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**យុទ្ធសាស្ត្រការរៀនចាត្រូវស័ព្ទ ៖ ទស្សនៈ និងការប្រើប្រាស់ជាក់ស្តែង
របស់សិស្សកម្ពុជា ដែលរៀនភាសាអង់គ្លេស ជាភាសាបរទេស**

**Vocabulary Learning Strategies: Perception and Actual Use
from Cambodian EFL Student**

A Thesis

**Submitted in Partial Fulfillment of the Requirements for the Degree of Master
of Education Program**

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ABSTRACT

The purpose of this study was carried out to investigate the students' perceptions and their actual use of strategies. As different learning tasks require different strategies, it is worthwhile looking at how learners learn vocabulary and the strategies they use to discover and retain word meaning. The number of selected sample included 200 grade 12 students studying at Hun Sen Sereypheap High School, derived through purposive random sampling. In order to have an in-depth study, 20 high proficient students were selected for the think-aloud vocabulary tasks and semi-structured interviews. The research instruments were vocabulary learning strategy questionnaire, think-aloud vocabulary tasks, and semi-structured interviews. Collected data were analyzed using both quantitative data from the questionnaire, and qualitative data from the think-aloud vocabulary tasks and the semi-structured interviews.

The results of the study were summarized as follows:

1. The students in general favored strategies focusing on contextual guessing when they encountered new words. Some reported that dictionary strategies were used to confirm guess and prior knowledge including word features, context, and world knowledge would lead to successful guessing.

2. The students in the study tended to study word form to consolidate new words and enhance retention but most of them did not systematically keep track of their learning or initiate learning outside class time.

3. It was found that the high proficient students used similar learning strategies as their counterparts but they were more effective in manipulating the strategies.

As a result of this study, it is strongly suggested that teachers should make learners aware of their own responsibility in vocabulary learning and expose them to different approaches and strategies in enhancing vocabulary acquisition.

មូលន័យសង្ខេប

ការស្រាវជ្រាវនេះមានគោលបំណង ដើម្បីសិក្សាការយល់ដឹងនិងការប្រើប្រាស់យុទ្ធសាស្ត្រការសិក្សាវាក្យស័ព្ទរបស់សិស្សខ្មែរដែលរៀនភាសាអង់គ្លេសជាភាសាបរទេស។ ការសិក្សាដែលខុសប្លែកគ្នាក៏ត្រូវប្រើយុទ្ធសាស្ត្រដែលខុសគ្នាដែរ។ ដូច្នោះ អ្វីដែលសំខាន់គឺស្វែងរកវិធីសាស្ត្រនៃការសិក្សាវាក្យស័ព្ទនិងយុទ្ធសាស្ត្រដែលសិស្សប្រើក្នុងការស្រាវជ្រាវនិងការចងចាំអត្ថន័យរបស់ពាក្យទាំងនោះ។ ភាគសំណាកដែលប្រើក្នុងការស្រាវជ្រាវនេះ ជាសិស្សខ្មែរនៃវិទ្យាល័យហ៊ុន សែនសេរីភាព ចំនួន ២០០ នាក់ដែលបានជ្រើសរើសដោយការរើសបែបគោលដៅ (Purposive Sampling) ដើម្បីសិក្សាស៊ីជម្រៅជាមួយសិស្សដែលមានសមត្ថភាពភាសាអង់គ្លេសខ្ពស់ចំនួន ២០ នាក់ ត្រូវបានរើសសម្រាប់របៀបវិធីការគិតក្នុងចិត្តរបស់ភារកិច្ចពាក្យ (Think-aloud Vocabulary Tasks) និងការសម្ភាសន៍ពាក់កណ្តាលរចនាសម្ព័ន្ធ (Semi-structured Interviews)។ ឧបករណ៍ ការស្រាវជ្រាវ ប្រកបដោយ កម្រងសំណួរកលវិធីការរៀនពាក្យ របៀបវិធីការគិតក្នុងចិត្តរបស់ភារកិច្ចពាក្យនិងការសម្ភាសន៍ពាក់កណ្តាលរចនាសម្ព័ន្ធ។ ទិន្នន័យដែលបានមកពីកម្រងសំណួរត្រូវបានវិភាគបែបបរិមាណវិស័យ និងទិន្នន័យដែលបានមកពីរបៀបវិធីការគិតក្នុងចិត្តរបស់ភារកិច្ចពាក្យនិងការសម្ភាសន៍ពាក់កណ្តាលរចនាសម្ព័ន្ធ ត្រូវបានវិភាគដោយវិធីគុណភាពវិស័យ។

លទ្ធផលការស្រាវជ្រាវអាចសរុបបានដូចខាងក្រោម ៖

១. សិស្សដោយទូទៅប្រើយុទ្ធសាស្ត្រទាយពាក្យតាមបរិបទនៅពេលពួកគេជួបពាក្យថ្មីខណៈពេលដែលសិស្សខ្លះរាយការណ៍ថា ពួកគេប្រើវចនានុក្រម ដើម្បីត្រួតពិនិត្យការទាយពាក្យ។ ក្រៅពីនេះ ចំណេះដឹងដើម ឬចំណេះដឹងសាវតារ ដូចជា ៖ លក្ខណៈរបស់ពាក្យនៅជុំវិញ បរិបទនិងចំណេះដឹងទូទៅឆ្ពោះទៅរកការទាយអត្ថន័យពាក្យបានជោគជ័យ។

២. សិស្សក្នុងការស្រាវជ្រាវនេះ ចូលចិត្តរៀនរូបបែបពាក្យ ដើម្បីរួមរួមពាក្យថ្មីៗនិងបន្ថែម ការចាំតែសិស្សមួយចំនួនធំមិនបានរក្សាវិធីសាស្ត្រការរៀនជាប្រព័ន្ធឬមិនផ្ដើមការរៀនក្រៅម៉ោងរៀនរដ្ឋ។

៣. លទ្ធផលការស្រាវជ្រាវ បានបង្ហាញថា សិស្សដែលមានសមត្ថភាពភាសាខ្ពស់ប្រើ យុទ្ធសាស្ត្រការរៀនដែលប្រហាក់ប្រហែលគ្នាជាមួយសិស្សផ្សេងៗ តែពួកគេអាចប្រើយុទ្ធសាស្ត្រការរៀននោះបានយ៉ាងមានប្រសិទ្ធភាព។

លទ្ធផលការស្រាវជ្រាវនេះ បានផ្តល់អនុសាសន៍ថា គ្រូបង្រៀនគួរធ្វើឲ្យសិស្សមានការយល់ដឹង ការទទួលខុសត្រូវក្នុងការរៀនពាក្យរបស់ពួកគេនិងគ្រូបង្រៀនគួរបង្រៀនសិស្សឲ្យយល់ចំពោះវិធីសាស្ត្រនិងកលវិធីដែលខុសគ្នាក្នុងការបន្ថែមការរៀនពាក្យ។

SUPERVISOR'S RESEARCH SUPERVISION STATEMENT

TO WHOM IT MAY CONCERN

Name of program: Master of Education Program

Name of candidate: BIN Sopheakda

Title of thesis: "Vocabulary Learning Strategies: Perception and Actual Use from
Cambodian EFL Student".

This is to certify that the research carried out for the above titled master's thesis was completed by the above named candidate under my direct supervision. I played the following part in the preparation of this thesis.

Supervisor (s) (Sign)

Date

CANDIDATE'S STATEMENT

TO WHOM IT MAY CONCERN

This is to certify that the thesis that I, BIN Sopheakda, hereby present entitled "Vocabulary Learning Strategies: Perception and Actual Use from Cambodian EFL Student" for the degree of Master of Education at the Royal University of Phnom Penh is entirely my own work and, furthermore, that it has not been used to fulfill the requirements of any other qualification in whole or in part, at this or any other University or equivalent institution.

Signed by (the candidate):

Date:

Signed by Supervisor:

Date:

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TABLE OF CONTENTS

	Page
TABLE OF CONTENTS	I
LIST OF TABLES	V
LIST OF FIGURES	VI
LIST OF ABBREVIATIONS	VII
 CHAPTER	
1 INTRODUCTION	1
1.1 Background of the Research	1
1.2 Purposes of the Study	2
1.3 Research Questions	3
1.4 Significance of the Research	3
1.5 Scope and Limitations of the Research	4
1.6 Definitions of Key Terms	5
1.7 Overviews of the Study	6
1.8 Summary of the Chapter	7
 2 LITERATURE REVIEW	 8
2.1 Background of Language Learning Strategies	8
2.2 Defining Language Learning Strategies	9

2.3	Taxonomy of Language Learning Strategies	12
2.3.1	O'Malley and Chamot's (1990) Classification of Language Learning Strategies	14
2.3.2	Oxford's (1990) Classification of Language Learning Strategies	14
2.3.3	Schmitt's (1997) Classification of Vocabulary Learning Strategies	17
2.4	History of Vocabulary Research	21
2.5	Characteristics of Current Vocabulary Research	26
2.5.1	Characteristics of ESL Vocabulary Research	27
2.5.2	Characteristics of EFL Vocabulary Research	30
2.6	Previous Study on Vocabulary Learning Strategies	33
2.7	Previous Study on Successful Language Learners	39
2.8	Summary of the Chapter	45
3	RESEARCH METHODOLOGY	47
3.1	Research Participants	47
3.2	Research Instruments	48
3.2.1	Vocabulary Learning Strategies Questionnaire (VLSQ)	48
3.2.1.1	Construction and Development of VLSQ	49
3.2.1.2	Structure of the VLSQ	49
3.2.2	Think-aloud Vocabulary Task	50
3.2.3	Semi-structured Interview	51

3.3	Data Collection Procedures	52
3.3.1	Vocabulary Learning Strategies Questionnaire (VLSQ)	53
3.3.2	Think-aloud Vocabulary Task	53
3.3.3	Semi-structured Interview	53
3.4	Data Analyses and Statistical Procedures	55
3.5	Summary of the Chapter	56
4	RESULTS	
4.1	Quantitative Analysis	58
4.1.1	Students' Use of Vocabulary Learning Strategies	59
4.1.2	Students' Perceptions of the Usefulness of the Strategies	64
4.2	Qualitative Analysis	69
4.2.1	Think-aloud Vocabulary Tasks by the High Proficient Students	69
4.2.1.1	Guessing from Context	70
4.2.1.2	Use of Dictionaries	75
4.2.2	High Proficient Students' Opinions about Vocabulary Learning	77
4.2.2.1	Importance of Vocabulary Learning	77
4.2.2.2	What "Knowing a Word" means to the High Proficient Students	78
4.2.2.3	Lack of Time Spent on Vocabulary Learning	81
4.3	Summary of the Chapter	82

5 CONCLUSIONS AND DISCUSSIONS	84
5.1 Summary of the Major Findings	84
5.2 Students' Use of Vocabulary Learning Strategies	86
5.3 Students' Perceptions of the Usefulness of the Strategies	90
5.4 Think-aloud Protocols by the High Proficient Students	93
5.5 High Proficient Students' Opinions about Vocabulary Learning	94
5.6 Pedagogical Implications on Vocabulary Learning Strategies	95
5.7 Suggestions for Further Studies	97
5.8 Concluding Remarks	98
 REFERENCES	 101
 APPENDICES	
A Formal Letters	116
B Vocabulary Learning Strategies Questionnaire	119
C Think-Aloud Vocabulary Task	125
D Semi-structured Interview	129

LIST OF TABLES

Table	Page
2.1 Defining Language Learning Strategies (LLS)	13
2.2 Features of Language Learning Strategies	15
2.3 Differences between Successful and Unsuccessful Learners	42
4.1 Discovery Strategies Used by the Grade 12 Students (N=200)	59
4.2 Discovery Strategies Used by the High Proficient Students (N=20)	61
4.3 Consolidation Strategies Used by the Grade 12 Students (N=200)	62
4.4 Consolidation Strategies Used by the High Proficient Students (N=20)	63
4.5 Perceived Usefulness of the Discovery Strategies by the Grade 12 Students (N=200)	65
4.6 Perceived Usefulness of the Discovery Strategies by the High Proficient Students (N=20)	66
4.7 Perceived Usefulness of the Consolidation Strategies by the Grade 12 Students (N=200)	67
4.8 Perceived Usefulness of the Consolidation Strategies by the High Proficient Students (N=20)	68

LIST OF FIGURES

Figure	Page
2.1 Interrelationships between Direct and Indirect Strategies and among the Six Strategy Groups	16
3.1 The Flow Chart of the Research Design	55

LIST OF ABBREVIATIONS

CS	Consolidation Strategies
DS	Discovery Strategies
L1	First Language
L2	Second Language
VLSQ	Vocabulary Learning Strategy Questionnaire

CHAPTER 1

INTRODUCTION

1.1 Background of the Study

Learning a second language involves the manipulation of four main skills: reading, writing, listening and speaking. One crucial factor in all four skills that underlies the success of second language acquisition is the amount of vocabulary one possesses. As Hill (2003, p. 1) noted in her recent work about the importance of vocabulary teaching and learning that while grammar is important, words are the building blocks to communication. This implies that knowledge of the grammatical structure plays an important part in language learning and equally important is that of knowing the meanings of words in a text. A similar argument is made by McCarthy in an interview for Cambridge Connection (2001, cited in Fan, 2003, p. 222), in which he commented that vocabulary not only forms the biggest part of the meaning of any language, it is also the biggest problem for most learners.

In light of this, mounting concern has arisen over vocabulary acquisition and particularly, vocabulary learning strategies in many Asian classrooms (Gu & Johnson, 1996; Schmitt, 1997; Fan, 2003; Gu, 2007). The striking message concerning university students' lack of vocabulary and limited choice of learning strategies sets out to uncover whether similar deficiencies exist among secondary students since the incremental nature of vocabulary acquisition stresses the importance of building a strong vocabulary foundation at early age. There is a compelling need to understand

how students acquire vocabulary by looking at the strategies they employ in lexical learning in the early years of schooling.

Though it seems likely that limited L2 vocabulary would affect elementary school EFL learners in carrying out the basic skills in English, L2 vocabulary learning at early age is still largely un-researched. Given the importance of vocabulary to oral and written language comprehension, it is astounding that there have been few experimental studies on English vocabulary learning among elementary school children. This problem not only affects local students but also worries many language teachers. Recent evidence of growing concern about inadequate vocabulary of L2 learners is pointed out by the English language education section (Ministry of Education, Youth and Sport (MoEYS), 2002) in its report.

To compensate for this, MoEYS (2006) has developed an English vocabulary lists for Cambodian schools to raise students' awareness of how words are formed and related to each other, such as synonyms, antonyms, collocations and idiomatic uses of words. Nevertheless, teaching of vocabulary as a discrete topic or introducing the vocabulary learning strategies is still rare in Cambodian secondary schools. Therefore, it is high time to focus on vocabulary learning strategies for younger learners in the local school context.

1.2 Purposes of the Study

In view of the above situation, a study is carried out to investigate the students' perceptions and their actual use of strategies. As different learning tasks require different strategies, it is worthwhile looking at how learners learn vocabulary and the strategies they use to discover and retain word meaning.

The present study aims to investigate which Discovery Strategies and Consolidation Strategies are most frequently used by the intermediate learners of English and their perceptions of the usefulness of the strategies. More importantly, the study enables the researcher to examine the features and behaviors of “good learners” by means of a think-aloud task and semi-structured interview.

1.3 Research Questions

In particular, the research is designed to answer the following questions.

1.3.1 Which discovery strategies and consolidation strategies do the grade 12 students and the high proficient students use most frequently?

1.3.2 Which discovery strategies and consolidation strategies do the grade 12 students and the high proficient students perceive as most useful?

1.3.3 Is there a significant difference between the use of strategies by high proficient students and other participants in the study?

1.3.4 How do the grade 12 high proficient students perceive vocabulary learning?

1.4 Significance of the Research

This study is important and useful for both language teachers and learners because it will highlight the use of vocabulary learning strategies, shed light on the conceptions and misconceptions of vocabulary learning. It will be intended that the study would enhance teacher’s understanding of the vocabulary acquisition among the

learners so that adjustments could be made to vocabulary teaching as well as strategy training.

1.5 Scope and Limitations of the Research

This is an exploratory study of students' vocabulary learning strategies. Population are all grade 12 students at Hun Sen Sereypheap High School in Kandal Province. The subjects were 200 grade 12 students, aged between 16-18 years old. In order to have an in-depth study, twenty participants, who is belonging to the top end of the proficiency scale according to the total marks of reading, writing, listening and speaking papers in the first-term examination, is selected for the think-aloud vocabulary tasks and semi-structured interviews to investigate the vocabulary learning strategies used by high proficient students. Although the population size in the study are also small, the findings of this study have highlighted preliminary indications of the vocabulary learning strategies used by the intermediate L2 learners and their perceptions of the usefulness of the strategies in the local context and enriched the research on vocabulary learning strategies. It would be beneficial to replicate this study on larger and different populations in order to examine the dynamic and complex nature of vocabulary acquisition among L2 learners.

Methodologically speaking, the data from the questionnaire, think-aloud tasks and the interviews are self-reported by the participants. Like any studies of a similar nature, there is always a question of how much self-reports reflect reality. Likewise, the protocols and interview data only provide insights into the possible strategic behavior of the high proficient students. Nevertheless, the anonymity of the questionnaire and the nature of the think-aloud tasks considerably reduced the

possibility of false reports. The time for conducting the current research is the second semester of the academic year 2015 intentionally.

1.6 Definitions of Key Terms

Here are the explanations and definitions of the key terms used in this study:

1.6.1 Perceptions refer to the interpretation or impression based on one's understanding of something (Concise Oxford Dictionary, 1995, p. 1014). In this study, how the learners perceive their own pattern of strategy use is a substantial aspect of investigation.

1.6.2 Actual Use refers to the selection and application of strategies made by the 200 grade 12 students studying at Hun Sen Sereypheap High School, divided into 10 high achievers, and 10 low achievers, including the discovery strategy and consolidation strategy.

1.6.3 Vocabulary Learning Strategies refers to specific actions, steps, techniques, physical behaviors or mental operations consciously or subconsciously employed by learners to get the word form and meaning and then consolidate the word form and meaning in memory before they can use the word properly. Hence, vocabulary learning strategies can be divided into two main categories: (1) strategies for discovering a new word's meaning; and (2) strategies for consolidating a word (Nation, 1990; Schmitt, 1997). For this research, analysis of strategies will be based on Nation's (1990) and Schmitt's (1997) classification of discovery and consolidation strategies.

1.6.3.1 Discovery Strategies refers to the strategies for learners to discover a new word meaning fall mainly into four types, namely, guessing or lexical inferencing, analysis of word features, use of the dictionary, and asking other people.

1.6.3.2 Consolidation Strategies refers to the strategies which aiming at committing the words learned to memory. The words learned to memory consist of word association, grouping, semantic-processing strategies, the keyword method, and repetition strategies.

1.6.4 Cambodian EFL Students refers to the 200 grade 12 students studying at Hun Sen Sereypheap High School, Kandal Province, Cambodia who study English as a foreign language (EFL) in academic year 2015-2016 in non-English speaking surrounding.

1.6.5 High Proficient Students refer to 20 grade 12 students studying at Hun Sen Sereypheap High School in Kandal Province who are studying English as foreign language in academic year 2015 in non-English speaking surrounding. Their English scores of the second semester of the grade 11 ranged from 70-100.

1.7 Overviews of the Study

This thesis addresses the role of vocabulary learning strategies in learning vocabulary in English as foreign language. The current investigation includes five chapters. Chapter One introduces the background to the study and the growing concern about inadequate vocabulary of L2 learners which gives rise to the purpose and the significance of the study. Chapter Two reviews the conceptual and theoretical framework on learning strategies, vocabulary learning strategies and research on good learners. Chapter Three outlines the research design, instruments and data analysis in

relation to the research questions. Chapter Four presents the results and discussions of the quantitative data from the questionnaire and qualitative data from the think-aloud vocabulary task and the semi-structured interview. Finally, the last chapter, Chapter Five, sums up the present study and offers suggestions for future research.

1.8 Summary of the Chapter

In the introductory chapter, the background of the research describes the current situation of vocabulary learning and teaching in the Cambodian high school context. Besides, the purposes and significance of the study are identified to set the framework of the study. The current research is attempted to identify the basic assumption, scope and limitation of the study. This research also provided the definitions of key terms used to define the research variables and contributions of the research. In the next chapter, Chapter Two, relevant literature for this study is reviewed.

CHAPTER 2

LITERATURE REVIEW

In this chapter, relevant literature will be reviewed, underlying the relevance to the issues investigated in this paper. Firstly, the research background of language learning strategies will be discussed. The second section reviews the established taxonomy of learning strategies while the third section aims to map out a theoretical framework for vocabulary learning strategies concerning the most commonly used language learning strategies among learners in various learning contexts. Also, the history in this review provides vocabulary learning developed with relation to literacy theory and presents characteristics of background knowledge for each type of vocabulary learning strategies. Then the researcher reviews the selected reports that describe the current characteristics of vocabulary learning research. Finally, this chapter ends with summarize the research on language learning strategies used by many researchers.

2.1 Background of Language Learning Strategies

The term “strategy” is of military origin where it refers to carefully designed plans for military operations (Oxford, 1990, p. 7). When applied to a non-military setting like school learning, the strategy concept has been taken on a new meaning and has been transformed into learning strategies. Gagne (1985 cited in Gu. 2005: 9), first defines learning strategies as the control or executive processes that oversee the whole process of information processing.

At the onset of the research on learning strategies, there was no theory and few empirical investigations into the nature of learning strategies and their influence on second language acquisition (O'Malley & Chamot, 1990, p. 2). However, there has been a dramatic proliferation of research concerned with the features of learning strategies, taxonomy of learning strategies and the possible learning outcomes resulting from these strategies in the last several decades. Research efforts concentrating on the "good language learner" identified strategies reported by students or observed in language learning situations that appear to contribute to learning. In general, these efforts manifested that students do apply learning strategies while learning a second language and that these strategies can be described and classified (O'Malley & Chamot, 1990, p. 3). Therefore, different taxonomies of learning strategies will be reviewed in the following section, which offer a sounder theoretical basis for contrastive analysis.

2.2 Defining Language Learning Strategies

There are different definitions for language learning strategies. For example, Takala (1996 cited in Oxford, 1990, p. 8) determines the word "strategy": "Strategies are taken to be the behaviors that the learners engage in during learning that are intended to influence cognitive and affective processing." In addition, as O'Malley and Chamot (1990, p. 1) put it, learning strategies are thoughts or behavior the learners use to comprehend, learn or retain new information. Carroll (1981, p. 126) describes learning strategy to be "a choice that the learner makes while learning or using the second language that affects learning". Ellis (1985, p. 165) points out that native language speakers use the same strategy types as learners of second language.

However, there are differences in the frequency of strategy use between native speakers and non-native speakers.

Even though some scholars agree that language learning strategies can be unconscious, Cohen (1998, p. 4) states that consciousness distinguishes strategies from the processes that are not strategic. Cohen (1998, p. 4) continues that the element of choice is an important factor in language learning strategies and therefore there cannot be strategies which are unconscious. However, Oxford (1990, p. 12) points out that learning strategies are usually seen as intentional and conscious actions made by the learner in order to take control of their own learner. However, in contrast to Cohen's (1998) view, Oxford (1990, p. 12) states that some strategies can become automatic and unconscious when used for long period of time.

Learning strategies are not always easy to notice. They can also be taught and, in addition, language learning strategies are flexible and influenced by a variety of factors. Oxford (1990, p. 7) defines language learning strategies as steps taken by students to enhance their own learning. According to her, language learning strategies are important since they create active and self-directed involvement and help to develop communicative competence.

According to Oxford (1990, p. 8), language learning strategies also allow the learners to become more self-directed, expand the role of teachers, are problem-oriented and are specific actions taken by the learner. Oxford (1990, pp. 8-12) continues that they also involve many aspects of the learner; they are not just the cognitive aspects. This means that language learning strategies support learning both directly and indirectly. The strategies which involve direct learning and use of subject

matter, which in this case is a new language, are direct strategies whereas strategies which contribute to learning indirectly are called indirect strategies.

The processes involved when using second language knowledge consist of production strategies, reception strategies and communication strategies. Production strategies and reception strategies are used when trying to use existing knowledge of the second language efficiently with minimal effort. On the other hand, communication strategies are used when the first attempt to use language in getting the message though fails. Communication strategies are likely to involve greater effort and therefore they are more conscious than production and reception strategies (Ellis, 1985, p. 165).

According to Ellis (1985, p. 103), learning strategies and techniques can be divided into two groups: those involved in studying the second language and those involved in obtaining second language input. In this study the former group is the main interest. Oxford (1990, p. 1) points out that even though learning strategies have been studied only for the past few decades, they have actually been used for thousands of years. O'Malley and Chamot (1990, p. 3) also point out that in the early stages of learning strategy research attention was mainly paid to differences between successful and unsuccessful language learners and the characteristics of good language learners. In addition, also factors influencing strategy choice were taken into consideration.

Many recent studies on L2 vocabulary concentrate on individual strategies or a small number of them (Fan, 2003, pp. 225). According to Catalán and María (2003, p. 56), during the last two decades studies of language learning strategies have aimed

at determining the characteristics of good and poor language learners and the difference between language learning and communication learning strategies.

2.3 Taxonomy of Language Learning Strategies

Research on learning strategies in the domain of second language acquisition may be viewed as a part of the general area of research on mental processes and structures that constitutes the field of cognitive science. The term “learning strategy”, was defined by Wenden and Rubin (1987) in their valuable work in the late eighties. First of all, the term learning strategies refers to “language learning behaviors learners actually engage in to learn and regulate the learning of a second language” (1987, p. 6). Secondly, the term also refers to “what learners know about the strategies they use, i.e. their strategic knowledge” (1987, p. 6). Finally, the term learning strategies indicates “what learners know about aspects of their language learning other than the strategies they use” (1987, p. 7). These definitions clearly demonstrate the different dimensions of learning strategies. In the discussion of different views on strategies, Naiman, Fröhlich and Stern (1975) acknowledged “a consensus on a definition of the term is lacking”. Eight years later, Bialstok (1983, p. 100) made an almost identical statement, “there is little consensus on the literature concerning either the definition or the identification of language learning strategies”. Table 2.1 shows chronologically how the term evolved in our field through the years. It is also important to note that these comments indicate the need of reaching an agreement on the definition of learning strategies in future studies.

Table 2.1**Defining Language Learning Strategies (LLS)**

Authors	What are LLS?	What are LLS for?
Rubin (1975, p. 43)	techniques or devices	to acquire knowledge
Bailystok (1978, p. 76)	methods/conscious enterprises	for exploiting available information to increase the proficiency of L2
Naiman et al. (1978, p.2)	general, more or less deliberate approaches to learning	
Cohen (1984, p. 110)	mental operations	to accomplish learning tasks
Rubin (1987, p. 19)	set of operations, steps, plans, routines what learners do	to facilitate the obtaining, storage, retrieval, & use of information; to regulate learning
Wenden (1987a, pp. 6-7)	- learning behaviors - strategic knowledge - knowledge about learning	to learn and regulate the learning on an L2
O'Malley & Chamot (1990, p. 1)	special thoughts or behaviors	to help comprehend, learn, or retain new information
Oxford (1990, p. 8)	specific actions	to make learning easier, faster, more enjoyable, more self-directed, more effective, and more transferable to new situations

Source: Gu (2005, pp. 32-33)

Despite a lack of general consensus on the definition of learning strategies, there is by now a substantial body of research outlining and categorizing the behaviors learners exhibit and describing the thought processes they engender while learning a foreign or second language, for example, O'Malley and Chamot (1990), Oxford (1990) and Schmitt (1997). It is acknowledged that there is a divergence among the various taxonomies of learning strategies yet the underlying educational goal is identical – to help learners become not only more efficient at learning and

using their second language but also more capable of self-directing these endeavors (Wenden & Rubin, 1987, p. 8).

2.3.1 O'Malley and Chamot's (1990) Classification of Language Learning Strategies

In the early 90s, O'Malley and Chamot (1990) proposed a new classification of language learning strategies. They divided learning strategies into three major types: namely metacognitive, cognitive and social / affective (p, 43). The first type includes strategies for overviewing the processes of language use and learning, and for taking steps to efficiently plan and regulate those processes. Meanwhile, cognitive strategies are those which involve the manipulation of information in an immediate task for the purpose of acquiring or retaining that information. Finally, learners also acquire the language by means of dealing with interpersonal relationships and controlling one's emotional constraints. In this regard, these strategies are generally subsumed under social or affective strategies. The system clearly shows that each of these major categories is interdependent and equally important to the process of language acquisition.

2.3.2 Oxford's (1990) Classification of Language Learning Strategies

One commonly used technical definition is that learning strategies are operations employed by the learner to aid the acquisition, storage, retrieval, and use of information (Oxford, 1990, p. 8). Nonetheless, Oxford criticized this definition as it fails to convey the complexity and richness of learning strategies. She expanded the definition by saying that "learning strategies are specific actions taken by the learner to make learning easier, faster, more enjoyable, more self-directed, more effective,

and more transferable to new situations” (1990, p. 8). In addition, she also summarized the features of language learning strategies in the following table.

Table 2.2

Features of Language Learning Strategies

Language Learning Strategies
1. Contribute to the main goal, communicative competence.
2. Allow learners to become more self-directed.
3. Expand the role of teachers.
4. Are problem-oriented.
5. Are specific actions taken by the learner.
6. Involve many aspects of the learner, not just the cognitive.
7. Support learning both directly and indirectly.
8. Are not always observable.
9. Are often conscious.
10. Can be taught.
11. Are flexible.
12. Are influenced by a variety of factors.

Source: Oxford (1990, p. 9)

This review of the features of language learning strategies is a useful background to the new strategy classification system, discussed next.

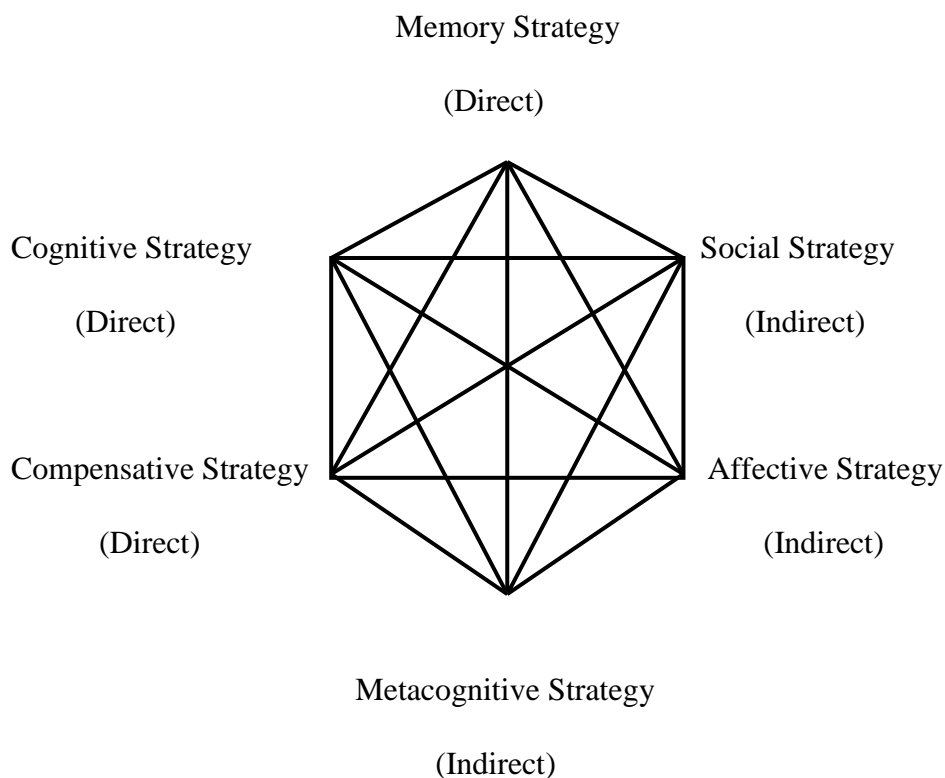
Oxford (1990) developed the Strategies Inventory for Language Learning (SILL), which is different in several ways from earlier attempts to classify strategies.

This strategy system is more comprehensive, detailed and systematic in linking individual strategies, as well as strategy groups, with each of the four language skills (listening, reading, speaking, and writing). She classifies strategies into two major classes: direct and indirect. These two classes are subdivided into a total of six groups. The former includes memory, cognitive, and compensation whereas the latter includes metacognitive, affective, and social strategies (p, 14). Figure 1 indicates that there is mutual support between direct strategies and indirect strategies, and that each strategy group is capable of connecting with and assisting every other strategy group.

Figure 2.1

Interrelationships between Direct and Indirect Strategies and among the Six

Strategy Groups. Source: Oxford, 1990, p. 15



The first major class, direct strategies, works with the language itself in a variety of specific tasks and situations. According to Oxford (1990, p. 14), these strategies are particularly important for learners to acquire the second or foreign language. The direct class is composed of memory strategies for remembering and retrieving new information, cognitive strategies for understanding and producing the language, and compensation strategies for using the language despite knowledge gap.

In contrast, the second major strategy class – indirect strategies for general management of learning – is made up of metacognitive strategies for coordinating the learning process, affective strategies for regulating emotions, and social strategies for learning with others (p, 15).

It is important to note that Oxford's scheme does not only include six strategy groups but it subdivides them into a total of 19 strategy sets and 62 subsets, 193 strategies in total when combined with the four language skills. Given the comprehensive structure of Oxford's strategy system, a large overlap naturally exists among the strategy groups in the system presented here and the system also fails to categorize the discrete aspect of language such as vocabulary-specific strategies.

2.3.3 Schmitt's (1997) Classification of Vocabulary Learning Strategies

Of the more established systems, the one developed by Schmitt (1997, p. 205) seems best able to provide a classification scheme for a wide range of L2 vocabulary learning strategies. Seeing the inadequacy of categorizing vocabulary-specific strategies in Oxford's system, Schmitt adapts and expands the previous work. Schmitt's taxonomy aims to focus on vocabulary learning and minimizes the potential overlap in classification of strategies.

Schmitt's (1997) taxonomy of vocabulary learning strategies is organized in two groups: Discovery Strategies and Consolidation Strategies. Discovery Strategies for learners to discover a new word meaning fall into four main types: guessing or lexical inferencing, analysis of word features, use of the dictionary and asking other people (p, 206). He believed that when encountering a word for the first time, learners must use their prior knowledge of the target language, contextual clues, or reference materials to figure out the new meaning, or seek help from someone who knows to gain initial information about a new word. Learners have to get the word form and meaning and then consolidate the word form and meaning in memory before they can use the word. As a result, Discovery Strategies are the crucial building blocks of successful vocabulary learning.

On the contrary, once learners have gained initial information about a new word, it is worthwhile to make some effort to remember it. Consolidation Strategies aim to commit the words learned to memory. They include word association, grouping, semantic-processing strategies, the keyword method and repetition strategies.

This simple distinction results in a more comprehensive system of vocabulary learning strategies in which Discovery Strategies are subdivided into Determination and Social Strategies whereas Consolidation Strategies come from the Social, Memory, Cognitive, or Metacognitive Strategy groups. A detailed description of the five vocabulary learning strategy groups will be reviewed as follows.

A learner may use Determination Strategies such as analyzing part of speech, analyzing affixes and roots, checking the L1 cognate or even guessing from textual context to discover the meaning of a new word. However, Clarke and Nation (1980)

warn that analysis of word parts can lead to misinterpretation and thus suggest that this strategy is better used as a confirmation of guesses. Checking for the L1 cognate may seem feasible especially for words that are borrowed from other languages as these loanwords often retain similarities in form and meaning. Though cognates can be a reliable resource for both guessing the meaning of and remembering new words, the success depends greatly on the perceived distance between the two languages by the learners (Ringbom, 1986). Other promising ways include finding a word's meaning from reference materials such as a dictionary or using word lists and flash cards which are commonplace among learners. Social Strategies use interaction with other people to improve language learning. Learners may ask someone who knows to help discover a new meaning, teachers and peers are often in this position. For example, teachers may give the L1 translation, a synonym, a definition by paraphrase or use the new word in a sentence, or by any combination of these (Schmitt, 1997, p. 210). There are pros and cons of giving the L1 translation and thus they must be taken into consideration. One obvious advantage of L1 translation is that it is usually effective. Learners can easily understand the translations and make possible the transfer of all the knowledge a student has of the L1 word (collocations, associations, etc.) onto the L2 equivalent. However, the drawback of this practice is that many translation pairs are not exact equivalents, so that the translation may not be accurately transferred.

Looking at vocabulary learning from another perspective, learners need to acquire and use the appropriate Consolidation Strategies to remember the word after the first encounter. According to Ebbinghaus (1993), the forefather of modern understanding of human memory, knowledge rapidly decreases immediately after

learning, but a plateau is reached about an hour later whereby the speed of forgetting gets lower and slower.

One of the Consolidation Strategies that can enhance retention of a new word is Social Strategies. Nation (1977) and Dansereau (1988) suggest that cooperative group learning can promote active processing of information and cross modeling / imitation and prepare the participants for, team activities outside the classroom (cited in Schmitt, 1997, p. 211). As suggested by Kramersch (1979 as cited in Schmitt, 1997, p. 211), another social strategy involves students enlisting teachers to check their work for accuracy, such as flash cards and word lists, which facilitates independent learning outside class time.

Schmitt (1997) explains that most memory strategies involve relating the word to be retained with prior knowledge. For example, studying new words with pictures of their meaning, associating the word with its coordination, synonymy, or antonymy, using a scale for gradable adjectives or even grouping words together within a storyline. Of the various and many mnemonics, the Keyword Method is perhaps the most researched mnemonic strategy of all. This method combines the phonological forms and meanings of L1 and L2 words in order to facilitate recall. For instance, a learner finds a L1 word which sounds like the target L2 word, i.e. the English word cat for the Japanese word katana (sword). Then an image combining the two concepts is created, such as a cat waving a sword. The Keyword Method has proved to be highly effective in enhancing the recall of words (Atkinson & Raugh, 1975; Pressley, Levin & Miller, 1982; Pressley et al., 1982; Pressley, Leven & Delaney, 1982). However, this method is argued to be difficult for many L2 learners.

Cognitive strategies resemble memory strategies, but are not focused so specifically on manipulative mental processing; they include repetition and using mechanical means to study vocabulary. Written and verbal repetitions over time are common strategies among language learners. O'Malley and Chamot (1990) once make a comment on written and verbal repetition. O'Malley and Chamot (1990) claim that they are so entrenched that students often resist giving them up to try other ones. Another kind of cognitive strategy is using study aids. Taking notes in class and making use of any special vocabulary sections in their textbooks can help them study target words. As a result, vocabulary notebooks have been promoted by a number of writers (Allen, 1983; McCarthy et. al., 1988). This practice is effective because it allows learners to create their own personal structure for newly learned words, and also affords the chance for additional exposure during review.

The framework of the present study is adapted from Schmitt (1997) in which the research instruments are drawn on the two distinct groups of vocabulary learning strategies: the Discovery Strategies and Consolidation Strategies.

2.4 History of Vocabulary Research

The history of research on vocabulary instruction is complex. Until 1950, vocabulary research focused on four areas: (1) vocabulary size at various ages; (2) the relationship between vocabulary and intelligence; (3) identifying the most useful words to know; and (4) identifying a core of words that make text more understandable (Irvin, 1990). However, the study of vocabulary was one of the weaker areas in early research for English language learners while the study about grammatical and phonological structure had been dominant throughout the 1940s,

1950s, and 1960s. Charles Fries' *Teaching and Learning English as a Foreign Language* (1945 cited in DeCarrico, 2001) was the most influential study for this tradition based on behaviorist psychology. It valued audio-lingual method as a good way to learn second languages by paying systematic attention to intensive drills of basic sentence patterns and their pronunciation (DeCarrico, 2001). The basic assumption was that once students learned the structural frames, lexical items could be learned later to fill the grammatical slot in the frames. Direct method or audio-lingual method in this period emphasized oral skills, accurate production, and limited vocabulary knowledge as a way to build good language use habits. From this perspective, good language habits would eventually lead to an increased vocabulary.

Revolutionary changes in linguistic theory were brought by Chomsky (1957). In his work, language teaching was viewed as a rationalist's framework rather than the behaviorists' notion of habit formation. The central assumption was that language is represented as a speaker's mental grammar, in other words, a set of abstract rules for generating grammatical sentences. Since, language learning was considered as rule acquisition, not habit formation, vocabulary was somewhat important; however, rule learning still has a place in language learning (Decarrico, 2001).

In 1970's, Hymes's concept of communicative competence emphasized the sociolinguistic and pragmatic factors governing effective use of language (Hymes, 1972). He was especially concerned about using language for meaningful communication, including the appropriate use of language in particular social contexts. Since the communicative language teaching promoted fluency over accuracy, lexical competence was a central part of communicative competence. In other words, teaching vocabulary started to become a central part of teaching

language in contrast to early language research. However, during the 1970s contemporary linguistics and cognitive psychology supported the psycholinguistic approach, which focused on guessing the meaning of unknown words through the use of contextual clues (Coady, 1993). Psycholinguistic studies provided insights concerning mental processes involved in vocabulary learning, such as memory, storage, and retrieval.

In the 1980s there seems to have developed a reaction against the psycholinguistic model. The research trend in this period emphasized the role of lexis in large units of language beyond the single word-form. The meaning has to be reinterpreted constantly throughout a text because of the interaction of a number of text features such as lexical cohesion, subordinators, pragmatic consideration, coherence relations, and genre structures (Coady, 1993). This interactive approach argues that the proficient readers utilize both bottom-up and top-down processing, and that successful comprehension is the result of an interaction between both types of processing. Within this approach, schema theory emphasizes the role of preexisting knowledge which the learner relates to the input from the text interactively. Thus, interactional activities in this framework emphasize teaching students to take advantage of all of their prior knowledge. As a result, vocabulary acquisition is viewed in terms of the students' background knowledge of concepts as well as of word forms.

In addition, in the 70's and 80s' the communicative approach and interactional approach focused on implicit, incidental learning. Incidental vocabulary learning is defined as learning that occurs when the mind is focused elsewhere, such as on understanding a text or using language for communicative purpose. In a review of 144

studies, Krashen (1989) argues that incidental acquisition of vocabulary occurs through the operation of his Input Hypothesis, which proposes that learners acquire a second language when they are exposed to comprehensible input.

A number of studies which support this hypothesis have shown that guessing from context can lead to vocabulary acquisition. Raptis (1997) shows that many current second language reading textbooks promote the assumption that vocabulary is best learned incidentally by guessing from context. Based on this learning theory, teachers encouraged students to recognize clues to word meanings in context and to use monolingual dictionaries rather than bilingual dictionaries, and textbooks emphasized inferring word meaning from context.

In the review of incidental vocabulary learning, Huckin and Coady (1999) state some advantages of incidental vocabulary learning over direct introduction: (1) it is contextualized, giving the learner a paired-associate exercises; (2) it is pedagogically efficient in that it enables two activities - vocabulary acquisition and reading - to occur at the same time; and (3) it is more individualized and learner-based because the vocabulary being acquired is dependent on the learner's own selection of reading materials. However, Huckin and Coady in the same article point out some limitations of incidental learning: (1) guessing is imprecise because many reading tasks call for precise interpretation; (2) accurate guessing require accurate word recognition and careful monitoring because there are many deceptive lexical items that can easily mislead the learner; (3) guessing takes time and thus slows down the reading process; (4) guessing is effective only when the context is well understood and almost all of the surrounding words in the text are known; (5) guessing requires good reading strategies; (6) guessing often does not translate into acquisition; and

(7) guessing is not effective in the acquisition of multiword lexical items. In spite of the above, they concluded that the incidental learning is still seen as an important part of vocabulary building, especially among advanced learners, but it requires a great deal of prior training in basic vocabulary, word recognition, metacognition, and subject matter. In fact, most scholars agree that, except for the first few thousand most common words, vocabulary learning predominantly occurs through extensive reading incidentally, with the learner guessing at the meaning of unknown words.

However, Hulstijn (1992) reports that the number of new words learned incidentally is relatively small compared to the number of words learned intentionally. Incidental vocabulary learning tends to be incremental and slow even with the use of a dictionary and the inferring strategy. The study by Hulstijn, Hillander and Greidanus (1996) point out why second language learners could not have enough learning incidentally. The authors suggest the following reasons: (1) learner failed to notice the new words; (2) they noticed the new word, but ignored them; (3) they do not focus their attention on the unknown word; (4) they infer the meaning from context incorrectly; and (5) the low frequency of most unknown prevents effective learning. It was emphasized by Hulstijn (1992) that both incidental and intentional learning should exist together in vocabulary instruction for second language learners.

In fact, Chall's work (1987) suggests that decisions to use incidental versus conscious approaches can only be made by considering students' ages and proficiency levels. Coady (1993) also concludes after exploring the basic argument for a mixed approach to vocabulary acquisition in ESL that the basic or core vocabulary should be taught, but less frequent vocabulary will be learned "naturally" via context, but even in that case, techniques for that purpose should be taught. Carter and McCarthy

(1988) concludes that a mixture of approaches should be adopted since there are advantages and disadvantages between context-based inferential strategies and some other explicit vocabulary learning approaches such as key-word techniques, or translation in pairs, or using a monolingual or bilingual dictionary.

In summary, in spite of the evident role of reading in much advanced vocabulary acquisition, there are some problems from the perspective of effective learning. In incidental acquisition through reading, the acquisition process is slow, often misguided, and seemingly haphazard, with differential outcomes for different learners, word types, and context. According to Sternberg (1987), even if most vocabulary is learned from context, one should not conclude that this is the fastest or most efficient way of learning specific vocabulary.

2.5 Characteristics of Current Vocabulary Research

Folse (2004) points out eight categories for recent trends in vocabulary research: (1) How many words and which words do learners need to know?; (2) How do second language learners' vocabularies develop?; (3) Why are some words more difficult to learn than other?; (4) Is second language vocabulary learned more easily through natural context or through direct instruction?; (5) Which vocabulary learning strategies do students employ?; (6) Which types of practice activities promote vocabulary learning?; (7) What effect do certain types of marginal glosses and internet annotations have on incidental vocabulary learning?; (8) How does using a dictionary impact vocabulary acquisition? All the questions deal with vocabulary instruction from various perspectives, which reveal the characteristics of current vocabulary instruction research.

Much research has been conducted on which kind of instruction works best. However, there is little difference in research trends depending on where research is conducted. The researcher reviews and divides material into two groups: research conducted in English speaking countries (ESL learning conditions) and research conducted in non-English speaking countries (EFL learning conditions). The characteristics of the ESL group are discussed separately from those in EFL conditions.

2.5.1 Characteristics of ESL Vocabulary Research

For vocabulary instruction research for English language learners under ESL conditions, the studies focus on whether a structured vocabulary approach or some kinds of vocabulary programs are effective. Sanaoui (1995) reports that learners in Canada who have a structured learning approach are more successful in retaining vocabulary taught in their classes. A structured approach is found to be more effective than an unstructured approach for both beginning and advanced learners. However, Lessard-Clouston (1996) concludes that a more structured approach would not necessarily result in more vocabulary learning. Rather, the individual nature of vocabulary learning including a learner's learning style, motivation, previous education, may play an important role. Of course, there is a study that reveals the same result in first language vocabulary acquisition about incidental learning. Paribakht and Wesche (1999) found that that most vocabulary learning occurs naturally when learners attempt to understand new words when they hear or read them in context. But they added later that, reading-based approaches might reasonably be combined with explicit instruction for an initial core of several thousand frequently

used words to bring learners to a threshold level for text comprehension (Wesche & Paribakht, 2000).

Gaudio (2003) reports that vocabulary is acquired through the intensive vocabulary building program which included the use of small group vocabulary instruction, computerized vocabulary programs, vocabulary software, vocabulary based games, and mini vocabulary dictionaries. In addition, there are some studies regarding the effectiveness of video clips in teaching unknown vocabulary (Al-Seghayer, 2001), the effectiveness of the collaborative database using online-resources for learners who have moved beyond the elementary level (Cobb & Horst, 2001), and the reevaluation of the dictionary use in the L2 reading class (Fraser, 1999).

The other factor affecting second language vocabulary instruction, not considered in first language acquisition, is the translation effect. Prince (1996) points out that the effectiveness of translation learning depends on the learners' proficiency. The use of primary language support is a strategy widely recommended for second language vocabulary instruction; however, the research opposing the use of native language strategies was prevalent as well. Despite controversies surrounding the use of primary language, that strategy can come in many forms, from direct instruction in the native language to translation of worksheets. Fraser's study (1999) shows that consulting a dictionary to confirm inference is a valuable metacognitive strategy for lexical acquisition. Kroll and Curley (1988) states that ESL students use translation exclusively in the beginning stage compared to students in advanced stages.

Sautermeister (1989) reports vocabulary learning behavior among university, non-specialist learners of English who were consistently presented with new words in

context, but who were not satisfied until they found a first language equivalent to assist their learning. This behavior is similar to that described for beginners above. In summary, it appears that learning vocabulary in context is widely perceived by the teaching profession as desirable; however, it is true that the translation condition is sometimes better in the beginning stage.

The process of inferring (Bot, Paribakht & Wesche, 1999) and the process of negotiation (Smith, 2004) as well as gestures or non-verbal behaviors (Lazaraton, 2004) also affect the effectiveness of instruction in the studies conducted under ESL conditions. Comparing studies with native English learners, Zareva, Schwanenfliegel, and Nikolova, (2005) reported that vocabulary size, word frequency effects, number of associations, and with-group consistency are more effective whereas learners' metacognitive awareness is not proficiency dependent. Also Kojic-Sabo and Lightbrown (1999) investigate the differences between ESL and EFL vocabulary learning. Students in the two settings exhibit some differences with regard to what strategies they used and to what extent. However, vocabulary learning is not necessarily related to those conditions and is rather related to other factors. Extensive strategy use is linked to success in language learning, whereas lack of effort on the learners' part relates to poor achievement. Time and learned independence were two measures most closely related to success in vocabulary learning and higher overall English proficiency.

Much research has been conducted about second language vocabulary knowledge and vocabulary processing compared to first language instruction. Second language learners' mental processing in the target language is different from first language learners (Wolter, 2001). In other words, phonology does not play an

important role for second language learners compared to the role of phonology in first language vocabulary learning; rather, semantic factors seem to play more roles in learning second language vocabulary. Quin (2002) researched vocabulary knowledge depth, and argued that the dimension of vocabulary depth is as important as vocabulary size in predicting performance on academic reading for ESL students. Knowledge of word meaning showed a higher likelihood of being remembered more than of it being forgotten (Schmitt, 1998).

In summary, for vocabulary instruction research for English language learners in ESL conditions, research first focuses on whether a structured vocabulary approach or a vocabulary building program is effective; second, whether specific supports, such as online-resources, dictionaries, translations, or technologies, are more effective than incidental learning; third, how second language vocabulary knowledge and lexical processing are different from those of first language.

2.5.2 Characteristics of EFL Vocabulary Research

The research conducted under EFL conditions showed little difference from research under ESL conditions. EFL students' purpose for learning English is similar to that of ESL students, but their different environments have affected the focus of vocabulary research.

Qian (1996) shows results that learning vocabulary by word lists is more effective than learning vocabulary in context. He did not claim that lexical guessing in context is not effective, but he was concerned about the learner's background, needs, preference, and learning style as important factors for acquiring new words, especially for Asian students. However, Gu and Johnson (1996) conduct a study about Chinese students in China and found contradictions to popular beliefs about Asian learners.

The participants did not use memorization; rather, they used more meaning-oriented strategies. Additionally, Fan's study (2003) about Chinese students in Hong Kong shows similar results that guessing unknown words is most often used to learn vocabulary, particularly for the high level vocabulary learners. Laufer and Hill (2000) conduct a study about dictionary use. Their results showed that different people have different lookup preferences and the use of multiple dictionary information seems to reinforce retention. Also, using first language translation is effective in second language vocabulary learning similar to dictionary use and first - second language paired word lists.

Hulstijn and Laufer (2001) study the retention of vocabulary, which is related to the amount of task-induced involvement load: retention is highest in the composition tasks, lower in reading plus tasks, and lowest in reading only tasks. Hill and Laufer (2003) also conclude that two form-oriented tasks yield better results than a meaning oriented task. An important factor determining task effectiveness for vocabulary learning is the amount of word-related activity that the task induces. More words are acquired through tasks than through reading (Laufer, 2003). FonF (Focus on Form: drawing students' attention to linguistic elements as they arise incidentally in lessons), and FonFs (Focus on Forms: teaching discrete linguistic structures in separate lessons), whether related to a communicative task or not, play a crucial role in building the learner's lexical competence (Laufer, 2005).

Hill (2000) explored the usefulness of online tasks and concluded that contrary to Krashen's Input Hypothesis, the conventional comprehension task does not necessarily promote vocabulary learning. Tasks that require greater involvement with words result in better long term recall. The web is excelling as an interactive medium

to present information in a more clearly comprehensible format. In addition, word-focused tasks (Laufer, 2003), form-focused instruction (Ellis, 2004), and form-oriented tasks (Hill & Laufer, 2003), work more effectively than natural acquisition through reading or meaning-focused instruction.

Since phonological skills and awareness are very important in early literacy, some studies on EFL children were conducted to measure how phonological ability affects second language vocabulary learning. Hu (2003) investigates the role of phonological memory and awareness for early childhood English learners in Taiwan. Phonological awareness is the ability to apprehend and manipulate smaller and smaller units of sound and facilitate the connection between letters and the sounds they represent in words. Phonological memory is the ability to hold sound-based information in immediate memory. Hu concludes that phonological memory is related to foreign language word learning, whereas phonological awareness is not. In contrast to this result, the study by Masoura and Gathercole (2005) show that the children's speed of learning new English is independent of phonological memory skills. Their results show that the use of existing lexical representations is important as a means of supporting the acquisition of new vocabulary forms as well as increasing familiarity with the sound structure of a language.

In summary, the first trend of the EFL studies is examining whether Asian learners' characteristics are different from the other populations regarding the same instruction since many studies were conducted with Chinese students as English learners. The second major topic of the studies in this group is what kind of instruction supports vocabulary learning with the premise that vocabulary can be better acquired in task related instruction rather than in incidental learning. Last, study

results with child learners of EFL show that a meaning-related task is more related to vocabulary learning than phonological skill.

2.6 Previous Study on Vocabulary Learning Strategies

Empirical studies on vocabulary learning strategies shed light on the actual use and perception of strategies for vocabulary learning in different contexts. In the following section, two large-scale projects conducted by Gu and Johnson (1996) and by Schmitt (1997) concerning Asian students will be reviewed. Furthermore, Fan's (2003) study focusing on local tertiary students will be reviewed to understand the different dimensions of vocabulary learning strategies. Finally, a case study conducted by Law (2003) among form four students in a CMI secondary school will be reviewed to shed light on the current vocabulary teaching and learning in the Hong Kong secondary school context.

Gu and Johnson (1996) aimed to establish the vocabulary learning strategies used by Chinese university learners of English and the relationship between their strategies and outcomes in learning English. They asked 850 sophomore non-English majors at Beijing Normal University in China to complete a vocabulary learning questionnaire in order to elicit students' beliefs about vocabulary learning and their self-reported vocabulary learning strategies. The researchers correlated replies to the questionnaire with results on a vocabulary size test and on the College English Test (CETBAND2). Overall, the participants emphasized the belief that vocabulary should be memorized. They believed that vocabulary should be carefully studied and put to use. Therefore, contextual guessing, skillful use of dictionaries, note-taking, paying attention to word formation, contextual encoding, and activation of newly learned

words positively correlated with the two test scores. However, the researchers found that visual repetition of new words was the strongest negative predictor of both vocabulary size and general proficiency (Gu & Johnson, 1996, pp. 643-644).

Schmitt (1997) conducted a large-scale investigation on the relationships between strategy use and perceived usefulness of these strategies. He surveyed a sample of 600 Japanese students to assess which vocabulary learning strategies the learners actually used and how helpful they believed them to be. The results showed that six strategies were most commonly used: using a bilingual dictionary, using a written repetition, using a verbal repetition, saying a new word aloud, studying a word's spelling, and taking notes in class. Of those reported strategies, they considered dictionary and repetition strategies were more useful than others. In contrast, they used fewer imagery and semantic grouping strategies than other strategies and regarded them as the least useful. Schmitt's (1997) study has three implications for vocabulary learning and teaching. Firstly, it is evident that more advanced learners tended to use more complex and meaning-focus strategies than less advanced learners. Secondly, patterns of strategy use can change over time as a learner either matures or becomes more proficient in the target language. Finally, these results imply that learners may be willing to try new strategies if they are introduced to and instructed in them. Therefore, cognitive maturity and language proficiency should be taken into consideration when introducing strategies to the learners and a wide range of strategies should be recommended over time.

Early in 1999, Fan made an attempt to find out the factors that contribute to success in learning a second language. She investigated the beliefs and strategies of Hong Kong tertiary students in learning English. Findings of the study revealed a

consistent relationship between language learning beliefs and strategies in relation to success in learning L2.

In Yang's (1999) quantitative study, an adapted questionnaire was used to investigate the relationship between college EFL students' beliefs about language learning and their use of learning strategies in Taiwan. This study found that these participants tended to use formal oral-practice strategies, focusing on practicing the sounds of English, and trying to talk like native English speakers. On the other hand, the students were less likely to use cognitive-memory strategies. More specifically, they rarely memorized English words by grouping, or by using new words in sentences. She concluded that students' beliefs about the value and nature of learning spoken English were directly linked to the use of formal oral-practice strategies.

Recently, Fan (2003) launched the largest scale project ever conducted in Hong Kong concerning the learning of English vocabulary by Cantonese speakers. With the aim of examining the frequency of use of vocabulary learning strategies, learners' perceived usefulness of the strategies, and the actual usefulness of the strategies, Fan included 1,067 university entrants in her study who had recently been offered places by the seven local institutions of higher education. Data were collected through a vocabulary test and a vocabulary learning strategies. The results of the study showed two distinctive characteristics of Hong Kong tertiary learners. First, unlike the Japanese learners in Schmitt's (1997) study, these students neither regarded repetition strategies as useful nor used these strategies more frequently than others. Furthermore, there was strong evidence that Hong Kong tertiary learners did not opt for strategies for imagery and grouping in learning vocabulary. The unwillingness to

use association strategies for the Hong Kong learners may be due to the language distance between their mother tongue and target language.

Inspired by Fan's (2003) study, Law (2003) extended the investigation of vocabulary learning in the secondary school context. She carried out an action research to investigate 80 Form Four students' perceptions and their actual use of strategies. The participants of her study studied in a Band Two secondary school in Hong Kong, where Chinese was the medium of instruction for all subjects except English and Putonghua. The study was implemented in three phases – semi-structured interviews, a survey and think-aloud vocabulary tasks. The results indicated that the most of the intermediate learners focused on learning the word form and neglected the context. Law (2003) explained that this might be due to the practice of using L1 and L2 word lists in teaching and learning L2 vocabulary in junior forms. Furthermore, Law (2003) reported that guessing from context or inferencing and using a dictionary were the most common strategies for the students to discover a new word meaning at the first encounter. Finally, Law found that the students seldom spent time and took initiative to learn vocabulary outside class time. The results suggested that teachers should make learners aware of their own responsibility in vocabulary learning and expose them to different approaches and strategies in enhancing vocabulary acquisition.

Barcroft (2004) overviewed the major areas of research related to second language vocabulary acquisition, and summarized ten research areas. These include incidental vocabulary learning, lexical requirements for comprehension, input enhancement and text-based factors, vocabulary learning strategies, combined indirect and direct vocabulary instruction, methods of direct instruction, word-based

determinants of learn ability, bilingual mental lexicon, receptive versus productive vocabulary knowledge, and lexical input processing. He also discussed five principles for effective second language vocabulary instruction with emphasis on lexical input processing. The instruction for second language learners should: (1) present new words frequently and repeatedly in the input; (2) use meaning-bearing comprehensible input when presenting new words; (3) limit forced output during the early stages of learning new words; (4) limit forced semantic elaboration during the initial stages of learning new words; and (5) progress from less demanding to more demanding vocabulary-related activities.

Liao (2004) investigated the vocabulary learning strategies used by 625 Taiwanese EFL freshmen. The Schmitt (1997) vocabulary strategy questionnaire was adopted for this survey. The results showed that metacognitive and social strategies were the two least used strategy categories. She argued that the possible reason for the low frequency use might be because English vocabulary learning was viewed as an individual learning process in general; therefore, students tended not to seek other's help when encountering unfamiliar words. Moreover, based on Gu and Johnson (1996) who indicated that metacognitive strategies can be a positive predictor of general proficiency, Liao concluded that the low frequency used in metacognitive strategies may be that these participants' general English proficiency was limited. By examining isolated strategies use, the researcher found that Taiwanese students preferred to use bilingual electronic dictionaries, write the word several times and study the sounds of the word. These findings were the same as Wu's (2005) study, which examined the use and helpful ranking of vocabulary learning strategies

employed by Taiwanese EFL learners, ranging from junior school students to university students.

In 2006, Koh Thong Chiang conducted the research to investigate the types of vocabulary learning strategies employed by students in English reading in a natural setting, the types of relationship between the students' use of vocabulary learning strategies and the specific variables of text difficulty, the types of relationship between the students' use of vocabulary learning strategies and students' language proficiency levels and to investigate the accuracy of constructed meaning of problem words. The samples were 17 first year students studying in Chiang Mai University, academic year 2005 with a mixture of 7 English majors from the Faculty of Humanities, and 10 from other faculties (4 from the Education faculty, 2 each from Dentistry and Engineering, 1 each from Science and Agricultures), who volunteered to participate in this study. The research instruments were vocabulary level test by Schmitt, Schmitt and Clapham (2001), 2 sessions of verbal reporting (Think-aloud), observation, interview, and concluded with a general questionnaire based on Schmitt's (1997) taxonomy framework and also Oxford's (1990) Strategy Inventory for Language Learning (SILL), improvised and added to the questionnaire for use in this study. Verbal-report data was analyzed both quantitatively and qualitatively. Descriptive statistics were employed to explore the differences across passages of differing difficulties and subject groups, the qualitative analysis were used to illustrate and exemplify the quantitative findings. The findings revealed that (1) the majority of the participants preferred the use of Cognitive, Memory, Metacognitive and Social strategies in descending order; (2) there were great differences between the students' use of vocabulary learning strategies on texts of differing levels of difficulty. The

types of strategies used were also noted to be different when participants managed texts of differing difficulty; and (3) the types of vocabulary learning strategies between higher and lower proficiency students indicated that higher proficiency students used more strategies than lower proficiency students while handling the texts. The findings did not show hint of any differences in strategy types used by students of differing proficiency levels.

2.7 Previous Study on Successful Language Learners

Research on vocabulary learning strategies is a relatively new field. Researchers' interests in this area started to grow about two decades ago. In general, as Schmitt (1997) points out, research has tended to concentrate on individual strategies (such as the keyword method, repetition, and guessing from context), or to deal with vocabulary strategy training. Only very few studies looked at the group "as a whole" (Schmitt, 1997). In this section, the researcher will concentrate especially on these studies.

While the research on learning strategies is in full swing, only recently have papers appeared on learning strategies in second language acquisition emerging from a concern for identifying the characteristics of effective learners. The suggestion that the "good language learner" was first introduced at about the same time in work by Rubin (1975) and by Stern (1975). The proponents of this notion suggested that special learner tactics or strategies might assist second language acquisition (Rubin, 1975; Stern, 1975). In other words, the "good language learner" is effective because of special ways of processing information. More importantly, there was also the suggestion that these strategies are not the personal possession of the highly capable

individuals, but could be learned by strategy training. In one of the earliest studies, Stern (1975) pointed out “the good language learner constantly probes the language and forms hypotheses about it in order to discover rules and relationships and to organize the discrete elements into an ordered whole or system” (p, 313). Similar findings from Ahmed (1989) confirm that “good” learners exhibit certain behaviors in learning a second language. Ahmed (1989) used a cluster analysis technique to isolate five kinds of learners typified by the kinds of strategies they used. The good learner subjects used a variety of strategies, were aware of their learning, knew the importance of learning words in context, and were conscious of semantic relationships between new and previously-learned L2 words. On the contrary, poor learner subjects used few strategies and showed little awareness of how to learn new words or associate new words with prior knowledge. According to the list constructed by Naiman et al. (1978), good language learners are those who actively involve themselves in the language learning process by identifying and seeking preferred learning environments and exploring them, develop an awareness of language as a system, develop an awareness of language as a means of communication and interaction, accept and cope with the affective demands of L2, and extend and revise L2 system by inferencing and monitoring. More recent work by Fan (2003) indicates that the good learner subjects used various kinds of strategies significantly more often than their counterparts, a finding that is in agreement with the findings of many previous studies on L2 vocabulary (Ahmed, 1989; Gu & Johnson, 1996; Lawson & Hogben, 1996; Sanaoui, 1995). In particular, they predominantly used more sources such as guessing, dictionary, and known words strategies than the less proficient students.

Finally, Gu (2005) presented case studies of 11 successful and 5 unsuccessful Chinese EFL learners in his latest work. He reported that the successful learners demonstrated common characteristics within the group, for example, they used a wider range of strategies more flexibly than the unsuccessful ones (p, 153). He also agreed with Rubin (1975) and Stern's (1975) claim that successful learners are more active learners. Table 2.3 delineates an overall pattern and contrasts the successful group with the unsuccessful group at the metacognitive, cognitive, and affective levels.

Table 2.3**Differences between Successful and Unsuccessful Learners**

		Top Group	Bottom Group
	Self-Initiation	very active, always plan, monitor and evaluate learning	very passive, little or no planning, monitoring and evaluation of learning
Metacognitive	Selective attention	know what's important (to task at hand and learning in general)	random, non-selective
	Beliefs about language	see language as an integrated system; and vocabulary as integral and dynamic part of language	see language as separate systems of grammar rules and vocabulary; and vocabulary as words of fixed meanings
	Strategies (what)	use a wide range of strategies	use a narrow range of mainly rote strategies
Cognitive	Strategies (how)	flexible and principled use of strategies and strategy combinations	inflexible choice of strategies (stick to a narrow range); inflexible or even non-rational use of strategies
	Activation / Use of English	try to use English as much as possible	never use English
Affective	Affective reaction	- in comfortable control of learning; - enjoy learning; enjoy English	- despair (if seeing English as important) - avoid English altogether

Source: Gu, 2005, p. 154

Horn (2009) described the successes and failures of bilingual education from the perspectives of former students. A thorough review was conducted of literature impacting bilingual education. In this qualitative case study, participants were interviewed face-to-face and one-on-one in English. The interviews were transcribed into electronic files and then analyzed using the constant comparative method. A cross-case analysis and within-case analysis yielded emerging themes. Among them

was the belief that the participants had experienced equal participation with their English-speaking peers. Additionally, these former ELLs had not experienced an inferiority complex. These interviewees viewed bilingual education as fun, and they recognized the importance of learning English at a young age. This resulted in the revelation of important legislation and court cases that had revolutionized public education and the manner in which English Language Learners were taught in the United States. The testimonies of former ELLs supported the idea that students who participated in bilingual education classes not only learned English, but they oftentimes excelled academically and socially. Many became popular students by the time they graduated from high school.

Martinez (2009) examined the attributes of students who earned the requisite units for entrance to the California university system and who at one point in time were designated as EL. The question this study seeks to answer is: Are there common characteristics and attributes among English Learners or Reclassified Fluent English Proficient (RFEP) students that can be attributed to their success in school and qualification for California's 4-year universities? Do factors such as age of entrance and date of enrollment play a significant role in accessing a college (university) preparatory program? This study utilized a qualitative research methodology. Specifically, inquiry was conducted through a phenomenological and heuristic approach. Participants for this study were selected from a large Southern California high school district's six comprehensive high schools. The study utilized criterion sampling to determine the participants. Of the 134 students who met the criteria, 16 students volunteered to give a personal account of their personal background and educational experience. The major findings of the study are, namely; (1) home and

family factors heavily influence the goals set by students; (2) schooling in grades K-8 plays a critical role as students set goals for themselves based on perceived success; (3) social capital was evident in the lives of these students. They engaged in meaningful dialogue with parents and friends, and institutional agents, such as teachers and counselors; and (4) twenty-four students graduated as valedictorians of their graduating classes, demonstrating that students who come from a home where Spanish is the primary language, and who at one point in time were identified as English Learners, can also attain the number one position in their graduating class.

Middleton (2009) explored the qualitative case study to investigate teaching strategies that promote social acceptance and enhance academic success for English Language Learners in middle school. The conceptual framework for this study was based on Vygotsky's social cognitive theory. The primary research question for this study focused on how English Language Learners perceive and experience academic success and social acceptance in middle school. Open-ended interviews and classroom observations were used to collect data from a purposeful sample of 9 English Language Learners. Hand coded data using open and interpretative coding were analyzed for patterns, relationships and themes. Categorical aggregation was used to establish patterns of categories, and emerging categories were further analyzed using comparison tables. Direct interpretation was used to develop naturalistic generalizations to answer the research questions. Results from this study indicated that English Language Learners perceived that peer tutoring, interactive classroom activities, using graphic organizers, and working cooperatively were teaching strategies that promoted social acceptance while enhancing academic success. Findings from this study can contribute to social change by identifying

effective teaching strategies that provide needed support for English Language Learners. Data will be available for the development of instructional programs to help meet the unique needs of English Language Learners, allowing them to become productive and successful.

Uddin (2009) explored the relationship between counseling techniques and second language vocabulary acquisition for adult second language learners. This study implemented two counseling techniques, Role play and Story telling in teaching second language vocabulary to adult second language learners. The results of this study showed that both techniques Role playing and Story telling were reported to be favorable and successful by all participants who attended this study. The participants not only successfully enhanced their vocabulary but also managed to utilize those words into their Role play and Story telling activities. Role play enhanced their fluency of communicative skills which necessitates vocabulary enhancement. Without such an increment of vocabulary, their progress would have been slower. Story telling assisted participants to take time to reflect on their stories and to take full use of the vocabulary acquired earlier. This technique particularly assisted them in making learners become independent learners, owning their language skills and, as a result, making them empowered.

2.8 Summary of the Chapter

This chapter reviews the empirical research on language learning strategies, in particular, the strategies for learning vocabulary in L2 and the characteristics of good language learners. These findings not only provide valuable information to Cambodian teachers in enhancing the understanding of vocabulary teaching and

learning, but also shed light on the design of the underlying principle of the present study. First, the researcher reviews the background of language learning strategies. Next, it also demonstrates the defining language learning strategies. In addition, it explains the taxonomy of language learning strategies. Then, the history of vocabulary research and characteristics of current vocabulary research are described. Lastly, the previous studies on previous study on vocabulary learning strategies and previous study on successful language learners are presented. In the next chapter, the methodological approach and the instruments are discussed.

CHAPTER 3

RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

The review of the literature in the Chapter Two yields inconclusive results with respect to the students' perceptions and their actual use of strategies especially for English language learners. To better understand the how learners learn vocabulary and the strategies they use to discover and retain word meaning, combining empirical research is needed instead of another individual study. Therefore, this chapter gives a detailed account of the research design including the setting, the participants' background and the design of the instruments. Also, the objective of this chapter is to discuss the conceptual framework of the research, as well as some general principals of research design which apply to the present investigation. Moreover, the procedures of data collection including the methods of data analysis are described.

3.1 Research Participants

The research participants are 200 grade 12 students studying at Hun Sen Sereypheap High School, aged between 16-18 years old. Most students are mainly from the families of the middle- to low-income group and had limited exposure and resources to learn English outside the class time. Despite the limited exposure and resources to learn English outside class time, the students in this study demonstrate a considerable degree of English proficiency as they are studying at a high school, where English is the only compulsory subject. In order to have an in-depth study, 20 participants, who is belonging to the top end of the proficiency scale according to the

total marks of reading, writing, listening and speaking papers in the first-term examination, are selected for the think-aloud vocabulary tasks and semi-structured interviews to investigate the vocabulary learning strategies used by high achievers.

3.2 Research Instruments

In the present study, the research employs three instruments for data collection, aiming to obtain quantitative and qualitative data respectively. These are the Vocabulary Learning Strategy Questionnaire (VLSQ), think-aloud protocols, and semi-structured interviews. The research instruments are classified under the following three headings:

3.2.1 Vocabulary Learning Strategies Questionnaire (VLSQ)

The survey, as a method of collecting information from people about their ideas, feelings, beliefs, attitudes, needs, motivations, and behavior, has been widely employed in social science research (Fink, 2002; Gray & Guppy, 1999) as well as in the field of English as a second or foreign language education (Gorsuch, 2000; Stoller, 1994). Researchers choose to use surveys as a research method because it is an effective way to get the required information from a large number of individuals (Alreck & Settle, 1995). The QVLS is adopted from Vocabulary Learning in the Content-oriented Second-language Classroom (Schmitt, 1997; Harley & Hart, 2000).

Like oral interviews, written questionnaires are used to elicit learner responses to a set of questions, and they require the researcher to make choices regarding question format and research procedure (Cohen & Scott, 1996). In addition, Oxford and Crookall (1989) suggest that written questionnaire typically cover a range of language learning strategies and are usually structured and objective (closed) in

nature. In other words, informants have little or no freedom in providing their own responses to the questions as choices for responses are normally provided. Question items in written questionnaires can range from those asking for “yes” or “no” responses or indications of frequency (e.g. Likert Scales) to less structured items asking respondents to describe or discuss language learning strategies they employ in detail.

3.2.1.1 Construction and Development of VLSQ

A questionnaire is used to measure the used of vocabulary learning strategies. One questionnaire was designed to find out the general pattern of the strategy use among 200 grade 12 students. The questionnaire draws on both Discovery Strategies and Consolidation Strategies proposed by Schmitt (1997). The draft questionnaires then are modified and revised with the advisors’ suggestions after discussion. In addition, the Khmer translation of the strategy questionnaire is conducted, as this helped maximize ease of administration and ensure greater accuracy of results, especially with the low-ability students. The translation is done by the researcher and then checks for the validity and reliability with the thesis supervisor and experts, respectively.

3.2.1.2 Structure of the VLSQ

The questionnaire is included 26 vocabulary learning strategies grouped into two domains: Discovery Strategies and Consolidation Strategies. The grouping is based on the findings of previous work on vocabulary learning strategies (Gu & Johnson, 1996; Schmitt, 1997; Fan, 2003). The following is the repertoire of the strategies for the questionnaire which comply with reference to Schmitt’s (1997).

I. Discovery Strategies

1. Guess its meaning from the context
2. Look at the parts of speech (e.g. noun, verb or adjective)
3. Look for the clues to meaning in the word itself (e.g. prefixes, suffixes and roots)
4. Try to think of an English word this is similar
5. Look up the word in a Khmer / English dictionary
6. Look up the word in an English dictionary
7. Use an electronic or online dictionary
8. Ask my teacher for the meaning
9. Ask my classmates or peers for the meaning
10. Interact with native speakers
11. Learn words through Facebook communication
12. Learn words from word lists or glossary
13. Learn words from the mass media such as newspaper, magazines, radio, songs, TV or films
14. Ignore it

II. Consolidation Strategies

1. Read it in a text
2. Hear it in English
3. Study the spelling of the target word
4. Divide the target word into syllables (e.g. po / lar)
5. Use English words similar in sound
6. Use Khmer words similar in sound
7. Connect it to other English words on the same topic
8. Imagine a visual image
9. Put it in a sentence
10. Keep a vocabulary notebook
11. Study the word list
12. Study the word overtime

In addition, for the VLSQ confident that the instruments use in this research presented high validity, the three experts are asked to check for the research instrument.

3.2.2 Think-aloud Vocabulary Task

The think-aloud protocol is an introspective method borrowed from psychology to trace cognitive processes in real time (Ericsson & Simon, 1993).

Given that the questionnaire in the first stage is based on self-report of students' belief and behaviors of vocabulary learning, think-aloud data complements the questionnaire

data and provides an indication of what is on the participants' mind during the task and might reveal the kinds of strategies used, the kinds of knowledge employed and the kinds of representations constructed.

The design of the task is developed in light of Nation's (2001) definition of knowing a word. Nation (2001, p. 26) suggests that knowing a word involves the receptive and productive knowledge of the form, meaning and use at the most general level. Therefore, the present study aims at demonstrating the participants' receptive and productive knowledge of ten target words in the think-aloud tasks. Ten target words will be selected according to the three criteria: (1) The words will be shortlisted from the article is Building Self-confidence by Jim Sullivan, adapted from the website; (2) Two English teachers will be invited to identify ten words from the list which might be unfamiliar to their Grade 12 students; and (3) The definitions of the ten words will be taken from the Concise Oxford Dictionary and the sentences in the task will be modified from the definitions in the resource pack.

Interestingly, during the think-aloud tasks, 20 high proficient students performed individually by verbalizing the meaning, part of speech and pronunciation of the ten target words. The think-aloud sessions were conducted in Khmer or English at their own discretion and audio-taped for data analysis.

3.2.3 Semi-structured Interview

The purpose of using semi-structured interviews after the questionnaire is to obtain additional information that would support the information gained from the questionnaires. These are the information that the subjects may have missed or do not have time/space to express in detail in the questionnaire, and/or some additional details that the subjects found difficult to express in English in the questionnaire form.

In order to allow students to reveal aspects of their beliefs and opinions about vocabulary learning and their use of strategies which are not addressed in the questionnaire and think-aloud tasks, semi-structured interviews are conducted with the same group of students immediately after the think-aloud vocabulary task. For triangulation, the students' perceptions and the actual use of strategies are compared.

For validity and trustworthiness, Maxwell (2005, p. 106) defines validity as "the correctness or credibility of a description, conclusion, explanation, interpretation, or other sort of account". To minimize plausible validity threats to the study's findings, interpretations, and conclusions, the study employed: (1) a member checking process by allowing the participants to reconfirm their relevant interview transcripts to reassure "the validity of the constructions the interviewer had made" (Lincoln & Guba, 1985, p. 271); and (2) a peer debriefing process to ensure that the definitions of the coding categories was warranted (Ryan & Bernard, 2003). Throughout this code building stage, the researcher involved his thesis experts and a thesis supervisor in a data cross-checking process to assure the validity and trustworthiness of the data analysis device.

3.3 Data Collection Procedures

In order to answer the research questions for the present investigation, questionnaire on vocabulary strategy, think-aloud protocols, and semi-structured interviews are described as follows:

3.3.1 Vocabulary Learning Strategies Questionnaire (VLSQ)

For this stage, a vocabulary learning strategies questionnaire about students' perception of their use and the usefulness of the strategies is administered to English classes during English lessons. As mention earlier, the questionnaire draws on both Discovery Strategies and Consolidation Strategies proposed by Schmitt (1997). It includes 14 statements describing how the learners discover a new word meaning and 12 statements describing how they remember a new word.

Of the 200 grade 12 students, 20 participants from the top end of the first-term examination results of English reading, speaking, listening and writing are selected to take part in the think-aloud vocabulary tasks and the semi-structured interviews in the second and third stages. The participants instruct to self-report whether they have used the strategies and how useful the strategies are for them. Finally, they also rank the effectiveness of the strategies in the table with “1” for the most useful and “10” for the least useful. The pilot version is conducted before the final version is used. The questionnaire is first designed in English, and then translated into Khmer. However, only Khmer version is piloted and used.

3.3.2 Think-aloud Vocabulary Task

During the think-aloud tasks, 20 high proficient students performed individually by verbalizing the meaning, part of speech and pronunciation of the ten target words. The think-aloud sessions were conducted in Khmer or English at their own discretion and audio-taped for data analysis.

3.3.3 Semi-structured Interview

The participants receive a list of open-ended questions before the interviews. During the interviews, participants give responses to the questions in Khmer or

English at their discretion. Moreover, the interviews are conducted individually and pseudonyms are used to ensure privacy. The interviews are audio-taped for research purposes and notes are taken by the researcher to supplement the data. Khmer, which is the first language of both the teacher and student informants, is employed as the medium of communication in the interview so that free flow of ideas without language barrier is facilitated.

The overall design of the research is presented in Figure 3.1 below.

Figure 3.1

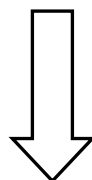
The Flow Chart of the Research Design

Stage 1: Vocabulary Learning Strategies Questionnaire

Number of Participants: 200

Format: The strategies are categorized into two groups: Part 1 (Discovery Strategies) and Part 2 (Consolidation Strategies). Participants self-report their actual use of strategies in learning vocabulary and their perception of the usefulness of the strategies.

Data Collection: quantitative data of students' perceptions of strategy use.

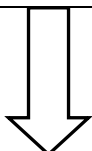


Stage 2: Think-aloud Vocabulary Task

Number of Participants: 20 High Proficient Students

Format: The task consists of 10 sentences and a target word is underlined in each sentence. The participants report the meaning, part of speech, pronunciation of the target words. The task is carried out individually.

Data Collection: qualitative data of actual strategy use by high proficient students.



Stage 3: Semi-structured Interview

Number of Participants: 20 High Proficient Students

Format: The participants interview individually and a list of questions was given to the participants 15 minutes prior to the interview. The interviews are audio-taped.

Data Collection: qualitative data of the opinions on vocabulary learning and use of strategies in regular practice.

3.4 Data Analysis and Statistical Procedures

The study is generated both quantitative data from the survey and qualitative data from the think-aloud vocabulary tasks and the semi-structured interviews. The analysis of data is carried out in several ways.

1. The quantitative data is generated from the Vocabulary Learning Strategies Questionnaire in the first stage. The subjects self-report their actual use of strategies and the usefulness of each strategy are added up to reflect the general pattern of the strategy use among 200 grade 12 students.

2. The Think-aloud Vocabulary Task provides hands-on experience for 20 high proficient students to exhibit their actual use of strategies in sentence-context and demonstrate their breadth and depth of vocabulary knowledge such as meaning, part of speech and pronunciation of a word. The analysis is carried out at two levels. At the general level, responses from the tasks transcribe and compare among the high achievers to check whether there is patterns of the actual use of strategies by them. At the detailed level, the researcher looks at how individual participants make use of the strategies to discover word meanings in sentence-context.

3. The last instrument used in the study is a semi-structured interview. The twenty high proficient students interview individually immediately after the think-aloud tasks. To complement the data from the closed questions in the questionnaire, the interviews are conducted to explore their opinions of vocabulary learning, patterns of strategy use and characteristics of high achievers. The tape recordings of the interviews are transcribed in English and recurring and salient responses identified and included in the discussion of results.

3.5 Summary of the Chapter

This methodology provides systematic procedures for answering the research questions. In this chapter, the research design and instruments used in the study are described. The study will carry out in three stages: a questionnaire administered to

200 grade 12 students in English classes; think-aloud vocabulary tasks and semi-structured interviews with 20 high proficient students from the top end of the proficiency scale. After data collection, both quantitative and qualitative data analysis are performed. Statistical data derived from the questionnaire projected the general pattern of strategy use among all high school learners and the qualitative data from the think-aloud tasks and semi-structured interviews highlighted the high achievers' perceptions and actual use of strategies. The next chapter, Chapter Four, presents a detailed account of the results in response to the interpretation from the literature and the actual situation.

CHAPTER 4

RESULTS

This chapter provides the data and results of the analysis for this study. The purpose of this study was to investigate the students' perceptions and their actual use of strategies. As different learning tasks require different strategies, it is worthwhile looking at how learners learn vocabulary and the strategies they use to discover and retain word meaning. Also, this study examined which Discovery Strategies and Consolidation Strategies are most frequently used by the intermediate learners of English and their perceptions of the usefulness of the strategies. The data presented in this chapter are divided into two parts: (1) quantitative analysis, which discusses the data gathered by questionnaire survey, and (2) qualitative analysis, which are results of a think-aloud vocabulary tasks and semi-structured interviews concerning language learning related issues.

4.1 Quantitative Analysis

In this section, the students' use of vocabulary learning strategies, which focused on discovery strategies and consolidation strategies do grade 12 students and the high proficient students use most frequently were explored. Also, a significant difference between the use of strategies by high proficient students and other participants in the study was examined. The quantitative data were obtained from 200 grade 12 students through questionnaire and they were asked to indicate their beliefs and strategic behaviors regarding the vocabulary strategies in a questionnaire. The

results of the quantitative analysis are described in the following order: (a) students' use of vocabulary learning strategies; and (b) students' perceptions of the usefulness of the strategies.

4.1.1 Students' Use of Vocabulary Learning Strategies

This part presents the results of the vocabulary learning strategies of grade 12 students through a questionnaire. Table 4.1 below summarizes the strategies used by the grade 12 students to discover a new word meaning.

Table 4.1

Discovery Strategies Used by the Grade 12 Students (N=200)

Ranking	Discovery Strategies	No.	%
1	Guess its meaning from the context	168	84.0
2	Look up the word in a Khmer/English dictionary	163	81.5
3	Use an electronic or online dictionary	159	79.5
4	Ask my classmates or peers for the meaning	155	77.5
5	Learn words from the mass media	147	73.5
6	Try to think of an English word that is similar	128	64.0
7	Look up the word in an English dictionary	126	63.0
8	Ask my teacher(s) for the meaning	118	59.0
9	Look at the parts of speech	108	54.0
10	Look for the clues in the word itself	92	46.0
11	Learn words from word lists or glossary	78	39.0
12	Ignore it	62	31.0
13	Learn words through Facebook communication	54	27.0
14	Interact with native speakers (e.g. the NET)	40	20.0

Table 4.1 divided and analyzed into three cut-off points: the most-used (used by 100% - 66.7% of the respondents), the commonly used (used by 66.6% - 33.3% of the respondents) and the least-used (used by 33.3% - 0% of the respondents). Among the 14 strategies, it was reported that the most-used. Discovery strategies were guessing from context (84%), using a bilingual dictionary (81.5%), using an

electronic or online dictionary (79.5%), asking classmates or peers (77.5%) and learning words from the mass media (73.5%).

Interestingly, there is clear evidence that guessing from context is the most common strategy for L2 learners to discover a new word meaning. Therefore, guessing word meaning from context is widely acknowledged as a useful skill, especially vital to the reading comprehension. Furthermore, the respondents also expressed a strong preference for finding a word's meaning through reference materials, primarily dictionaries. More than eighty percent (81.5%) of the students reported that they looked up word meaning in a Khmer/English bilingual dictionary. In comparison to the popularity of using other dictionary strategies, the respondents did not indicate strong affinity for them, especially the monolingual dictionary. In spite of the lack of general consensus on the choice of dictionaries, the learners should know how to negotiate the meaning with the context and note the relevant information available in the dictionary so that the reference materials can be fully utilized.

Apart from context guessing and dictionary strategies, learners also resorted to the social strategies to discover a new word's meaning. In comparison with the percentage of asking teacher(s) for the meaning (59%), the learners seemed to learn new word more frequently from classmates or peers (77.5%). Although teacher usually plays an important role in class, many students reported in the interview that it was "embarrassing" to ask the teacher(s) and it was "inconvenient" and "troublesome" to ask the teacher(s) every time when they encountered a new word.

Finally, seventy-four per cent of the respondents reported that they learned words from the mass media which included the newspapers, television, radio and the Internet. The mass media not only provide enormous resources for students to learn

English in an authentic way but also increase the exposure to learning English outside class time.

In term of the most-used discovery Strategies by the high achievers, of the 200 grade 12 students, 20 students from the top end of the proficiency scale were labeled as “high proficient students”. It is surprising to see that the high proficient students did not use as many Discovery Strategies as their counterparts. On the contrary, they highly concentrated on the inferencing strategies such as guessing from context (90%) and looking for the clues of the words (70%) to discover a new word meaning. An overview of the Discovery Strategies used by the high proficient students is summarized in Table 4.2 below.

Table 4.2

Discovery Strategies Used by the High Proficient Students (N=20)

Ranking	Discovery Strategies	No.	%
1	Guess its meaning from the context.	18	90.0
2	Look for the clues in the word itself.	15	75.0
3	Look up the word in an English dictionary.	10	50.0
4	Learn words from the mass media.	8	40.0
5	Look at the parts of speech.	7	35.0
5	Look up the word in a Khmer/English dictionary.	7	35.0
5	Learn words from word lists or glossary.	7	35.0
8	Use an electronic or online dictionary.	6	30.0
9	Ask my teacher(s) for the meaning.	4	20.0
10	Interact with native speakers (e.g. the NET).	1	5.0
11	Try to think of an English word that is similar.	0	0
11	Ask my classmates or peers for the meaning.	0	0
11	Ignore it.	0	0

Table 4.2 showed that when discovering a new word meaning, the high proficient students used guessing strategy more often (90%) than the rest of the grade 12 students (84%). One plausible reason to justify this situation may be the high

proficient students have acquired a threshold level of vocabulary so that they could make successful guess. Furthermore, the second most-used Discovery Strategy by the high proficient students was looking for clues in the word itself (70%). It was reported that seventy per cent of the high proficient students would make inference to the word part such as the derivational and inflectional features.

In term of the most-used consolidation strategies by the grade 12 students, the similar to the Discovery Strategies, the Consolidation Strategies are categorized into three groups: the most-used (used by 100% - 66.7% of the respondents), the commonly used (used by 66.6% to 33.3% of the respondents), and the least-used (used by 33.2% - 0% of the respondents). Table 4.3 presents the strategies used by the students to consolidate a word in memory.

Table 4.3

Consolidation Strategies Used by the Grade 12 Students (N=200)

Ranking	Consolidation Strategies	No.	%
1	Hear it spoken in English.	139	70%
2	Divide the target word into syllables.	137	69%
3	Study the spelling of the target word.	134	67%
4	Use English words similar in sound.	125	63%
5	Read it in a text.	124	62%
6	Connect it to other English words on the same topic.	101	51%
7	Put it in a sentence.	89	45%
8	Study the word list.	88	44%
9	Keep a vocabulary notebook.	80	40%
9	Relate it to a visual image.	80	40%
11	Use Khmer words similar in sound.	73	37%
12	Study the word over time.	70	35%

As presented by Table 4.3 above, on the whole, the students seemed to use far fewer strategies to consolidate a word in memory. This claim is well-grounded on the fact that only 70% to 35% of the respondents used the Consolidation Strategies to

remember a word. The apparent implication of this tendency would be the learners used some strategies to discover a word's meaning, however, without consolidating it in memory. Though the participants did not use many Consolidation Strategies, it is found that the learners favored the strategies focusing on the word form. Hearing it spoken in English (70%), dividing the target word into syllables (69%) and studying the spelling of the target words (67%) were at the top of the list. In other words, studying the spoken and written word form was widely used by the students to commit a word to memory.

As for the most-used consolidation strategies used by the high achievers, in comparison to the strategies used by the grade 12 students and the high achievers, strategies focusing on the word form such as hearing it spoken in English and dividing the target word into syllables were commonly used by both groups. Table 4.4 describes the strategies used by the high proficient students to commit a word in memory.

Table 4.4

Consolidation Strategies Used by the High Proficient Students (N=20)

Ranking	Consolidation Strategies	No.	%
1	Connect it to other English words on the same topic.	17	85%
2	Hear it spoken in English.	15	75%
3	Divide the target word into syllables.	14	70%
4	Study the spelling of the target word.	13	65%
5	Relate it to a visual image.	11	55%
6	Read it in a text.	10	50%
7	Put it in a sentence.	8	40%
8	Study the word list.	4	20%
9	Use Khmer words similar in sound.	3	15%
10	Use English words similar in sound.	2	10%
10	Keep a vocabulary notebook.	2	10%
12	Study the word over time.	1	5%

Tale 4.4 indicated that on top of that, the most commonly used Consolidation Strategies by the high proficient students was the grouping strategies (85%). At the top of the list was the grouping strategy to consolidate word meanings. Seventeen out of twenty of the high proficient students consolidated a word by connecting it to other English words on the same topic. This may be attributed to the theme-based approach curriculum and the design of the course book. Therefore, vocabulary is grouped according to different themes.

In conclusion, the results of the questionnaire summarized strategies used by the Form Three students and the high proficient students for comparison. The data indicated that guessing from context was the most commonly used Discovery Strategies by the grade 12 students (84%) and the high proficient students (90%). Besides guessing from context, the grade 12 students also resorted to a wider range of strategies such as dictionary strategies and social strategies to discover word meanings. On the contrary, the high proficient students used a limited range of strategies, namely inferencing strategies, to discover word meaning. In terms of the Consolidation Strategies, the grade 12 students preferred strategies focusing on word form. Studying the spoken or written form of a word seemed to be a commonplace for most learners in the study. Though the high proficient students also studied the word form, they used more grouping strategy to consolidate a new word.

4.1.2 Students' Perceptions of the Usefulness of the Strategies

Asking for the most useful discovery strategies perceived by the grade 12 students, when studying vocabulary learning strategies as a unified concept, it must not be forgotten that they are for the benefit of the learners. Thus, researcher must consider the learners' feelings, and take not what they think of the various learning

strategies. So one way forward is to research into which vocabulary learning strategies learners are using, and at the same time ask them how effective they believe those strategies are. The students were asked to indicate their perceptions of the usefulness of the strategies in the same questionnaire. The results are shown in Table 4.5 below.

Table 4.5

Perceived Usefulness of the Discovery Strategies by the Grade 12 Students

(N=200)

Ranking	Discover Strategies	No.	%
1	Ask the teacher(s) for meaning.	138	69.0
2	Look at the parts of speech.	125	62.5
3	Look for the clues to meaning in the word itself.	122	61.0
4	Look up the word in an English dictionary.	119	59.5
4	Interact with native speakers (e.g. the NET).	119	59.5
6	Use an electronic or online dictionary.	115	57.5
7	Look up the word in a Khmer/English dictionary.	113	56.5
8	Learn words from word lists or glossary.	109	54.5
9	Learn words from the mass media.	108	54.0
10	Guess its meaning from the context.	104	52.0
11	Try to think of an English word that is similar.	103	51.5
12	Ask my classmates or peers for the meaning	89	44.5
13	Learn words through Facebook communication.	74	37.0
14	Ignore it.	49	24.5

Using the same cut-off points, the Table 4.5 showed that the data was classified into three groups: the most useful (100% - 66.7%), quite useful (66.6% - 33.3%) and the least useful (33.2% - 0%). At the top of the list, sixty-nine per cent of the respondents indicated that asking the teachers for meaning was the most useful strategy. This may be due to the fact that the teachers were more knowledgeable to provide the correct meanings of the word.

In term of the most useful discovery strategies perceived by the high achievers, Table 4.6 describes the responses of the high proficient students towards the usefulness of the Discovery Strategies.

Table 4.6
Perceived Usefulness of the Discovery Strategies by the High Proficient Students
(N=20)

Ranking	Discover Strategies	No.	%
1	Look up the word in an English dictionary.	18	90
2	Ask the teacher(s) for meaning.	16	80
3	Learn words from word lists or glossary.	15	75
4	Guess its meaning from the context.	12	60
5	Look for the clues to meaning in the word itself.	10	50
6	Use an electronic or online dictionary.	9	45
6	Look up the word in a Khmer/English dictionary.	9	45
6	Look at the parts of speech.	9	45
9	Interact with native speakers (e.g. the NET).	6	30
10	Learn words from the mass media.	4	20
11	Learn words through Facebook communication.	3	15
12	Ask my classmates or peers for the meaning.	1	5
13	Try to think of an English word that is similar.	0	0
13	Ignore it.	0	0

The Table 4.6 illustrated that the high proficient students that among all Discovery Strategies, using a bilingual dictionary (90%) was the most useful one followed by asking the teacher(s) for meaning (80%) and learning words from word lists or glossary (75%).

In term of most useful consolidation strategies perceived by the grade 12 students, the Table 4.7 shows the results.

Table 4.7

Perceived Usefulness of the Consolidation Strategies by the Grade 12 Students

(N=200)

Ranking	Consolidation Strategies	No.	%
1	Keep a vocabulary notebook.	129	64.9
2	Hear it spoken in English.	128	64
3	Study the spelling of the target word.	115	58
4	Divide the target word into syllables.	111	56
5	Study the word list.	105	52.5
6	Use English words similar in sound.	103	52
6	Put it in a sentence.	103	52
8	Connect it to other English words on the same topic.	98	49
9	Study the word overtime.	95	47.5
10	Read it in a text.	92	46
11	Relate it to a visual image.	85	43
12	Use Khmer words similar in sound.	81	41

Although the grade 12 students used strategies focusing on word form and surface word processing to commit a word in memory, they believed that a keeping vocabulary notebook (64.9%) was a useful tool to keep track of their vocabulary learning. Taking this into account, reviewing the vocabulary notebook can enhance the retention of the learners.

In term of the most useful consolidation strategies perceived by the high achievers, Table 4.8 below summarizes the results.

Table 4.8

Perceived Usefulness of the Consolidation Strategies by the High Proficient

Students (N=20)

Ranking	Consolidation Strategies	No.	%
1	Keep a vocabulary notebook.	16	80
2	Study the word over time.	13	65
3	Connect it to other English words on the same topic.	12	60
4	Study the word list.	11	55
5	Study the spelling of the target word.	11	55
6	Divide the target word into syllables.	10	50
6	Put it in a sentence.	8	40
8	Use English words similar in sound.	6	30
9	Hear it spoken in English.	5	25
10	Read it in a text.	3	15
11	Relate it to a visual image.	1	5
12	Use Khmer words similar in sound.	0	0

Table 4.8 showed that it is surprising to note that the high achievers' perception on the most useful consolidation strategies coincided with the grade 12 students' perception. The high proficient students believed that keeping a vocabulary notebook was useful to consolidate new words. Besides, they also thought that studying the word over time could enhance retention. This seems to suggest that the high proficient students regarded the cognitive strategies and metacognitive strategies as useful tools to consolidate new words and they could be used in a complementary manner, that is, the learners can create their own vocabulary notebooks and review over time.

In conclusion, this section had summarized the perception of strategies by the full cohort of 200 students and the 20 high proficient students. It was concluded that most of the students believed that keeping a vocabulary notebook helped them to retain word meanings and studying the word form was also a favorable strategy for

most learners. In the next section, the actual use of strategies by the high proficient students will be discussed along with the think-aloud protocols.

4.2 Qualitative Analysis

This section focused on gaining an understanding of the grade 12 students' opinions towards vocabulary learning strategies which existed from high achievers. To address this section, qualitative data from think aloud and semi-structure interview were employed. With regard to the actual use of strategies, the section below clearly demonstrates how the selected high-achievers made use of each of these strategies during the think-aloud sessions and the opinions about vocabulary learning.

The following section reports different types of vocabulary learning strategies that were reported by the high achievers. The reported areas of vocabulary learning strategies could be separated into these emerging themes: (1) think-aloud vocabulary tasks by the high proficient students; and (2) high proficient students' opinions about vocabulary learning.

4.2.1 Think-aloud Vocabulary Tasks by the High Proficient Students

Ample evidence has shown that, good learners' used more vocabulary learning strategies and they consistently adopt types of strategies based either on their beliefs about vocabulary and vocabulary learning or on other pre-existing cognitive or social factors. Although each strategy contributes to success or failure, consistent employment of certain types of strategies forms an approach to vocabulary learning that may considerably influence the outcomes of L2 learning. Therefore, how different learners combine different strategies and how this affects their learning outcomes warrant studying as much as, perhaps more than, the effects of individual

strategies. In light of this, twenty high proficient students were invited to participate in the think-aloud tasks to demonstrate how they made use of the strategies to discover meanings of ten target words. It is found that the most used strategy is guessing or lexical inferencing and the second commonly used strategy is monolingual dictionary by the high proficient students in the tasks. Some think-aloud protocol data is used for illustration.

The following section discusses in greater detail each type of vocabulary learning that the high proficient students reported and encountered during the think-aloud sessions.

4.2.1.1 Guessing from Context

The think-aloud introspection indicates the high proficient students favored the guessing strategy when they encountered new words in the tasks. It should be noticed that studying the context in which a word occurred provides important linguistic and contextual clues for making inferences. These clues include sentence-level grammar and the surrounding text, which provide a knowledge base for inferencing. The following excerpt demonstrates how a high achiever made use of the linguistic and contextual clues to discover the target word meaning successfully.

Excerpt 1

Test Word in Context:

He was identified as John Sabunnya, a boy who had disappeared three years earlier after his mother was murdered and his father went missing. John was only two years old when he **vanished**.

Think-aloud Protocol:

Student A:

The first sentence describes the situation about the boy (John) and why he had disappeared. Because of his mother was killed and his father went missing. I think the word 'van-ish' means disappeared.

Because it is mentioned in the first sentence. The second sentence repeats the first one.

According to excerpt 1 above, student A inferred the meaning from the surrounding context and he tried to make use of every possible hint to deduce the meaning of the target word. Comparing the two sentences, this student noticed that the first hint which is the name of the subject, John, appeared in both sentences. He immediately knew that the second sentence was an elaboration of the first sentence. Another hint embedded in the sentences is the occurrence of synonyms. The words ‘disappeared’ and ‘went missing’ are synonyms of ‘vanished’ which led the participant to successful guessing.

Successful guessing may draw on inferencing the linguistic and contextual clues, learners can also analyze the part of speech and word parts of the target words to deduce the word meanings. Excerpt 2 shows how the student made use of the word study strategies to discover meaning of ‘retrieved’ successfully.

Excerpt 2

Test Word in Context:

By the time the technician arrived, we had **retrieved** most of our lost data.

Think-aloud Protocol:

Student B:

The word ‘retrieved’ must be a verb because it is in past perfect tense. Usually ‘re-’ means do again like ‘re-correction’. In this sentence, I think we have lost the data and we want to get back the data so we called the technician for help. I think ‘retrieved’ means ‘get back’.

Based on excerpt 2, the student B first identified the inflectional affix ‘-ed’ which shows him the part of speech of the target word. Then he made use of the prior knowledge of the word ‘re-correction’ to relate it to the target word ‘retrieved’ so he knew that the prefix ‘re-’ meant ‘again’. Finally, the participants reread the sentence and used the surrounding context to confirm his guess. The protocol of Excerpt 3 illustrates how a high achiever used similar technique to infer the meaning of the unknown word.

Excerpt 3

Test Word in Context:

Perhaps people tease you about your **complexion** – maybe you have freckles, or a few pimples.

Think-aloud Protocol:

Student C:

I think ‘-ion’ word ending represents a noun, for example, dictation, satisfaction... and after ‘your’...we should have a noun. Does it mean something ‘complex’ because I recognize the word ‘complex’ or maybe there is something, a noun, there can make things complex.

Based on excerpt 3, student C looked at the word feature of the target word and he thought that ‘complexion’ and ‘complex’ belonged to the same word family. Although he misinterpreted the relationship between the two words, he managed to use his prior knowledge about word ending ‘-ion’ and confirm the part of speech of the target word. If he had examined the surrounding context of the word such as freckles and pimples, he would have had known that ‘complexion’ and ‘complex’ were not related. This shows that focusing on the word itself and neglecting the context in which the word occurred can be misleading and unreliable.

Apart from making use of the clues at sentence-level, students demonstrated the skill to infer from world knowledge. Real world knowledge does play a vital part in guessing especially when it provides the schema or the background knowledge for readers. In Excerpt 4, the students used the context and world knowledge to extract the appropriate meanings of the target word.

Excerpt 4

Test Word in Context:

The theatre managed to **boost** its audiences by cutting ticket prices.

Think-aloud Protocol:

Student D:

I have seen this word before, it means 'increase' right? I think it's a common sense if you cut price, the demand will increase. This is what we have learnt from the Econ lesson about Law of Demand, Demand and Supply.

Excerpt 4 indicated that student D recalled that he had seen the target word before and he confirmed his guess by common knowledge of Economics. By cutting the price, he knew that the cinema would be able to attract more audiences. The drawing upon different source of knowledge enabled him to succeed in guessing. If the sentence pattern and grammar features are clear to the learners, they may be able to deduce the meaning more easily. Excerpt 5 demonstrated a confident learner inferred the word meaning from the sentence pattern and his prior knowledge of grammar feature.

Excerpt 5

Test Word in Context:

A **feral** child is a child who, from a young age, has lived with animals in the wild.

Think-aloud protocol:

Student E:

There is a pair of commas in this sentence. I think this is a non-defining relative clause because of the 'who' and the commas. Actually, the part in the middle is not very important. And 'fer-al' (feral) means somebody lived with animals in the wild.

Based on excerpt 5, student E demonstrated a sound foundation of the English grammar. Since he knew the structure and function of relative clause, he reached a conclusion of the word meaning without hesitation. In some situations, guessing from context can be a huge challenge especially when the clues are not explicit to the learners.

Excerpt 6

Test word in context:

Although he **sarled** and bit the police, he was no match for them.

Think-aloud protocol:

Student F:

I think it is a verb, similar to 'bite'. Does it mean 'attack'?

Excerpt 7

Test word in context:

Although he **sarled** and bit the police, he was no match for them.

Think-aloud protocol:

Student G:

It may be related to the police. What is no match for them? Sorry, I don't know this word.

Interestingly, guessing from context was regarded as the most commonly used strategies by the strategies in the questionnaire. This is also true when the high proficient students encountered new words in the think-aloud tasks. To guess from context required the manipulation of different guessing skills such as analyzing word features, sentence-context and world knowledge to derive meanings of new words. However, it is important to note that guessing from context is not always accurate and reliable. Hence, the high proficient students resorted to adopt dictionary strategies to confirm the guess.

4.2.1.2 Use of Dictionaries

Dictionaries can be used for a wide range of purposes. It has consistently distinguished between the different requirements and strategies for dictionaries which are to be used for comprehension (listening and reading) and dictionaries which are to be used for production (speaking and writing). Regardless of the different purposes as well as being sources of information, dictionaries can also be aids to learning. Several excerpts are selected to demonstrate how participants negotiated and confirmed the meaning with the context.

Since word meanings are context-sensitive, dictionary users need to negotiate between dictionary explanations and contextual meaning. That is to find an appropriate dictionary meaning and fit it into the context. Excerpt 8 shows that a high proficiency learner was aware of the different dictionary explanations of the target word 'company' and how he settled on the most relevant meaning suitable for the context.

Excerpt 8

Test Word in Context:

They never smiled or showed any interest in human **company**, and the only emotion that ever crossed their faces was fear.

Think-aloud Protocol:

Student H:

‘Company’ is something to do with money and business, but it seems that ... it’s not really business in this case. Can I check it in the dictionary?

Teacher:

Sure! There are several dictionaries on the bookshelf.

Student H:

I see. Here... it means a group of people together... human company ... people...no, maybe this one is better. Being with somebody else and not alone? I enjoy Jo’s company (the student is reading an example from the dictionary). I think this is better. ‘Company’ means being with somebody and they do not like to stay with human. Am I correct?

The participants made a number of attempts before he came to the right explanation of the target word. At the end of the task, he said that he was so surprised to know that a simple word like ‘company’ carried multiple meanings. He was also ascertained that dictionary was an effective and powerful tool to learn second languages.

In short, think-aloud protocol data enables teachers to examine the strategic behavior of high proficient students to discover new word meanings. It is found that guessing or inferencing was the most common strategy for the high proficient students to discover the meaning which is consistent with results of the questionnaire. During the think-aloud tasks, the high proficient students effectively used various kinds of prior knowledge such as word features, sentence-context and world knowledge to derive meanings of new words. Besides, they tended to confirm guesses from context

with the aid of dictionaries. When faced with unfamiliar words, they resorted to adopt a combined approach to succeed in guessing. The next section looks into how the high proficient students evaluate vocabulary learning.

4.2.2 High Proficient Students' Opinions about Vocabulary Learning

In order to capture what questionnaire and think-aloud data could not reveal, an immediate retrospection in the form of structured interview was conducted to collect qualitative data from the good learners. The data include their opinion about vocabulary learning, knowing a word and time spent on vocabulary learning.

Following is how the high proficient students expressed and evaluated their concern about each aspect of vocabulary learning.

4.2.2.1 Importance of Vocabulary Learning

Remarkably, one of the most difficult challenges for language learners is to learn the meanings and use of the words they need to master if they are to be able to understand and communicate in a second or foreign language. Undoubtedly, words are the building blocks to communication that is why vocabulary learning and teaching are important to second language acquisition. In general, the high proficient students seemed to agree that vocabulary learning played an important role in learning English. 16 out of 20 ranked it at 8 on a scale of 1 to 10 with 10 meaning 'the most important'. The other four students ranked it at 6 or 7 on the scale. Excerpts 9 and 10 describe how the high proficient students commented on vocabulary learning.

Excerpt 9

Student G:

I think learning vocabulary is very important because I can have enough vocabulary to express myself. I sometimes find it difficult to express my ideas in writing compositions because I don't have a lot of vocabulary to use. I think the rating should be 8.

Excerpt 10

Student C:

Of course, learning vocabulary is important for us but I think grammar is more important. I can use some simple words to express myself in composition but if I have poor grammar, others will not understand me. Can I say grammar and vocabulary are equally important? Vocabulary and grammar complement each other perfectly. I give them 7 out of 10.

Based on excerpt 9 and 10, all students reported that having sufficient vocabulary size helped them to express their ideas freely and they were able to fully comprehend reading passages. It is intriguing that most interviewees associated vocabulary size with the quality of their composition. They believed that the more extensive vocabulary they have acquired, the better their compositions would be. A plausible explanation is that most learners only knew the productive aspect of a word and neglected the receptive side. In the following section, the focus of discussion will be on the aspect of 'knowing a word'.

4.2.2.2 What “Knowing a Word” means to the High Proficient

Students

Most linguists agree that a word is a complex entity made up of a set of properties and features. In the present study, the high proficient students were asked to explain what “knowing a word” in their own words during the semi-structured interviews. All of them mentioned that “knowing a word” meant knowing the word

meaning, pronunciation, spelling and parts of speech. Additional aspects like collocation and register were mentioned by several interviewees.

1) Word Meaning

Normally, learners tend to learn the meaning and the form of a word before the other aspects of word knowledge. Students unanimously reported that the most important aspect of knowing a word is to know the meaning of a word. Knowing a word means knowing the semantic value of a word and many of the different meanings associated with a word. The high proficient students reported that remembering a corresponding Thai equivalent was not effective and necessary as the equivalent in the first and second languages might not be identical. This claim is supported by the fact that most of the learners opted for monolingual dictionary when they faced with a new word or confirmed meaning.

Moreover, learners usually associate a new word meaning with a known word with similar meaning. For example, student C linked 'vanished' to the words 'disappeared' and 'went missing' since the words are synonyms. The strategic behavior reveals that the students commit a word in memory by linking the synonyms and thus enhances retention.

2) Spelling and Pronunciation

It has been argued that most Cambodian students tend to use more “mechanical” strategies such as memorization, notetaking, and repetition than strategies that involve deep processing, such as guessing, imagery, and the keyword technique. However, such a claim appears to be incompatible with the general findings in the present study.

From the previous questionnaire results, it is found that both the grade 12 students and the high proficient students favored Consolidation Strategies focusing on word form such as dividing the target word into syllables, hearing it spoken in English and studying the spelling of the target word. The students tended to focus on the written and spoken form of the word partly because of the belief in the usefulness of this strategy. It is noted that the over fifty per cent of the grade 12 students believed that studying the spelling and pronunciation (syllables) helped them to consolidate new word and similar perception was also found among the high achievers. One of the high proficient students described the relationship between knowing a word and written word form in the interview and his response was transcribed in Excerpt 11.

Excerpt 11

Semi-structured Interview:

Student I:

I think knowing a word means ... I know the meaning and the spelling of the word. For example, in the dictation, we need to know the spelling in order to get the marks. Sometimes, we need to know how to read the word but it can be quite difficult for me. I always find it hard to pronounce the last part of the word correctly, for example, shop-ped, want-ed. You told me the -ed ending can have different sounds depending on the part in front of it...

For excerpt 11, student I reported that learning vocabulary in second language involved three major aspects: meaning, spelling and pronunciation of the word. Most of the teachers and students would likely agree with that and that explains the needs to introduce students with more strategies to consolidate new words and enhance retention, such as strategies that involve deep processing.

Another interesting finding about the aspect of pronunciation is that almost all interviewees realized the importance of pronunciation. In the think-aloud tasks, 16 out of 20 high proficient students could pronounce all the target words correctly. During the interview, they expressed that knowing how to pronounce the word would not only help them to enhance retention but also enabled them to communicate in daily lives. When they were asked the key to accurate pronunciation, most of the interviewees gave credit to their primary schools as they had been taught phonics in English lessons. This indicates that know the spoken form a word plays an important role in vocabulary learning.

4.2.2.3 Lack of Time Spent on Vocabulary Learning

Although all the high proficient students unanimously agreed that vocabulary was very important in learning English, they rarely planned their vocabulary learning and spent very little time on it. The response in the interview triangulated the data collected from the questionnaire and proved that most students did not study the word over time. The rest of them spent 1 to 2 hours learning English vocabulary outside class, for example, watching movie, listening to songs and reading newspaper and they did not often put in extra time or effort in learning English vocabulary. A student responded that learning vocabulary was “time-consuming” and he could “naturally pick up vocabulary” in English lessons. The following excerpt shows how the student acquired vocabulary outside class.

Excerpt 12

Semi-structured Interview:

Teacher: Do you think vocabulary learning is important?

- Student J: Yes, it is important because we need to know the word in order to understand things around us.
- Teacher: Do you plan your vocabulary learning?
- Student J: No. In fact, I think I can learn the vocabulary naturally from the teachers, newspapers, TV... I don't need to plan it in order to learn it.
- Teacher: How much time do you spend on learning vocabulary outside class?
- Student J: I'll say less than 1 hour. I am too busy and I won't spend time to revise English at home unless I have dictation or test.

Data from the interview reflects that high proficient students did not spend much time on vocabulary learning and outside class time despite its importance. This striking message commands attention of language teachers to provide more opportunities for the learners to practice and use English outside class.

4.3 Summary of the Chapter

In summary, few findings of this study reached the purposes of the study. The results of each section of this chapter are described in two aspects, namely; quantitative analysis which was based on questionnaire; and qualitative analysis which lied on think-aloud tasks and semi-structured interviews among high achieving students. Also, it can be said that good learners use a variety of strategies and take the initiative to manage their vocabulary learning. In the present study, it is found that the high proficient students were aware of the importance of vocabulary learning and they favored contextual guessing and strategies focusing on word form. Based on observation, however, it is surprising that the high proficient students in this study did not demonstrate all the good learner's characteristics. First, they tended to place heavy reliance on contextual guessing and dictionary strategies to discover word

meaning instead of using a wide range of strategies when they encountered new words. In addition, the students focused mainly on the memorization of spoken form to consolidate new word meaning. Given the students processed vocabulary mainly at sensory level where committing the form to memory was the focus, it is difficult for them to recall the learned vocabulary that was neither deeply processed nor linked with their existing knowledge. Finally, although most of the high proficient students agreed that vocabulary was very important in learning English, they rarely planned their vocabulary learning and spent very little time on it. As a result, there were insufficient use and practice of the newly learned vocabulary and thus the vocabulary items were easily forgotten. The findings allowed the researcher to understand how the students, in particular, the high proficient students learnt vocabulary in English and helped the researcher to get more insights to her teaching. Some possible reasons for these results will be discussed next in Chapter Five.

CHAPTER 5

CONCLUSIONS AND DISCUSSIONS

This final chapter of the thesis provides a brief review of the results of the current quantitative and qualitative study on the perceptions and uses of grade 12 Cambodian EFL students towards English vocabulary language learning strategies, based on Chapter Four. It then presents a thematic discussion of the major findings, provides implications for theory and pedagogical practice, and makes recommendations for future research. The chapter ends with a conclusion to the whole study.

5.1 Summary of the Major Findings

The purpose of this study was carried out to investigate the students' perceptions and their actual use of strategies. As different learning tasks require different strategies, it is worthwhile looking at how learners learn vocabulary and the strategies they use to discover and retain word meaning. The number of selected sample included 200 grade 12 students, derived through purposive random sampling. The instruments consisted of vocabulary learning strategy questionnaire, think-aloud vocabulary tasks, and semi-structured interviews. Collected data were analyzed using both quantitative data from the questionnaire, and qualitative data from the think-aloud vocabulary tasks and the semi-structured interviews.

The following major findings were summarized drawing from the data analysis and interpretation of the data.

5.1.1 Guessing followed by the use of the dictionary was the most commonly used discovery strategies for both the grade 12 students and the high proficient students. Besides contextual guessing (90%), the results of the questionnaire indicated that the high proficient students used other inferencing strategies to discover word meanings such as look for clues in the word itself (75%). For the rest of the grade 12 students, they tended to use social strategies to infer word meanings. Almost eighty per cent of the grade 12 students reported that they asked their classmates or peers for the meaning.

5.1.2 To consolidate a word in memory, the grade 12 students and the high proficient students favored strategies focusing on the spoken and written form of the word. They usually studied the spelling of the target word and divided the target word into syllables. Studying spoken and written form of the word, according to the high achievers, could help them to enhance retention and facilitate communication in daily lives. They also believed that knowing the meaning, spelling and pronunciation meant that they have learnt the word. Finally, it is worth noting that the high proficient students used grouping strategy most often to consolidate new words.

5.1.3 In general, the grade 12 students believed that asking the teacher(s) for meaning was the most useful discovery strategy; whereas, the high proficient students believed that using a monolingual dictionary was the most useful strategy to discover a new word meaning. At the top of the list, the high proficient students indicated that asking the teacher(s) for meaning and learning words from word lists or glossary were effective ways to learn a new word.

5.1.4 To enhance retention of a newly learnt word, all students unanimously agreed that keeping a vocabulary notebook was the most useful consolidation

strategy. Besides, the high proficient students also thought that studying the words over time helped them to keep track of their learning and remember the word.

5.1.5 In comparison with the use of strategies, it is found that there is no significant difference between the grade 12 students and the high proficient students. At the first encounter of a new word, guessing followed by the use of dictionary was used commonly by both groups of students. Besides, both group of students favored strategies focusing on word form. The only difference seems to be the high proficient students would use more grouping strategy to consolidate new words.

Below are the discussions of the following aspects based on the findings: students' use of vocabulary learning strategies, students' perceptions of the usefulness of the strategies, think-aloud vocabulary tasks by the high proficient students, and high proficient students' opinions about vocabulary learning, respectively.

5.2 Students' Use of Vocabulary Learning Strategies

The results of this study found that guessing followed by the use of the dictionary was the most commonly used discovery strategies for both the grade 12 students and the high proficient students. Besides contextual guessing (90%), the results of the questionnaire indicated that the high proficient students used other inferencing strategies to discover word meanings such as look for clues in the word itself (75%). For the rest of the grade 12 students, they tended to use social strategies to infer word meanings. Almost eighty per cent of the grade 12 students reported that they asked their classmates or peers for the meaning. The reasons why these learners tended to rely on contextual strategies for learning the tasks in English might be related to the context and the task types of their study. The learners in this study were

learning English in the rural context where contact with the English language is limited. Thus, it is not easy for the learners to practice using the materials they have learned in the classroom in other daily communicative situations, and as a result they might end up studying only what they are able to do by themselves and become solitary, such as memorizing through repetition and practicing course materials. In addition, the learners in this study were from a secondary school level. Thus, because the learners in the present study were not advanced learners, the tasks they focused on in their study might be dependent on the course materials and quizzes, because the beginning learners' tasks are cognitively often more challenging due to needing to build new concepts and memorize a lot of words rather than just comparing and matching prior language knowledge. This finding coincided with the students' learning behavior of using the writing repetition strategy for memorizing Chinese characters. Rao's (2006) research in Chinese students' use of language learning strategies also had a similar discovery. Sixty-three percent of these students tried to write a word repeatedly to remember it. Rao pointed out that in acquiring the thousands of characters in common usage; one must keep practicing them until they are kept in mind. Some researchers (Pressley, Leven & Delaney, 1982; Dansereau, 1988; Ebbinghaus, 1993) conclude that the use of learning strategies is perhaps the product of one's cognitive style which is "concerned with working on new words in order to understand, categorize, and store them in the mental lexicon"(Hedge, 2000, p. 117). Decarrico (2001) indicate that cultural institutions, such as schools, classrooms, etc., have significant roles to play in an individual's cognitive growth and development. Hence, the use of learning strategies might be influenced by these learning milieus.

As a result they might have mainly used contextual strategies such as practicing by repetition and completing the required class exercises. In fact, Chamot and Kupper's study (1989) found that beginning learners relied mostly on cognitive strategies, such as repetition and translation when compared with intermediate and advanced learners. Also, research on strategy use among different levels of learners has suggested that advanced learners use a greater number of strategies more often than beginning learners (Carroll, 1981; Bialstok, 1983; O'Malley & Chamot, 1990; Oxford, 1990; Catalán & María, 2003).

Therefore, the classroom setting and the teacher-assigned tasks strongly impacted how learners chose to use strategies for learning Japanese, which indicate contextual factors in classroom-restricted learning (Nyikos & Fan, 2007). According to the psycholinguistic perspectives, Ellis (1985, p. 103) suggested that the tasks "have a significant impact on the way learners process language in performance, and therefore, potentially, on how they acquire an L2". Also, Wenden and Rubin (1987) insist that tasks lead to learning opportunities. Therefore, teachers may need to pay special attention to establish tasks and to consider how the tasks help learners to gain communicative ability beyond memorization and studying the tasks and materials for tests, although I believe that tests and quizzes (i.e., vocabulary quizzes) were still necessary, especially for the beginning level learners in order to gain the basic skills of the language.

To consolidate a word in memory, the grade 12 students and the high proficient students favored strategies focusing on the spoken and written form of the word. They usually studied the spelling of the target word and divided the target word into syllables. Studying spoken and written form of the word, according to the

high proficient students, could help them to enhance retention and facilitate communication in daily lives. They also believed that knowing the meaning, spelling and pronunciation meant that they have learnt the word. Finally, it is worth noting that the high proficient students used grouping strategy most often to consolidate new words. A possible explanation could be that the high proficient students always monitored their learning by combining these wide ranges of strategies and using these multi-layered strategies. Also, they tended to be active strategy users in producing the language and sentences, and this strategy allowed them to make the words and grammar their own as they moved from explicit, effortful learning to more acquired, automatic learning that is strategic because it is focused, applicable to the task and therefore effective, and personally meaningful so they have strategic and personal control over the task. Huckin and Coady (1999) found learning in context slightly more advantageous, but not enough to be considered as different achievements. Much of the research conducted in vocabulary instruction has failed to demonstrate any clear advantage of learning in contextualizing conditions (Nation, 1982). For instance, Coady (1993) concluded after exploring the basic argument for a mixed approach to vocabulary acquisition in ESL that the basic or core vocabulary should be taught, but the less frequent vocabulary would be learned better via context. However, even in that case, some techniques played an important role to learning effectively. Hulstijn, Hillander, and Greidanus (1996) concluded that a mixture of approaches should be adopted since there are advantages and disadvantages between context-based inferential strategies and some other explicit vocabulary learning approaches such as key-word techniques, or translation in pairs, or using a

monolingual or bilingual dictionary. In other words, the result of the current study is parallel with previous research mentioned above.

Furthermore, the high proficient students tended to practice the materials multiple times, as Paribakht and Wesche (1999) suggested in his study on the effects of task repetition. According to Cobb and Horst (2001) and Gaudio (2003), individual interest is the degree to which the learner is interested in certain topics, subject areas, or activities. It is also defined as an individual's long-term orientation toward a type of subject, activity, or an area of knowledge (Fraser, 1999). Since interest is a key part of motivation for learning, it is important to note that numerous studies reveal a significant relationship between motivation and language learning strategy use (Oxford, 1996a, 1996b).

Through these strategic approaches, the high proficient students seemed to study the tasks until they were able to produce and use them, and did not terminate at the stage of recognition or word-level production. This form of over learning seemed to ensure that the high level of certitude that they appear to need going into the classroom was achieved. As a result, the use of these strategies by the high proficient students was systematic and did not change over the one and a half month period under examination. Therefore, these findings may suggest that the high proficient students tended to know how and how much they have to study the tasks in order to attain high achievement on the target materials and tasks.

5.3 Students' Perceptions of the Usefulness of the Strategies

In the current study's findings from the think-aloud vocabulary tasks and the semi-structured interviews taken together, prior English learning appeared to be

associated with students' strategy use for learning English. The reason for this might be explainable by the fact that the students in this study had the restricted range of English proficiency and the restricted range of strategy use scores. It seems that prior English learning is related to high frequency of strategy use and high English proficiency and achievement (Chow, 1997; Lin, 2002; Chen, 2003). This finding is consistent with the previous study conducted with Taiwanese college students. Similar to this study, in Chou's study (2002), the participants were at the lower end of high range and showed stronger extrinsic motivation than intrinsic motivation. The mean of extrinsic motivation was significantly greater than that of intrinsic motivation in both studies. Also, participants' effort to learning and desire to use English was relatively low compared to two other types of motivation in both studies.

In general, the grade 12 students believed that asking the teacher(s) for meaning was the most useful discovery strategy; whereas, the high proficient students believed that using a monolingual dictionary was the most useful strategy to discover a new word meaning. At the top of the list, the high proficient students indicated that asking the teacher(s) for meaning and learning words from word lists or glossary were effective ways to learn a new word. These results may be because the high proficient students tended to have already developed and be aware of English learning strategies which were appropriate for certain tasks. The findings of the present study are consistent with those of previous studies (Kroll & Curley, 1988; Sautermeister, 1989; Fraser, 1999). Fraser's study (1999) showed that consulting a dictionary to confirm inference is a valuable strategy for lexical acquisition. Kroll and Curley (1988) stated that vocabulary learning in the beginning stage uses translation exclusively compared to vocabulary learning at the advanced levels. Indeed, in Sautermeister's (1989) study,

he reported that vocabulary learning behavior among English learners at colleges. English language learners were not satisfied until they had found a first language equivalent to assist their learning. In fact, in their interviews, half of the high proficient students reported that the things they noted in their answers to the questions in this study were effective in learning English, which might indicate their self-efficacy (Bandura, 2001). It is reasonable to believe that students' self-rating is in a way a manifestation of their self-efficacy. Research has also provided evidence in how self-efficacy is related to more positive learning results. These findings concurred with the study of Oxford (1996), which has found that self-efficacy is raised when students receive language learning strategy instruction. Thus, the high proficient students tended to have evaluated their previous English learning strategies, and have developed systematic and sustained approaches to their own strategy use which were appropriate for each task. These findings support a number of previous studies demonstrating the degree of expressed motivation to learn the language had the significant main effect on strategy choice (Oxford & Nyikos, 1989; Oxford & Ehrman, 1995; Oxford et. al., 1993; Wharton, 2000; Chou, 2002). For instance, Oxford and Ehrman's (1995) study of language learning strategy use among adult language learners reported that the strong relationship between learning strategy use on the one hand and motivation on the other hand.

In comparison with the use of strategies, it is found that there is no significant difference between the grade 12 students and the high achievers. At the first encounter of a new word, guessing followed by the use of dictionary was used commonly by both groups of students. Besides, both group of students favored strategies focusing on word form. The only difference seems to be the high proficient

students would use more grouping strategy to consolidate new words. This can be described that there was a relationship between the frequency of strategies students applied on the vocabulary task and both self-rated English proficiency and prior English learning. As anticipated, the findings of this study are generally consistent with those found in previous studies (e.g., Green & Oxford, 1995; Bremner, 1998; Lee, 2001). Similarly, Green and Oxford (1995) reported that no significant difference was found between the high and the mid groups. These findings suggest that “in research of this kind, the strength of the findings obtained can depend to a significant extent on the range of ability levels in the study” (Green & Oxford, 1995, p. 286). More precise relationships between strategy use and proficiency could be determined if researchers work with a variety of groups that show a broader range of proficiency outcomes.

5.4 Think-aloud Protocols by the High Proficient Students

The results of this study indicated that, the high proficient students were invited to participate in the think-aloud tasks to demonstrate how they made use of the strategies to discover meanings of ten target words, the most used strategy is guessing or lexical inferencing and the second commonly used strategy is monolingual dictionary by the high proficient students in the tasks. Some think-aloud protocol data is used for illustration. It can be inferred that good learners used more vocabulary learning strategies and they consistently adopt types of strategies based either on their beliefs about vocabulary and vocabulary learning or on other pre-existing cognitive or social factors. This finding fully supports the convictions by Sanaoui (1995), which claims that although each strategy contributes to success or failure, consistent

employment of certain types of strategies forms an approach to vocabulary learning that may considerably influence the outcomes of L2 learning. Therefore, how different learners combine different strategies and how this affects their learning outcomes warrant studying as much as, perhaps more than, the effects of individual strategies.

As stated earlier, the think-aloud introspection indicates the high proficient students favored the guessing strategy when they encountered new words in the tasks. Clarke and Nation (1980) point out that studying the context in which a word occurred provides important linguistic and contextual clues for making inferences. These clues include sentence-level grammar and the surrounding text, which provide a knowledge base for inferencing.

5.5 High Proficient Students' Opinions about Vocabulary Learning

To enhance retention of a newly learnt word, all students unanimously agreed that keeping a vocabulary notebook was the most useful consolidation strategy. Besides, the high proficient students also thought that studying the words over time helped them to keep track of their learning and remember the word. The explanation for this may lie in two areas. First, students justify the importance of vocabulary learning may be that words are the building blocks to communication that is why vocabulary learning and teaching are important to second language acquisition. Second, the students seem to agree that vocabulary learning played an important role in learning English. The findings in this study support the viewpoint of Hill (2005, p. 1) which explains that one of the most difficult challenges for language learners is

to learn the meanings and use of the words they need to master if they are to be able to understand and communicate in a second or foreign language.

Relatively, most linguists agree that a word is a complex entity made up of a set of properties and features. Chomsky (1975), for example, views lexis as a set of dictionary entries and the lexis contains syntactic, phonological and semantic information. Nation (2001), words are not isolated units of language, but fit into many interlocking systems and levels. Because of this, there are many things to know about any particular word and there are many degrees of knowing. At the most general level, knowing a word involves form, meaning and use and there is receptive and productive distinction for each aspect. The validity of the receptive/productive distinction as a way of distinguishing types of knowledge in most cases depends on its resemblance to the distinction between the 'receptive' skills of listening and reading and the 'productive' skills of speaking and writing (Palmer, 1921, p. 118, cited in Nation, 2001).

5.6 Pedagogical Implications on Vocabulary Learning Strategies

The first pedagogical implication is that more vocabulary learning strategies should be introduced to learners and strategy training is essential for learning. O'Malley and Chamot (1990) stressed that the strategic behavior might be affected by student characteristics such as motivation, aptitude, age, sex, prior education, as well as the cultural background and learning style. It may be complexes of them (i.e. behaviors) rather than specific ones which characterize different kinds of learners is worthy of further research. Therefore, it is worthwhile for both teachers and learners to spend time working on strategies. It may be beneficial for learners to choose their

own learning strategies according to their characteristics such as proficiency and learning style.

Another pedagogical implication of this study is that learners and teachers should be mindful of the quality (or depth) of the vocabulary students learn in order to achieve basic success in EFL learning. Nation (2001, p. 6) warned that when we plan the vocabulary goals of a long-term course of study, we can look at three kinds of information to help decide how much vocabulary needs to be learned: the number of words in the language, the number of words known by native speakers and the number of words needed to use the language. Therefore, the underlying principle of vocabulary teaching should have a major influence on content and sequencing of the curriculum. Teachers and learners should reach a general consensus on the learning goal when designing the course or curriculum.

The results of the study shed light on the role of learners and learner responsibility. Recent research has demonstrated that learner initiative and independence are crucial factors to attain higher levels of achievement (Gu, 1997; Kojic-Sabo & Lightbown, 1999). In other words, the more learners are aware of how learning is best carried out, the better learning is likely to be. For example, learners should know what vocabulary to learn, learners should continue to increase their vocabulary size and enrich the words they already know. As a result, no matter what the teacher does or what the course book presents, ultimately it is the learner who does the learning. With this in mind, teachers should deal with vocabulary in systematic and principled ways to make sure that the learners get the most benefit from the time spent and provide a rich environment for them to learn vocabulary in and outside class time.

The conception of vocabulary as a dynamic complex of knowledge plus skill is especially important in the understanding of vocabulary learning strategies. If the task of vocabulary learning is multifaceted, different dimensions of the lexicon would demand different learning strategies, and strategies suitable for one dimension might not be suitable for another dimension.

5.7 Suggestions for Further Studies

In considering this study, a variety of additional unanswered questions arose that could be the impetus for further investigations. The findings in this study support other researches in the field, but also contradict some findings. The following are some suggested research ideas the researcher feels would be of value.

5.7.1 The current research investigated the most-used vocabulary learning strategies by the intermediate L2 learners and their perceptions of the usefulness of the strategies. More importantly, the study enabled the researcher to closely examine the use and perception of strategies by the high achievers. With a view to investigating whether language proficiency is one of the crucial factors to vocabulary learning, it would be interesting if more research is carried out among the high proficient students in other Cambodian high schools.

5.7.2 In addition, vocabulary learning strategy research should also take cultural factors and pragmatic constraints into account and, rather than finding universal “good” strategies, aim to discover vocabulary strategies that suit different groups of learners with different backgrounds and ability. Methodologically, longitudinal designs are especially needed if vocabulary development as opposed to word list retention is of interest.

5.7.3 Furthermore, vocabulary researchers need a change of mentality, in that learners, especially experienced and successful ones, are capable of managing their own learning and choosing their own strategies. They should not be only on the receiving end. In other words, we need systematic studies of the natural processes of vocabulary learning in authentic foreign language learning situations with the aim of identifying the whole range of vocabulary learning strategies, finding out what works and what does not work, and what distinguishes the successful from the unsuccessful learners. Obviously, there is still much to learn and explore in the field of vocabulary acquisition. It is important for the language learners and teachers to work collaboratively towards the same learning goal.

Finally, the researcher wants to make an appeal that it is important to continue conducting research on vocabulary learning strategies. It will certainly lead to better understanding of the complex processes of vocabulary learning and contribute to foreign language learning and teaching.

5.8 Concluding Remarks

Based on the findings from the present study, the researcher draws the following conclusions which are outlined in four points:

5.8.1 Vocabulary should not be left to the learners alone.

5.8.2 Learners should be well informed about vocabulary learning strategies and develop a strategy inventory through strategy training.

5.8.3 Language instructors should be well informed about vocabulary learning strategies as well.

5.8.4 The language textbook should play an active role in strategy training.

Most importantly, as Schmitt (1997)'s suggestion, the good learners use a variety of strategies and take the initiative to manage their vocabulary learning. In the present study, it is found that the high proficient students were aware of the importance of vocabulary learning and they favored contextual guessing and strategies focusing on word form. Based on observation, however, it is surprising that the high proficient students in this study did not demonstrate all the good learner's characteristics described by Schmitt (1997). First, they tended to place heavy reliance on contextual guessing and dictionary strategies to discover word meaning instead of using a wide range of strategies when they encountered new words. In addition, the students focused mainly on the memorization of spoken form to consolidate new word meaning. Given the students processed vocabulary mainly at sensory level where committing the form to memory was the focus, it is difficult for them to recall the learned vocabulary that was neither deeply processed nor linked with their existing knowledge. Finally, although most of the high proficient students agreed that vocabulary was very important in learning English, they rarely planned their vocabulary learning and spent very little time on it. As a result, there were insufficient use and practice of the newly learned vocabulary and thus the vocabulary items were easily forgotten. The findings allowed the researcher to understand how the students in Cambodian teaching context, in particular, the high proficient students learnt vocabulary in English and helped the researcher to get more insights to her teaching. It is hoped that researchers will continue to explore the numerous factors that contribute to the success of Cambodian EFL learners.

Certainly, it is also crucial to bear in mind that teaching strategies to learners does not guarantee that they will definitely use the strategies in their learning

processes afterwards. However, in the researcher's opinion, this does not decrease the importance of ensuring that learners are well informed about the various options they have and that learners should develop an inventory of strategies to facilitate vocabulary and language learning.

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APPENDIX A

Formal Letters

Form TS-1

Master of Education
Royal University of Phnom Penh

Request for Thesis Proposal Approval

Mr.

Student's Surname: BIN.....Name: Sopheakda.....

Ms.

Tel. 016 948 411..... FaxEmail: sopheakdabin@yahoo.com

Thesis Proposal Title:

Vocabulary Learning Strategies: Perception and Actual Use from Cambodian EFL Student.

Signature
[Handwritten Signature]

Student

Date. *23. June. 2015*.....

សិល្បា Signature
[Handwritten Signature]

Supervisor

Date. *23/6/2015*.....

Signature

Program Director

Date.....

សាកលវិទ្យាល័យភូមិន្ទភ្នំពេញ
មហាវិទ្យាល័យអប់រំ

សំណើប្រមូលទិន្នន័យ

ឈ្មោះនិស្សិត: ប៊ិន សុភ័ក្ត្រ វីរា ប្រុស ស្រី

ទូរសព្ទ: 016 948411 Fax:

អ៊ីមែល: sopheakdabin@yahoo.com

ចំណងជើងនិក្ខេបបទ: Vocabulary Learning Strategies: Perception and Actual Use from Cambodia EFL Student

« សង្ខេបនិក្ខេបបទស្រាវជ្រាវ : ទស្សនៈ និងការយល់ដឹងអំពីការយល់ស្រាប់/ការយល់ដឹងស្រាប់របស់សិស្សស្រីកម្ពុជា ក្នុងការសិក្សាភាសាអង់គ្លេស »

សូមមេត្តាចេញលិខិតជូនទៅអ្នកពាក់ព័ន្ធ ដើម្បីស្នើសុំប្រមូលទិន្នន័យសម្រាប់ និក្ខេបបទរបស់ខ្ញុំបាទ/នាងខ្ញុំ:

* សូមភ្ជាប់នូវកម្រងសំណួរស្រាវជ្រាវមកជាមួយសំណើសុំនេះ។

ជូន: លោក/លោកស្រីនិងតួនាទី: អ៊ី. វិ. វណ្ណ (ឯកប្រធាន)

ស្ថាប័ន: មជ្ឈមណ្ឌលវប្បធម៌ និង វិទ្យាសាស្ត្រ ភាសាខ្មែរ

អាសយដ្ឋាន: ស្រះចក់ ភ្នំពេញ

ប្រភេទនៃអ្នកឆ្លើយតប: (ឧ. គ្រូ សិស្ស និស្សិត).....

ជូន: លោក/លោកស្រីនិងតួនាទី:

ស្ថាប័ន:

អាសយដ្ឋាន:

ប្រភេទនៃអ្នកឆ្លើយតប: (ឧ. គ្រូ សិស្ស និស្សិត)..... សិស្ស (វិទ្យាល័យ)

រយៈពេល: ឆ្នាំ ២០១៥ រហូតដល់ ឆ្នាំ ២០១៥

ថ្ងៃទី ០៨ ខែ វិច្ឆិកា ឆ្នាំ ២០១៥
ហត្ថលេខាសាមីខ្លួន

ឯកភាពតាមសំណើ
ថ្ងៃទី ០៨ ខែ វិច្ឆិកា ឆ្នាំ ២០១៥
ហត្ថលេខាស្រាវជ្រាវ

ប៊ិន សុភ័ក្ត្រ វីរា

បណ្ឌិត ម៉ុក សារ៉ុម



ព្រះរាជាណាចក្រកម្ពុជា
ជាតិ សាសនា ព្រះមហាក្សត្រ

សាកលវិទ្យាល័យភូមិន្ទភ្នំពេញ
Royal University of Phnom Penh

លេខ: ១១.៣៣/..... សកកព
២០១៦

សូមគោរពជូន
លោកប្រធានមន្ទីរអប់រំ យុវជន និងកីឡា ខេត្តកណ្តាល

កម្មវត្ថុ: សំណើសុំជួយសម្រួលដល់ការស្រាវជ្រាវរបស់និស្សិតឈ្មោះ ប៊ិន សុភ័ក្ត្រ ដោយនៅវិទ្យាល័យនានានៅខេត្តកណ្តាល។

តាមកម្មវត្ថុខាងលើ ខ្ញុំសូមជម្រាបលោកប្រធានមេត្តាជ្រាបថា លោក ប៊ិន សុភ័ក្ត្រ ជានិស្សិតថ្នាក់បរិញ្ញាបត្រជាន់ខ្ពស់ផ្នែកអប់រំ ជំនាន់ទី៨ នៅសាកលវិទ្យាល័យភូមិន្ទភ្នំពេញ។ លោកមានគម្រោងចុះស្រាវជ្រាវលើប្រធានបទ "យុទ្ធសាស្ត្រការរៀនសូត្រសិស្ស ទស្សនៈនិងការប្រើប្រាស់ជាក់ស្តែងរបស់សិស្សកម្ពុជាដែលរៀនភាសាអង់គ្លេសជាភាសាបរទេស" ដើម្បីសរសេរនិក្ខេបបទបញ្ចប់ការសិក្សាថ្នាក់បរិញ្ញាបត្រជាន់ខ្ពស់ផ្នែកអប់រំ។ គោលបំណងនៃការស្រាវជ្រាវនេះគឺដើម្បីប្រមូលទិន្នន័យសំខាន់ៗដែលទាក់ទងនឹងប្រធានបទខាងលើ។ ការស្រាវជ្រាវនេះនឹងមានរយៈពេល០៣ខែ ដោយគិតពីថ្ងៃទី០១ ខែតុលា ឆ្នាំ២០១៥ រហូតដល់ថ្ងៃទី៣១ ខែធ្នូ ឆ្នាំ២០១៥។

អាស្រ័យហេតុនេះ សូមលោកប្រធានមេត្តាជ្រាបជាព័ត៌មាន និងអនុញ្ញាតជួយសម្រួលជូនលោក ប៊ិន សុភ័ក្ត្រ បានធ្វើការសិក្សាស្រាវជ្រាវនៅវិទ្យាល័យនានានៅខេត្តកណ្តាលដោយក្តីអនុគ្រោះ។

សូមលោកប្រធានមេត្តាទទួលនូវការរាប់អានដ៏ស្មោះស្ម័គ្រពីខ្ញុំ។

បានឃើញ និង បញ្ជាក់សំណើ
- លោកឧបនាយករដ្ឋមន្ត្រី ហ៊ុន សែន
ស៊ីហ្វ សម រង្ស៊ី

០២ តុលា ឆ្នាំ២០១៥
ប៊ិន សុភ័ក្ត្រ
អ៊ុន-តុលា

រាជធានីភ្នំពេញ ថ្ងៃទី ២១ ខែ កញ្ញា ឆ្នាំ ២០១៥

ប្រធានមន្ទីរអប់រំ យុវជន និងកីឡា
សាកលវិទ្យាល័យភូមិន្ទភ្នំពេញ

បណ្ឌិត សុខ ច័ន្ទធី

APPENDIX B

Vocabulary Learning Strategies Questionnaire

A Survey of Vocabulary Learning Strategies

- 1 Tick (✓) the box in the first column if you use the strategy.
- 2 Tick (✓) the box in the second column if you think the strategy is useful or sounds useful.
- 3 Identify the top ten most helpful strategies. Put “1” for the **most useful** and “10” as the **least useful** in the third column.

(I) Strategies for the discovery of a new word’s meaning:	I have used the strategy	This strategy seems useful	Ranking
Inferencing Strategies			
1. guess its meaning from the context	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
2. look at the parts of speech (e.g. noun, verb or adjective)	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
3. look for the clues to meaning in the word itself (e.g. prefixes, suffixes and roots)	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
4. try to think of an English word that is similar	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Dictionary Strategies			
5. look up the word in a Khmer/English dictionary	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
6. look up the word in an English dictionary	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
7. use an electronic or online dictionary	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Social Strategies			
8. ask my teacher(s) for the meaning	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
9. ask my classmates or peers for the meaning	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
10. interact with native speakers (e.g. the NET teacher)	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Other Strategies			
11. learn words through Facebook communication	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
12. learn words from word lists or glossary	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
13. learn words from the mass media such as newspaper, magazines, radio, songs, TV programs or films	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
14. ignore it	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>

(II) Strategies for consolidating a word once it has been encountered:	I have used the strategy	This strategy seems useful	Ranking
Context Strategies			
1. read it in a text	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
2. hear it spoken in English	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Rote Learning Strategies			
3. study the spelling of the target word	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
4. divide the target word into syllables (e.g. po/lar)	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
5. use English words similar in sound	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
6. use Khmer words similar in sound	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Elaboration Strategies			
7. connect it to other English words on the same topic	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
8. relate it to a visual image	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
9. put it in a sentence	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Other Strategies			
10. keep a vocabulary notebook	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
11. study the word list	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
12. study the word overtime	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>

Others (please specify)

(Compiled with reference to Harley and Hart (2000), Vocabulary Learning in the Content-oriented Second-language Classroom: Student Perceptions and Proficiency, **Language Awareness**, Vol.9, No.2.)

កម្រងសំណួរអំពីយុទ្ធសាស្ត្រការរៀនវាក្យស័ព្ទ

ការស្ទង់មតិអំពីយុទ្ធសាស្ត្រការរៀនវាក្យស័ព្ទ

១. ដាក់សញ្ញា (✓) ក្នុងប្រអប់ ក្នុងខ្ទង់ទី ១ បើអ្នកប្រើយុទ្ធសាស្ត្រនេះ
២. ដាក់សញ្ញា (✓) ក្នុងប្រអប់ ក្នុងខ្ទង់ទី ២ បើអ្នកគិតថាយុទ្ធសាស្ត្រនេះគឺមានសារៈសំខាន់
៣. បញ្ជាក់យុទ្ធសាស្ត្រសំខាន់បំផុត ១០ យ៉ាង។ ដាក់លេខ ១ សម្រាប់យុទ្ធសាស្ត្រសំខាន់បំផុត និងលេខ ១០ សម្រាប់យុទ្ធសាស្ត្រដែលមិនសំខាន់ក្នុងខ្ទង់ទី ៣។

(I) យុទ្ធសាស្ត្រសម្រាប់ស្វែងរកន័យនៃពាក្យថ្មី ៖	ខ្ញុំបានប្រើ យុទ្ធសាស្ត្រ	យុទ្ធសាស្ត្រ នេះហាក់ បីដូចជា សំខាន់	លំដាប់
យុទ្ធសាស្ត្រយោង (Inferencing Strategies)			
១. ទស្សនាអត្ថន័យរបស់ពាក្យតាមបរិបទ	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
២. ក្រឡេកមើលចំណែកនៃសំដី (ឧ. នាម កិរិយាស័ព្ទ ឬគុណនាម)	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
៣. ស្វែងរកតម្រុយទាំងឡាយដើម្បីន័យនៃពាក្យនោះ (ឧ. ពាក្យបន្ថែមចុង ពាក្យបន្ថែមដើម និងឬសពាក្យ)	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
៤. ព្យាយាមគិតពាក្យជាភាសាអង់គ្លេសដែលមានន័យប្រហាក់ប្រហែលគ្នា	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
យុទ្ធសាស្ត្រវចនានុក្រម (Dictionary Strategies)			
៥. ស្វែងរកពាក្យក្នុងវចនានុក្រមខ្មែរអង់គ្លេស	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
៦. ស្វែងរកពាក្យក្នុងវចនានុក្រមអង់គ្លេស	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
៧. ប្រើវចនានុក្រមអេឡិចត្រូនិកឬអនឡាញ	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
យុទ្ធសាស្ត្រសង្គម (Social Strategies)			
៨. សួរលោកគ្រូអ្នកគ្រូរបស់ខ្ញុំនូវអត្ថន័យនៃពាក្យ	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
៩. សួរមិត្តរួមថ្នាក់ ឬក្រុមរបស់ខ្ញុំនូវអត្ថន័យនៃពាក្យ	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>

១០. ធ្វើអន្តរកម្មជាមួយម្ចាស់ភាសា	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
យុទ្ធសាស្ត្រផ្សេងៗ (Other Strategies)			
១១. រៀនពាក្យទាំងឡាយតាម Facebook	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
១២. រៀនពាក្យពីបញ្ជីពាក្យ ឬសន្ទានុក្រម	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
១៣. រៀនពាក្យពីសារពត៌មាន ដូចជាកាសែត ទស្សនាវដ្តី វិទ្យុ ចម្រៀង កម្មវិធីទូរទស្សន៍ ឬល្ខោន	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
១៤. ធ្វើព្រងើយកន្តើយចំពោះពាក្យ	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>

(II) យុទ្ធសាស្ត្រសម្រាប់រួមពាក្យម្តងពេលជួបពាក្យ:	ខ្ញុំបានប្រើ យុទ្ធសាស្ត្រ	យុទ្ធសាស្ត្រ នេះហាក់ បីដូចជា សំខាន់	លំដាប់
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យុទ្ធសាស្ត្រផ្នែកបរិបទ (Context Strategies)

១. អានក្នុងបរិបទជាអត្ថបទ	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
២. លឺជាភាសានិយាយ	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>

យុទ្ធសាស្ត្រការរៀនឬសពាក្យ (Rote Learning Strategies)

៣. សិក្សាការប្រកបពាក្យគោលដៅ	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
៤. បែងចែកពាក្យគោលដៅទៅជាព្យាង្គ (ឧ. po/lar)	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
៥. ប្រើពាក្យភាសាអង់គ្លេសដែលមានសូរស្រដៀងគ្នា	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
៦. ប្រើពាក្យភាសាខ្មែរដែលមានសូរស្រដៀងគ្នា	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>

យុទ្ធសាស្ត្រផ្នែកបរិយាយ (Elaboration Strategies)

៧. ភ្ជាប់អត្ថន័យជាមួយពាក្យភាសាអង់គ្លេសដែលមាន ចំណងជើងដូចគ្នា	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
៨. ទំនាក់ទំនងជាមួយរូបភាពដែលមើលឃើញដោយភ្នែក	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
៩. ដាក់បញ្ជូនទៅក្នុងប្រយោគ	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>

យុទ្ធសាស្ត្រផ្សេងៗ (Other Strategies)

១០. រក្សាពាក្យសំព្វក្នុង notebook	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
១១. សិក្សាបញ្ជីពាក្យ	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
១២. សិក្សាពាក្យក្រៅម៉ោង	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>

ផ្សេងៗ (សូមបញ្ជាក់)

(Compiled with reference to Harley and Hart (2000), Vocabulary Learning in the Content-oriented Second-language Classroom: Student Perceptions and Proficiency, **Language Awareness**, Vol.9, No.2.)

APPENDIX C

Think-Aloud Vocabulary Task

Dear students,

In order to help you learn vocabulary effectively, I would like to know more about how you learn vocabulary and how you respond to new words. The following task is NOT a test. Just say what you think or how you arrive at the conclusion. One example has been provided for your reference.

Thanks a lot for your kind help!

Regards,

Mr. Bin Sopheakda

Example 1

Your self-esteem **plummets**, dropping quickly and suddenly making you think ‘I’m such a loser’.

Meaning	Part of speech	Pronunciation	Strategy (ies) used
to fall very quickly and suddenly	verb	plum / met	guessing from context

Task

Question 1

The theatre managed to **boost** its audiences by cutting ticket prices.

Meaning	Part of speech	Pronunciation	Strategy (ies) used

Question 2

A **feral** child is a child who, from a young age, has lived with animals in the wild.

Meaning	Part of speech	Pronunciation	Strategy (ies) used

Question 3

He was identified as John Ssabunnya, a boy who had disappeared three years earlier after his mother was murdered and his father went missing. John was only two years old when he **vanished**.

Meaning	Part of speech	Pronunciation	Strategy (ies) used

Question 4

They never smiled or showed any interest in human **company**, and the only emotion that ever crossed their faces was fear.

Meaning	Part of speech	Pronunciation	Strategy (ies) used

Question 5

Although he **sarled** and bit the police, he was no match for them.

Meaning	Part of speech	Pronunciation	Strategy (ies) used

Question 6

By the time the technician arrived, we had **retrieved** most of our lost data. It was **exhausting**, but we all managed to get there before lunch.

Meaning	Part of speech	Pronunciation	Strategy (ies) used

Question 7

The place is a **shambles**, with broken lockers and a disgusting floor.

Meaning	Part of speech	Pronunciation	Strategy (ies) used

Question 8

The prisoner's attempt to escape was **foiled** at the last minute when the police received a tip-off.

Meaning	Part of speech	Pronunciation	Strategy (ies) used

Question 9

Perhaps people tease you about your **complexion** – maybe you have freckles, or a few pimples.

Meaning	Part of speech	Pronunciation	Strategy (ies) used

Question 10

The class gave a spontaneous cheer when Tim won the competition.

Meaning	Part of speech	Pronunciation	Strategy (ies) used

(adapted from Building Self Confidence by Jim Sullivan)

End of Task

APPENDIX D

Semi-structured Interview

Dear student,

Thank you once again for your kind participation in the Think-Aloud Vocabulary Task. In this interview, I would like you to share your opinions on vocabulary learning and use of strategies in your regular practice as well as in the previous task. You will be given a list of interview questions in advance and 15 minutes for your preparation. In any case, you can answer the questions in any language that is comfortable to you.

Thank you for your kind help.

Regards,

Mr. Bin Sopheakda

Interview Questions

1. How important do you think vocabulary learning is? Why?
2. You are asked to rate the importance of vocabulary learning from 1 to 10 in the survey. 1 is the least important and 10 is the most important. How do you rate it?
3. What does it mean to you when you say you have learnt a word?
4. Do you plan your vocabulary learning? How?
5. How much time do you spend on vocabulary learning in and outside class?
6. What do you do when you meet a new word?
7. Do you think the method(s) is/are effective to discover a new word meaning?
8. What do you do to study and remember a new word?
9. Do you think the method(s) is/are effective to help you remember a new word?