and complex elaboration. Nation's classification (2001) is another one which is always found cited in the literature on vocabulary learning strategies. Nation (2001) identified three main categories of strategies—planning, sources, and processes, each covering a subset of strategies. 'Planning' involves choosing what and when to focus attention on the vocabulary items. This category contains strategies for choosing words, choosing the aspects of word knowledge, choosing strategies, and planning repetition. 'Sources' refers to finding information about words from analyzing the words; context, dictionary, etc. 'Process' means establishing lexical knowledge through powerful processes as noticing, retrieving and generating.

The aforesaid vocabulary learning strategy classifications have been classified by different researchers based mostly on the results of their studies. However, exactly the same vocabulary learning strategy classifications cannot be found. This means that there is no exact agreement for vocabulary learning strategy classification. Additionally, some problems, such as a limit of English background knowledge, a fear of being blamed and a feeling of shyness for making mistakes, or a lack of chance to be in an English environment, may cause the different strategy use of the learners. Accordingly, the present study aims to explore what strategies are employed by the students to deal with their vocabulary learning problems. To investigate the VLSs that the learners used in language learning, the VLS classification purposed by Schmitt (1977) was used as the guide in the process of data analysis.

Research Methodology

Participant

A total of 63 undergraduate students studying at Khon Kaen University (2 campuses) participated in this study. At the time of data collection, the participants were enrolled in at least one English course. Within this

group, there were 33 science-oriented students and 30 non science-oriented students. Their ages ranged from 18 to 22. They were selected through the purposive sampling method on the basis of convenience and availability.

Data Collection

To explore how the participants dealt with vocabulary learning problems, one-to-one semi-structured interviews which were carried out in Thai were conducted as the main method of data collection. Prior to the actual stage of data collection, the interview questions were pilot with the students studying at Khon Kaen University in order to check whether or not the questions worked properly or if there was anything wrong with the wording, question sequences, timing, and so on (Intaraprasert, 2000). After that, the questions were rechecked and refined. There were two main parts in the interview. The first part of the interview (Questions 1 to 4) was concerned with gathering basic information about the interviewees. The second part (Questions 5 to 13) focused on the students' vocabulary learning strategies employed both inside and outside a language classroom. The main purposes of this part were to explore the students' vocabulary learning strategies used in language learning and how they solved problems associated with learning new vocabulary. The questions used in the investigation can be summarised as follows:

Part I:

- Q1:** an introduction part of the interviews, including the interviewer's and interviewee's names, the interviewee's field of study, and the purposes of the interview;
- Q2:** an investigation of the number of English courses each interviewee is studying, or has already studied;
- Q3:** an investigation of each interviewee's perception of his/her English language ability
- Q4:** an investigation of each interviewee's opinion about the importance of English in his/her life, and future career;

Part II:

- Q5:** an investigation of each interviewee's opinion about what he/she finds difficult in learning English and how he/she solves the problems;

- Q6:** an investigation of each interviewee's opinion on what aspects are necessary for learning English (If the interviewee's answer is that vocabulary is necessary, the interviewer will ask the next question. If the answer is not about vocabulary, the interviewer will stop this interview.)
- Q10:** an investigation of each interviewee's opinion on what aspects of problems he/she has in learning vocabulary items;
- Q11:** an investigation of the interviewee's opinion on which language skill he/she uses vocabulary leaning strategies the most frequently
- Q 12:** an investigation of the interviewee's use of vocabulary learning strategies to discover the meanings of new English vocabulary items
- Q13:** an investigation of each interviewee as to what vocabulary learning strategies he/she employs to recall newly-learned English vocabulary items

Data Analysis

After completing the stage of data collection, the interview recordings were transcribed verbatim. Then, the transcribed data were translated from Thai into English for the purpose of data analysis. The translated data were cross-checked for the accuracy by two Thai lecturers and one English native speaking lecturer teaching English at the university. The transcribed data were then analyzed with 'open and axial coding' techniques proposed by Punch (2005) and Strauss and Corbin (1998). The data were carefully read for possible codes and categories relevant to the purpose of the study. The stage of data analysis could be summarized as follows.

1. Looking through the interview data in order to see the overall picture of what the students reported doing to deal with vocabulary problems;
2. Looking at interview data script in detail, and making a list of statements which can be seen as vocabulary learning strategies. 1,541 statements eventually emerged.
3. Grouping all these 1,541 statements based on the similarities of the context or situation in which the vocabulary learning strategies were reported being employed for English learning. Then, these reported

statements were categorized based on the purpose to be achieved. At this stage, 64 main groups emerged.

4. Identifying those 64 groups. It was not easy to merge each strategy use into a suitable group and to find the suitable name to cover most because some strategies reported being employed seemed to overlap with others.

5. After some intensive revisions, the researcher had to make a clear distinction between vocabulary learning strategies and other types of strategies. Consequently, 33 groups of the reported statements were deleted because they were not consistent with the definition of vocabulary learning strategies for the present study.

6. Reconsidering and reclassifying the 31 remaining strategy groups under two main purposes to be achieved which are 1) strategies employed to discover the meaning of unknown words; and 2) strategies employed to retain the newly learned words in long-term memory and to recall them at will. At this stage, some individual strategy items were excluded because they were inconsistent with the proposed definition. For some other strategies which shared similar characteristics, they were merged. Eventually, 37 individual strategy items categorized into 6 categories under two main purposes remained.

Result

Based on the results of the data analysis, the 37 individual emergent strategies for dealing with vocabulary learning problems were classified by purposes to be achieved: 1) strategies for discovering the meaning of unknown words; and 2) strategies for retaining the newly learned words in long-term memory and recalling them at will. The first purpose was further categorized into 3 categories: 1.1) Discovery Strategies (DS); 1.2) Social Strategies (SoS); and 1.3) Support Strategies (SuS). The second one was categorized into 3 categories: 2.1) Memory Strategies (MS); 2.2) Cognitive Strategies; and 2.3) Metacognitive Strategies. The findings revealed that all the six types of VLSs were used in language learning. According to the frequency of VLSs; the most frequently employed strategies to cope with the vocabulary problems were support strategies (using dictionaries), while

the least frequently used strategies were memory strategies. Figure 1 below illustrates the complete vocabulary learning strategy classification found from the stage of the data analysis.

Vocabulary Learning Strategies	Strategies for discovering the meaning of unknown words	Discovery Strategies
		Social Strategies
		Support Strategies
	Strategies for retaining the newly learned words in long-term memory and recalling them at will	Memory Strategies
		Cognitive Strategies
		Metacognitive Strategies

Figure 1 A Classification of Vocabulary Learning Strategy

Purpose 1: Strategies for discovering the meaning of unknown words

Strategies for discovering the meaning of unknown words are the strategies that the students reported employing to get the meaning of unfamiliar or unknown vocabulary items with or without any helps. This purpose includes a variety of different strategies. And they are divided into three main categories as follows:

Category 1: Discovery Strategies (DS)

The strategies under this category aim to help learners to discover the meaning of words by themselves without any assistance from anyone or anything. There are altogether eight strategies in this category. These strategies include:

DS 1: Guess the meaning from contexts

DS 2: Guess the meaning of the new words by analyzing the part of speech of them such as noun, verb, adjective, adverb

DS 3: Guess the meaning from grammatical structure of sentence

DS 4: Guess the meaning of the new words by analyzing the affixes and roots of them

DS 5: Guess the meaning of the new words from aural features, such as stress, pronunciation

DS 6: Guess the meaning of the new words from real situations

DS 7: Guess the meaning of the new words from gestures

DS 8: Guess the meaning of the new words from some available pictures, graphs, figures, etc.

Category 2: Social Strategies (SoS)

The strategies under this category aim to help learners to discover the meaning of words by interacting with someone, such as peers, classmates, teachers, etc. In using the strategies in this category, the student was likely to consult someone expected to be able to explain the meanings of unfamiliar or unknown vocabulary items. Eventually, he/she could get the meaning of those vocabulary items. The emergent strategies in this category include:

SoS 1: Ask classmates and friends for the meaning of the words

SoS 2: Ask teachers for the meaning of the words

SoS 3: Ask other people, such as members of one's family or native speakers of English for the meaning of the words

Category 3: Support Strategies (SuS)

The strategies under this category aim to aid learners in discovering the meanings of new words by using some support mechanisms such as dictionary. The students likely to consult some support equipments expected to help them with the meaning of unknown words. The strategies under this category include:

SuS 1: Use an English-English dictionary

SuS 2: Use an English-Thai dictionary

SuS 3: Looking up the meaning of a new vocabulary item from electronic resources e.g. Talking dictionary, dictionary program in a computer, and the Internet

SuS 4: Use websites in the internet, such as Google

Purpose 2: Strategies employed to retain the newly learned words in long-term memory and to recall them at will

Category 4: Memory Strategies (MS)

The strategies under this category aim to aid learners in learning the new words through mental process by linking their existing knowledge with

the new words. There are altogether nine strategies in this category. These strategies include:

- MS 1: Link the word to a Thai word with similar sound
- MS 2: Try to use newly learned words in conversation with friends and teachers
- MS 3: Try to use newly learned words in imaginary situations in one's mind
- MS 4: Use words and concept associations
- MS 5: Link the words to visual images
- MS 6: Make up one's own sentences using the newly learned words
- MS 7: Link the words to other English words with similar sound
- MS 8: Link the words to other English words with similar spelling
- MS 9: Link the words to one's own experience

Category 5: Cognitive Strategies (CS)

The strategies under this category are the procedures the learners employ while learning intended to help the learners to retain the newly learned words in long-term memory and to recall them at will. The strategies under this category include:

- CS 1: Say the word with its meaning repeatedly
- CS 2: Write newly learned words items with meanings on papers and stick them on the wall in one's bedroom and repeatedly spell the words
- CS 3: Make a vocabulary list with meanings and examples in a notebook
- CS 4: Label English words on physical objects
- CS 5: Use word cards

Category 6: Metacognitive Strategies (MetS)

The strategies under this category are carefully planned techniques intended to help the learners to retain the newly learned words in long-term memory and to recall them at will. The strategies under this category include:

- MetS 1: remember words by doing English exercises after class
- MetS 2: remember words by grouping newly learned words according to the similarity of pronunciation and spelling

- MetS 3: remember words by grouping newly learned words according to the synonyms and antonyms
- MetS 4: remember words by doing dictations.
- MetS 5: remember words by playing crossword puzzles and scrabble
- MetS 6: remember words by watching an English-speaking film with subtitles
- MetS 7: remember words by reading novel, newspaper, short story, magazine, something from internet, etc.
- MetS 8: remember words by listening to English songs

Discussion and Conclusion

The main purpose of the present study was to investigate how KKU students deal with vocabulary learning problems. The findings from the interview demonstrated that the students are well aware of different vocabulary learning strategies. In summary, this study has arrived at the result that the vocabulary learning strategy classification emerging from the interview is consistent with some classifications classified by other scholars. For example, the classification from this study was similar to that from Schmitt's taxonomy (2002).

Moreover, the findings show various emergent strategies were reported to be employed to cope with vocabulary learning problems. In this situation, the students relied on different strategies to handle the problems. What follow are the discussions of certain strategies to deal with their vocabulary learning problems.

'Using a dictionary' and 'guessing from the context' were common strategies which were reported to be employed by all 63 research subjects when encountered vocabulary difficulties. These strategies are under categorization of Support Strategies and Discovery Strategies respectively. This finding is consistent with that of Asgari and Mustapha (2011) who found that among the Malaysian students, both 'using a monolingual dictionary' and 'guessing from the context' has been mentioned as common strategies which have been employed in vocabulary learning situation. The popularity of these two strategies may be because the use of a dictionary

and guessing from context clues are common practice in language class for second/foreign language learners. Furthermore, a dictionary gives detailed guidance on pronunciation, grammar and usage with explanations written in controlled, simplified vocabulary (Asgari and Mustapha, 2011). Carter (1987) also added that a dictionary provides examples of words used in various contexts as well. This finding is also in agreement with the findings of Wu (2005) which showed the common use of electronic dictionary strategy among Taiwanese students. In addition, in English language classes in Thai situation, most of the time, the teachers encourage the students to consult the dictionary for the meanings of unknown words. This may be another reason to explain this phenomenon. Therefore, we can say that ‘using a dictionary’ and ‘guessing from the context’ are likely to be significant for language learners to employ when they encounter some sort of vocabulary learning problems for better language learning result.

‘Watching an English-speaking film’ and ‘listening to English songs’ were other reported strategies by a few students to remember newly learnt words. The use of films and songs in this study is consistent with the results of the study conducted by Asgari and Mustapha (2011) which showed that using the English-language media such as songs, movies, TV programs, etc. were reported to be used frequently by Malaysian students. Asgari and Mustapha (2011) point out that authentic materials are good in terms of learning new words in their context. Moreover, a possible explanation of this finding may relate to the convenient accessibility of the new technology. That is to say, students may be able to maximize their English learning practice opportunities through media.

Regarding ‘reading novels, newspapers, short stories, magazines, or something from internet, etc’, this finding is in agreement with the findings of a number of studies which have shown that second language learners acquire vocabulary through reading (Haggan, 1990; Asgari and Mustapha, 2011; Pigada and Schmitt, 2006; Yali, 2010). Pigada and Schmitt (2006) found that extensive reading program can enhance lexical knowledge, words spelling, and meaning and grammatical knowledge. According to Yamamoto (2011), extensive reading can promote the incidental learning of L1 and L2

receptive vocabulary. Additionally, Dóczy (2011, p.142) states that “Reading stands out as one of the most important sources of language input, perhaps because this is the most traditional way of expanding vocabulary”. A possible explanation for this finding may relate to the traditional Thai educational system whereby in English language classroom, teachers have usually used English newspapers as a teaching method to improve and assist the learning and acquisition of vocabulary. This finding is also consistent with that of Haggan (1990) who found that the use of newspapers in EFL classes is a successful language method.

With regard to the strategies to learn the new words through mental process, “trying to use newly learned words in conversation with friends and teachers” emerged from this study. The students showed that they applied new English words in their daily speaking. Four of them mentioned that they practiced new words among their friends and tried to ask the teacher questions about the English lesson in the classroom. To explain this emergence, it is necessary to define the term ‘knowing a word’. If ‘knowing a word’ means the ability to recognize it (form) and to use it (meaning) correctly, the productive and receptive vocabulary knowledge may explain this emergence. Then, a possible explanation for this finding might be that the receptive and productive knowledge of vocabulary learning affects amount of vocabulary gained. It can be said that a number of new words can be learned receptively through listening, and productively through speaking. Shahov (2012) states that receptive knowledge is being able to understand a word in its spoken form and productive knowledge means to be able to use a word correctly in a speech. However, word knowledge is not only form and meaning. It is multifaceted because it involves more than just the link between meaning and form (Laufer and Goldstein, 2004). Although speaking practice can help learners expand their vocabulary, it cannot be the totality of vocabulary learning. Therefore, we can say that the relation between the ability in producing speech and lexical knowledge is very complex and still unclear.

‘Linking the words to visual images’ was another strategy which was reported to be frequently employed by the research subjects. This finding is

consistent with that of Siriwan (2007) who found that in the Thai Rajabhat university students context, ‘words and pictures associations’ was also reportedly used by the students to help them link between new words and visual symbols. Oxford and Crookall (1990, p. 16) states that “Visual image is a very useful aid for learning L2 vocabulary. The use of visual imagery for vocabulary learning is based on making associations between a picture and a word. The theory on which this technique is founded is that most learners are capable of associating new information to concepts in memory by means of meaningful visual images, and that visual images make learning more efficient.” Therefore, visual imagery is likely to be significant for language learners to employ when they encounter some sort of vocabulary learning problems.

English Language Classroom Implications

Lexical knowledge is very important for improving students’ English proficiency, but learners normally feel a lot of anxiety about their vocabulary learning because of its difficulty. Both language teachers and learners should be aware of how important vocabulary learning strategies are in their language learning. In this study, many strategies have been reportedly employed by the research subjects. Several pedagogical implications regarding strategies dealing with vocabulary learning arise from the foregoing discussion.

For Language Teachers

Before starting a training in how to use vocabulary learning strategies, a meeting should be set up for the teachers, who are always seen as the most important persons in Thai learning culture (Intaraprasert, 2006), to brainstorm and discuss the importance of vocabulary learning strategies, how the strategies can enhance the students’ language competence, how to introduce vocabulary learning strategies as a part of language classroom lessons, and in the meantime, how to encourage the students to use the strategies for their vocabulary learning. The teachers have to recognize that different strategies may be beneficial to students differently. Furthermore, teachers should realize that each student’s learning style might affect vocabulary learning. As Oxford and Crookall (1990, p.25) point out that

“Cultural and ethnic differences in learning styles may be very important and should be considered in understanding how people learn vocabulary”. Based on this statement, whenever possible, the type of vocabulary learning strategy use should be matched to learners’ learning style preferences. This means that learners will be able to learn vocabulary more efficiently with their preferred learning styles.

In a vocabulary learning strategy training session, teachers should become familiar with a variety of vocabulary learning strategies and should encourage their students to use them. The training can be better achieved by introducing it as a part of normal classroom activities. Oxford and Crookall (1990) suggest a training sequence as follows:

1. determining learners’ needs by exploring expectations and current vocabulary learning techniques;
2. choosing relevant techniques to teach;
3. finding ways to integrate these techniques into everyday language instruction;
4. considering issues of student motivation toward and anxieties concerning learning L2 vocabulary;
5. preparing materials and activities;
6. conducting completely informed training, in which learners are explicitly told how to use a particular technique to learn a given word, how to evaluate the success of the technique, and how to transfer it to a new word or set of words;
7. evaluating the training in terms of improvement in vocabulary learning; and
8. revising the training as needed.

For Language Learners

A seminar on vocabulary learning strategies should be held for students, especially at the beginning of new semesters before they start their English lessons. This can encourage and help them to become aware of the importance of vocabulary learning strategies. In other words, this will raise awareness of how vocabulary learning strategies can help them in language learning.

In conclusion, greater attention to vocabulary learning strategies by both language teachers and language learners will develop learners' language competence. Powerful strategies for vocabulary learning should be used, so that the language learners will be successful in their language learning.

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