



TEACHING VOCABULARY LEARNING STRATEGIES:  
AWARENESS, BELIEFS, AND PRACTICES. A SURVEY OF  
TAIWANESE EFL SENIOR HIGH SCHOOL TEACHERS.

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September, 2005

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## **Acknowledgements**

I would like to express my appreciation, first and foremost, to my supervisor Dr. Adela Gánem, who guided me to develop my study into a practicable frame in the very beginning and offered valuable suggestions while the work was in progress. My thanks also go to all the teachers that have instructed me at the University of Essex for their inspirational lectures in class, by which I have been motivated to explore some interesting issues concerning English language teaching and learning .

I am extremely obliged to a great number of friends both in Taiwan and in the U.K., without whose genuine encouragement my MA study here is hard to accomplish.

I owe a debt of thanks to a friend, Yuan-Huang Chen, who has been a good companion over the past few months when I worked on my dissertation.

Last but not least, I would like to give my immense gratitude to my family and boyfriend in Taiwan, without whose support my dream of pursuing further study abroad would not have been possible.

## **Abstract**

The present study investigated the awareness, beliefs, and instructional practices with respect to vocabulary learning strategies of Taiwanese EFL teachers in senior high school contexts. Over the past two decades, vocabulary learning strategies have appeared to be of much concern in that the pressing need of building up a repertoire of lexical words at hand is readily seen by L2 learners and vocabulary acquisition has revived to play a central role in the language classroom. However, the fact that the majority of L2 learners have traditionally been taught by methods paying insufficient attention to vocabulary might lead on to an unfavourable scenario whereby vocabulary acquisition continues to be neglected, since language teachers themselves have been mostly instructed toward grammar-oriented language learning. Studies on teachers' beliefs and practices have suggested that the "13,000-hour apprenticeship of observation" in the classroom plays a significant role in teachers' underlying assumptions and beliefs in language learning, which then exerts considerable influence on their teaching practices. Thus, the present study attempted to elicit information about teachers' awareness and beliefs based on individual learning experience, and further examine the correlations between teachers' beliefs and their teaching practices. A questionnaire was implemented to collect data on the issues involved. The results have suggested that the English teachers studied were aware of a range of vocabulary learning strategies, including both direct and indirect approaches to vocabulary acquisition. Nevertheless, some teaching practices seemed not to conform to research-informed orientation, implying the gap between the reality in the language classroom and implications from empirical research. Overall speaking, there existed positive correlations between the teachers' beliefs and their instructional practices. Some minor discrepancies involved might be attributable to various contextual factors. Thus, a need is seen to incorporate awareness-raising activities in pre-service or in-service teacher education programs to inform language practitioners of the state-of-the-art vocabulary pedagogy based on empirical research, as well as some practicable approaches to dealing with contextual dilemmas.

## CHAPTER 1 INTRODUCTION

The trends of linguistic theory play a role in the development of language pedagogy. The earlier dominance of Chomskyan school of linguistics partly accounts for the general neglect of vocabulary acquisition in favor of syntactic development. This argument is supported by Sökmen (1997, p.237) noting that “most L2 practitioners today have been trained in teacher education programs or molded by textbook writers to understand the terminology and teach the systemacity of grammar”. However, the fact that foreign language learners generally see vocabulary learning as their first priority and report that they encounter considerable difficulty in vocabulary learning is extensively recognized by language teachers and repeatedly pointed out in various learning contexts. Although vocabulary teaching and learning has suffered neglect for a long time, owing to the advances in the linguistic study of the lexicon, psycholinguistic investigations into the mental lexicon, and the popularity of the communicative approach since the 1970s, we have seen a re-think of the role of vocabulary in language pedagogy. Over the past two decades, a substantial range of research concerning vocabulary acquisition has provided us with valuable insights and suggestions to vocabulary instruction in the language classroom. Early research findings of L1 vocabulary acquisition by Nagy and Herman (1985) lead our perspective to a more implicit and incidental approach of vocabulary acquisition through extensive reading since children are observed to expand their vocabulary knowledge progressively through repeated exposures in various discourse contexts (Coady 1997b). Following this same logic, proponents (e.g. Krashen 1989) of this view argue that it is impractical to learn an enormous amount of vocabulary in a structured and explicit way due to the time constraints of the L2 classroom. Nevertheless, the urgent need to reach a threshold level of vocabulary is readily seen by L2 learners under the condition that they do not immerse in a rich-input learning context as their L1 counterparts. Concurrently,

the ineffectiveness of simply giving implicit vocabulary instruction is pointed out by more and more research and thus an improved approach integrating indirect teaching of vocabulary through a variety of meaning-focused activities with a more bottom-up and direct teaching of vocabulary with explicit instruction is advocated (Sökmen 1997). A review of the development of language teaching pedagogy leads us to draw a conclusion that “the pendulum has swung from direct teaching of vocabulary (the grammar translation method) to incidental (the communicative approach) and now, laudably, back to the middle: implicit and explicit learning” (Sökmen 1997, p.239).

In the late 70s and early 80s, the development in the area of second language acquisition research turns attention away from a teaching-centred perspective “to one which included interest in how the actions of learners might affect their acquisition of language” (Schmitt 1997, p.199). In other words, the belief that individual learners’ endeavours tend to be a governing factor in the language learning process was gradually formed among a number of scholars (Schmitt 1997). Language teachers, therefore, were getting motivated to examine what the individual learner, especially successful learners, do in their study to elicit useful information on the process of language acquisition. Rubin (1975) and Stern (1975) are two of the earliest researchers who shift their focus from teaching methods and materials to a more learner-centred aspect, maintaining that successful language learners employ a variety of learning strategies in their study to facilitate language acquisition. Other surveys (e.g. Bialystok & Fröhlich 1977; Naiman *et al.* 1978) also reveal findings supporting Rubin’s argument (Reiss 1985). By means of questionnaires, interviews, and observation, a more substantial collection of learning strategies is made possible and researchers attempt to construct a rigorous framework to describe them adequately. O’Malley and Chamot (1990, p.1) define learning strategies as “special thoughts or behaviors that individuals use to help them comprehend, learn, or retain new information” and classify these strategies into

three major types: metacognitive strategies, cognitive strategies, and social/affective strategies. Building on the research by Chamot, O'Malley, Dansereau, and Rubin, Oxford (1990) has compiled a most comprehensive classification of language learning strategies including six major categories. The direct strategies consist of memory strategies, cognitive strategies, and compensation strategies; the indirect category contains metacognitive strategies, affective strategies, and social strategies. One point to note about the learning strategies is that they "are not the preserve of highly capable individuals, but could be learned by others who had not discovered them on their own" (O'Malley & Chamot 1990, p.2).

The argument that learning strategies are teachable also helps to break the myth that some learners have an aptitude for languages and thus achieve high language proficiency without too many efforts. This preconceived notion may demotivate underachieved learners so much that they give up learning and teachers seem not to have a significant part to play in the language classroom. After an inspection to research on second language vocabulary instruction, Oxford and Scarcella (1994) propose a new 'research-based approach' to L2 vocabulary instruction. Compared to traditional approaches, in which teachers leave vocabulary learning to students without teaching them how to improve their vocabulary knowledge on their own or strategies for learning, this new research-based approach puts emphasis on vocabulary learning strategies instruction in addition to needs analysis, personalization, and varied activities in vocabulary teaching. Moreover, Hunt and Beglar (1998, cited Tassana-ngam 2004) also suggest a systematic vocabulary development framework incorporating incidental learning, explicit instruction, and independent strategy development.

It seems a commonly accepted truth that we incline to teach others in the same way we were instructed. Based upon Zimmerman's (1997) survey, we would think that most second language learners have traditionally been taught by methods that paid

insufficient attention to vocabulary and thus the statement that most teachers will also continue to neglect vocabulary appears reasonable (Coady 1997a). I personally have not become aware of the significance of vocabulary learning strategies until I began my MA study here at the University of Essex. Thinking back on my learning experience, I was not taught explicitly on the operation of vocabulary learning strategies. Moreover, I could hardly recall any training concerning vocabulary learning strategy instruction in pre-service or in-service teacher education programs, which might be the result of learning strategies being a relatively contemporary issue. Consequently, I was personally motivated to investigate teachers' knowledge on this issue, with particular reference to EFL teachers in senior high schools in Taiwan. My research was a descriptive survey focusing on teachers' awareness and beliefs of vocabulary learning strategies and their repercussion in the classroom. The research focus has been operationalised by means of the following questions:

1. In what aspects are Taiwanese English teachers in senior high schools aware of vocabulary learning strategies based on personal learning experience?
2. What vocabulary learning strategies are popular with Taiwanese English teachers in senior high schools in terms of personal choices (as students themselves) on the one hand, and pedagogically (as teachers) on the other?
3. Do Taiwanese English teachers in senior high schools teach vocabulary learning strategies they consider useful to their students? Why or why not?

To achieve this goal, a small scale survey has been carried out in the form of questionnaires to elicit relevant information to provide answers to the above questions. The data collected may also explore to some extent the intangible relationship between teachers' beliefs and their practices. While some studies (e.g. Johnson 1992) have indicated that teachers' practices mostly conform to their espoused beliefs, other researchers (e.g. Borg 2003) argue that contextual factors tend to hinder teachers' ability

to perform teaching practices reflecting their personal theories.

The dissertation consists of six chapters. Following the introduction in the first chapter, the second chapter reviews relevant literature concerning L2 vocabulary acquisition, vocabulary learning strategies, as well as teachers' beliefs and practices to provide a theoretical framework for the study. The third chapter discusses the methodology of the study. The results of the survey are presented in the fourth chapter, followed by a discussion in the fifth chapter. The conclusion serves as a summary of the major issues involved and discusses the implications of the study.

## CHAPTER 2 LITERATURE REVIEW

### 2.1 Vocabulary in SLA

#### 2.1.1 Vocabulary and Its Importance

Words are the building blocks in a language. By learning the lexical items, we start to develop knowledge of the target language. Based on our experience of being a language learner, we seem to have no hesitation in recognizing the importance of vocabulary in L2 learning. Meara (1980) points out that language learners admit that they encounter considerable difficulty with vocabulary even when they upgrade from an initial stage of acquiring a second language to a much more advanced level. Language practitioners also have reached a high degree of consensus regarding the importance of vocabulary. The findings in Macaro's survey (2003) indicate that secondary language teachers view vocabulary as a topic they most need research to shed light on to enhance the teaching and learning in their classrooms. Therefore, it may be claimed that the role of vocabulary in L2 learning is immediately recognized and implications for teaching from substantial research are in great demand.

#### 2.1.2 Knowing a Vocabulary Item

Words do not exist as isolated items in a language. That is, words are interwoven in a complex system in which knowledge of various levels of a lexical item is required in order to achieve adequate understanding in listening or reading or produce ideas successfully in speaking and writing. Richards (1976) contends that knowing a lexical item includes knowledge of word frequency, collocation, register, case relations, underlying forms, word association, and semantic structure. Nation (2001) applies the terms *receptive* and *productive* to vocabulary knowledge description covering all the aspects of what is involved in knowing a word. Form, meaning, and use are the three main parts at the most general level. Based on Nation's example "underdeveloped"

(2001, p. 26-28), I present below his proposed receptive knowledge of a word. Take the word *disadvantaged* as an example, knowing a word involves:

- being able to recognize the word when it is heard (**form** -- spoken)
- being familiar with its written form so that it is recognized when it is met in reading (**form**--written)
- recognizing that it is made up of the parts *dis-*, *-advantage-* and *-(e)d* and being able to relate these parts to its meaning (**form**--word parts)
- knowing that *disadvantaged* signals a particular meaning (**meaning**--form and meaning)
- knowing what the word means in the particular context in which it has just occurred (**meaning**--concept and referents)
- knowing the concept behind the word which will allow understanding in a variety of contexts (**meaning**-- concept and referents)
- knowing that there are related words like *poor*, *uneducated* and *deprived* (**meaning**-- associations)
- being able to recognize that *disadvantaged* has been used correctly in the sentence in which it occurs (**use**--grammatical functions)
- being able to recognize that words such as *families*, *position* are typical collocations (**use**--collocations)
- knowing that *disadvantaged* is not a high-frequency word (**use**--constraints on use, e.g. register, frequency)

On the other hand, the productive knowledge of a word involves:

- being able to say it with correct pronunciation including stress (**form**--spoken)
- being able to write it with correct spelling (**form**--written)
- being able to construct it using the right word parts in their appropriate forms (**form**--word parts)

- being able to produce the word to express the meaning ‘disadvantaged’ (**meaning**--form and meaning)
- being able to produce the word in different contexts to express the range of meanings of *disadvantaged* (**meaning**--concept and referents)
- being able to produce synonyms and opposites for disadvantaged (**meaning**--associations)
- being able to use the word correctly in an original sentence (**use**--grammatical functions)
- being able to produce words that commonly occur with it (**use**--collocations)
- being able to decide to use or not use the word to suit the degree of formality of the situation (**use**--constraints on use, e.g. register, frequency)

The numerous aspects of knowledge constitute the learning burden of a word, namely “the amount of effort required to learn it” (Nation 2001, p.23). Learners from different first language backgrounds thus experience different levels of difficulty in learning a word, depending on how the patterns and knowledge of the word are familiar to them. Generally speaking, the receptive aspects of knowledge and use are more easily to be mastered than their productive counterparts, but it is not clear why (Nation 2001).

### **2.1.3 Current Trends in L2 Vocabulary Teaching**

Oxford and Scarcella (1994) propose a new research-based approach to vocabulary teaching after examining relevant research concerning student motivation and need, the complexity of knowing a word, as well as factors that affect L2 vocabulary acquisition. Compared with traditional approaches, in which vocabulary is often taught unsystematically in class and teachers tend to leave their students to learn vocabulary on their own without much instruction or guidance, teachers following this new

research-based approach focus on words students are expected to meet frequently, and present words systematically based on a careful consideration of needs analysis. Vocabulary instruction is personalised according to learners' different learning needs, goals, and styles. Since most vocabulary learning takes place outside of the language classroom, learners are also trained to raise their awareness of the knowledge involved in knowing a lexical item and the process of learning a new word. Substantial emphasis on vocabulary learning strategies helps students become independent language learners inside and outside class. Among the numerous vocabulary learning strategies, guessing from context is held to be the most useful one. However, some studies (e.g. Pressley *et al.* 1987; Kelly 1990) indicate that learners seldom guess the correct meanings. In this approach, therefore, teachers guide students to use this strategy effectively and give them opportunities to practice the skill in class. A final point to note is that teachers reduce "decontextualized" vocabulary learning activities in class (e.g. word lists, flashcards) whereas implementing more "partially contextualized" (e.g. word association, visual and aural imagery, semantic mapping) or "fully contextualized" activities (e.g. reading, listening, speaking, and writing in authentic communication activities).

The arguments mentioned above are mostly supported by Sökmen (1997), commenting that the skill of guessing/infering from context is a useful strategy in vocabulary learning and should be covered in a language classroom. Nevertheless, some potential problems arise if learners mainly acquire vocabulary in this way. For example, acquiring vocabulary through guessing in context is probably a rather slow process given the limited amount of time learners can afford in class. In addition, guessing from context does not necessarily help learners commit the guessed words into their long-term memory. For example, a study of intermediate level adult ESL students by Wesche and Paribakht (1994, cited Sökmen 1997) shows that learners who

read and complete accompanying vocabulary exercises perform better in word acquisition than those who only do extensive reading. As a result, scholars come to call for a greater need of an explicit approach to vocabulary instruction, such as word unit analysis, mnemonic devices, etc. Sökmen (1997) thus states that “the pendulum has swung from direct teaching of vocabulary (the grammar translation method) to incidental (the communicative approach) and now, laudably, back to the middle: implicit and explicit learning” (p.239). In addition, considerable emphasis is put on encouraging independent learning strategies among students so that they know how to continue to learn vocabulary on their own. After experiencing what Resnick (1989) calls a ‘cognitive apprenticeship’, students will acquire some skills to promote the depth of word processing and manage individual vocabulary learning through the model of their teachers (Sökmen 1997). The time and efforts spent on developing learning strategies will reflect its value afterwards.

## **2.2 Language Learning Strategies (LLS)**

Although being substantially discussed in contemporary language teaching and learning, the issue of language learning strategies seems to have little or no place in the teacher-centred era of the Grammar-Translation Method or the Audiolingual Method. During that time, learners are not regarded as active participants in the language classroom, but rather a passive individual who needs stimulus and achieves acquisition through reinforcement. Objections to this behaviourist view of language learning arise gradually and culminate when Chomsky (1968) proposes that the learner is indeed an entity with inherent linguistic competence to generate rules (Griffiths & Parr 2001). Studies on language errors by Corder (1976) also suggest that language learners play an active role in developing their underlying linguistic competence and organizing

linguistic input. The shift of perspective on language learning leads an impetus by researchers such as Rubin (1975) to investigate what strategies successful language learners employ to actively enhance their learning (Griffiths & Parr 2001). Since then, a number of descriptive studies (e.g. Naiman *et al.* 1978; O'Malley *et al.* 1985) have been conducted to identify and classify the strategies involved in second language learning.

### **2.2.1 Definitions and Features of LLS**

Notions of LLS are to some extent defined differently by researchers. For example, Wenden & Rubin (1987, p.23) see LLS as the ones “which contribute to the development of the language system which the learner constructs and affect learning directly”. O'Malley & Chamot (1990, p.1) regard LLS as “the special thoughts or behaviors that individuals use to help them comprehend, learn, or retain new information”. Another interpretation comes from Oxford (2001, p.166), who defines LLS as “operations employed by the learner to aid the acquisition, storage, retrieval and use of information, specific actions taken by the learner to make learning easier, faster, more enjoyable, more self-directed, more effective and more transferable to new situations”. Oxford (1990, p.9) also proposes a list of twelve key features involving LLS, claiming that they:

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.

Among the features above, the tenth argument, which notes that strategies are able to be instructed to language learners, makes it particularly worthwhile for language practitioners to study this issue further so that appropriate strategy instructions may be provided to students to enhance their learning.

### **2.2.2 The Main Studies in LLS Field**

Rubin (1975) is one of the earliest researchers directing attention from teaching methods and materials to a more learner-centred aspect, assuming that successful learners tend to operate a range of strategies in their learning process which might be made available to help underachieved learners. Rubin points out that the good language learner:

1. is a willing and accurate guesser;
2. has a strong drive to communicate;
3. is uninhibited and willing to make mistakes;
4. focuses on form by looking at patterns and using analysis;
5. takes advantage of all practice opportunities;
6. monitors his or her own speech and that of others;
7. pays attention to meaning. (cited Oxford 2001, p.169)

Afterwards, Rubin (1981) presents a more detailed classification about LLS based upon extensive data collection, such as observations, interviews, analysis of self-reports, and daily journals of a group of students. Two primary categories are identified, one of which directly affects learning and the other indirectly. The first category consists of clarification/verification, monitoring, memorization, guessing/inductive inferencing, deductive reasoning, and practice. The second group includes creating opportunities for practice and production tricks.

Naiman *et al.* (1978) report their large-scale 'Good Language Learner' (GLL) study based upon an investigation of secondary school students learning French in English-speaking Canada. An inventory of five general strategies and related

techniques is proposed, suggesting that good language learners:

1. actively involve themselves in the language learning process by identifying and seeking preferred learning environments and exploring them;
2. develop an awareness of language as a system;
3. develop an awareness of language as a means of communication and interaction;
4. accept and cope with the affective demands of L2;
5. extend and revise L2 system by inferencing and monitoring.

(Rubin 1987, p.20)

Although this work has been criticized for some reasons, such as the identified strategies being a list refined from general psychology, instead of being reported spontaneously by the respondents, this Canadian study has played a part in giving rise to many research questions which several studies conducted in the 1980s continued to pursue (McDonough 1995).

One thing to note is that although these earlier studies on LLS pave the way to subsequent development of definitions and classifications in this field, they are not grounded in rigorous theories of second language acquisition or cognition. To address this problem, O'Malley and Chamot (1990) refer to Anderson's (1983, 1985) information processing theory of cognition and memory as the foundation for relating learning strategies to cognitive processes. In his model, Anderson makes a distinction between *declarative knowledge* and *procedural knowledge*. The former refers to all of the things we know about, such as the definitions of words, facts, and rules, while the latter involves the things we know how to do, such as language comprehension, and language production. To make one skill move on from rule-bound declarative knowledge to the more automatic proceduralized stage, it is argued that learners will go through three stages in the production system of all complex cognitive skills: the cognitive stage, the associative stage, and the autonomous stage (O'Malley & Chamot 1990).

With Anderson's cognitive theory being applied to the case of second language acquisition, learning strategies are subsumed into procedural knowledge which can be acquired through the above three stages. Within the cognitive theory framework, O'Malley and Chamot (1990) compose a list of strategies divided into three categories — metacognitive, cognitive, and social-affective — by means of large-scale studies conducted in the mid-1980s, involving mostly EFL students. In general, metacognitive strategies concern “thinking about language or the learning process” and “act less on language itself than knowledge about processing language” (Grenfell & Harris 1999, p.45), some examples of which are preplanning a linguistic task, monitoring while it is being carried out, and checking the outcomes of one's own language learning against a standard after it has been completed. Cognitive strategies involve “mental engagement with language in materials or tasks in order to develop understanding and hence learning” (Grenfell & Harris 1999, p.44). In other words, cognitive strategies “act on language in the acquisition process and may be specifically involved in production of language” (Grenfell & Harris 1999, p.44-45). Examples of cognitive strategies are guessing meanings of some unknown words on the basis of contextual clues, or using imagery and repetition to facilitate memorization. The last group of strategies, the social-affective strategies, refer to “the strategies involved in social contexts—for example, cooperation or asking for clarification—or control over the emotion and affection necessarily implicated in learning a foreign language” (Grenfell & Harris 1999, p.45). Each of the three main categories encompasses a range of strategies and thus can be described in a more detailed classification scheme. It may be said that the work by O'Malley and Chamot has contributed to a theory-based element of LLS in second language acquisition and presented substantial evidence of learners' active role in language learning.

## **2.3 Vocabulary Learning Strategies (VLS)**

### **2.3.1 Key Previous Studies on VLS**

In the process of investigating and classifying LLS, some studies indirectly involve the strategies specifically applicable to vocabulary learning. Nevertheless, studies on VLS in the early stage tend to focus on a limited number of strategies, such as guessing from context (Huckin *et al.* 1993) and certain mnemonics like the Keyword Method (Pressley *et al.* 1982). More thorough and in-depth studies which look at VLS as a group are in need to contribute to a more comprehensive taxonomy of VLS (Schmitt 1997).

A large-scale study on Chinese university learners' VLS was carried out by Gu and Johnson (1996). 850 sophomore non-English majors participated in the survey by filling out a questionnaire composed of three sections: Personal Data, Beliefs about Vocabulary Learning, and Vocabulary Learning Strategies. Researchers correlated responses to the questionnaire with results on a vocabulary size test and a general English proficiency measure. It was found that there were significant positive correlations between the two metacognitive strategies (Self-Initiation and Selective Attention) and the two test scores, whereas mnemonic devices (e.g. imagery, visual associations, and auditory associations), semantic encoding strategies, and word list learning probably correlated highly with vocabulary size, but not with general English proficiency. In a multiple regression analysis, the two metacognitive strategies also emerged as positive predictors of both general English proficiency and vocabulary size. Nevertheless, the second best predictor of vocabulary size, namely Dictionary Looking-Up strategies, did not rank comparably high as a predictor of general English proficiency. Likewise, variables such as extracurricular time spent on English, intentional activation of new words learned, and semantic encoding, seemed to play a role in predicting vocabulary size but not in overall English proficiency. The findings

suggest that “students would benefit more if they aimed at learning the language skills rather than just remembering English equivalents of all Chinese words” (Gu and Johnson 1996, p. 659). Another point to be noted in the study is that Visual Repetition and Imagery Encoding were both strong negative predictors of vocabulary size and English proficiency, implying that learners probably should not depend too much on visual repetition or fanciful imagery techniques when committing words into memory. Nation (2001) states that Gu and Johnson’s comprehensive study reveals some messages for teachers and learners, three of which are as follows:

1. Some of the strongest correlations in the study involved learners making decisions about what vocabulary was important for them. Relating learning to personal needs and goals is at the centre of taking responsibility for learning.
2. Memorization is only useful if it is one of a wide range of actively used strategies. It should not be the major means of learning.
3. There is a wide range of strategy options to draw on, and learners draw on these with varied success and skill. Learners could benefit from being made aware of these strategies, how to use them well, and how to choose between them. (Nation 2001, p.227)

Another large-scale survey on VLS was conducted by Schmitt (1997), who investigated 600 Japanese learners from four different age levels — junior high school students, high school students, university students and adult learners. Schmitt also implemented a questionnaire to gather information about what VLS were used and how useful they were rated. A strong affinity for the bilingual dictionary was revealed in the study, with 85% of the sample giving a positive response to the use of a bilingual dictionary to discover word meaning. The second and third most-used strategies were verbal repetition and written repetition, probably owing to the fact that vocabulary is presented via word lists in the materials and in Japanese school contexts students are required to memorize English grammar and vocabulary usually through repetition. However, these two strategies did not correlate high with English proficiency or vocabulary size in Gu and Johnson’s (1996) study, suggesting that learners could

benefit from training on strategy option and use (Nation 2001). Bilingual dictionary use also came first in the helpfulness evaluation results. The other five helpful strategies overlapping with the top ten most-used ones were 'written repetition', 'verbal repetition', 'say a new word aloud', 'study a word's spelling', and 'take notes in class'. On the other hand, four strategies ('study synonyms and antonyms', 'continue to study over time', 'ask teacher for paraphrase', and 'use pictures/gestures to understand meaning') were rated high in terms of helpfulness but not used relatively frequently by these learners, probably implying that "learners can see value in strategies which they do not currently use" and "may be willing to try new strategies if they are introduced to and instructed in them" (Schmitt 1997, p.221).

### **2.3.2 The Classification System for VLS**

A complete inventory of VLS will be conducive to pertinent studies in this area. However, just as Skehan (1989) argues, the field of learner strategies is still in an early stage of development. His remark is particularly applicable to VLS in that a comprehensive list or taxonomy of strategies in this specific area is not present (Schmitt 1997). In order to address this gap, Schmitt (1997) attempted to propose as exhaustive a list of VLS as possible and classify them based on one of the current descriptive systems. He primarily referred to Oxford's(1990) classification scheme and adopted four strategy groups (Social, Memory, Cognitive, and Metacognitive) which seemed best able to illustrate the wide variety of VLS. Social strategies involve learners using interaction with other people to facilitate their learning. Memory strategies consist of those approaches helping relate new materials to existing knowledge system. Skills which require "manipulation or transformation of the target language by the learner" (Oxford 1990, p.43) fall into the Cognitive strategies. Lastly, Metacognitive strategies "involve a conscious overview of the learning process and making decisions about

planning, monitoring, or evaluating the best way to study” (Schmitt 1997, p.205).

Since Oxford’s system deals with LLS in general and thus seems not to be able to cover certain specific strategies used in vocabulary learning, Schmitt created a new category for those strategies learners employ when discovering a new word’s meaning without consulting other people, namely Determination Strategies. In addition, a helpful distinction suggested by Cook and Mayer (1983) and Nation (1990) was incorporated into Schmitt’s classification scheme. That is, in terms of the process involved in vocabulary learning, strategies may be divided into two groups: (a) those for the discovery of a new word’s meaning and (b) those for consolidating a word once it has been encountered. Table 2.1 better illustrates the complete classification scheme proposed by Schmitt.

**Table 2.1** A taxonomy of vocabulary learning strategies

Vocabulary Learning Strategies (VLS)	Discovery strategies	Determination strategies
		Social strategies
	Consolidation strategies	Social strategies
		Memory strategies
		Cognitive strategies
		Metacognitive strategies

**2.3.3 Discovery Strategies**

Discovery strategies include several determination strategies and social strategies. A learner may discover a new word’s meaning through guessing from context, guessing from an L1 cognate, using reference materials (mainly a dictionary), or asking someone else (e.g. their teacher or classmates). There is a natural sense that almost all of the strategies applied to discovery activities could be used as consolidation strategies in the later stage of vocabulary learning (Schmitt 1997).

**2.3.3.1 Guessing through Context**

Nation (2001, p.232) maintains that “incidental learning via guessing from context is

the most important of all sources of vocabulary learning”. Over the past two decades, this strategy has been greatly promoted since it seems to “fit in more comfortably with the communicative approach than other, more discrete, Discovery Strategies” (Schmitt 1997, p.209). Context tends to be more interpreted as simply textual context. Nevertheless, some other important sources of information should also be taken into account when guessing, such as knowledge of the subject being read, or knowledge of the conceptual structure of the topic. In Liu and Nation’s (1985, cited Nation 2001) study, it is found that a minimum requirement for the guessing to happen is that 95% of the running words are already familiar to the learner. Clarke and Nation (1980, cited Nation 2001) present an inductive five-step approach to guess, including:

Step 1. Find the part of speech of the unknown word.

Step 2. Look at the immediate context of the unknown word and simplify this context if necessary.

Step 3. Look at the wider context of the unknown word. This means looking at the relationship between the clause containing the unknown word and surrounding clauses and sentences.

Step 4. Guess.

Step 5. Check the guess.

There are several ways to check the guess:

1. Check that the part of speech of the guess is the same as the part of speech of the unknown word.
2. Break the unknown word into parts and see if the meaning of the parts relate to the guess.
3. Substitute the guess for the unknown word. Does it make sense in context?
4. Look in a dictionary. (Nation & Coady 1988, p.104-105)

It must be noted here that the use of the word form comes after the context clues have been used. Some studies (e.g. Laufer & Sim 1985, cited Nation 2001) have suggested that learners made wrong guesses probably due to their heavy reliance on word form.

When learners make an incorrect guess based on word-part analysis, they may twist their interpretation of the context to support the incorrect guess. Thus, the most difficult part of the guessing strategy is to make learners delay using word form clues until after using contextual information (Nation 2001).

#### 2.3.3.2 Dictionary Use

Reference materials, primarily a dictionary, can be used in a receptive or a productive skill in language learning. However, since we likely have insufficient time to consult a dictionary during the process of speaking and listening, more look-up work happens during reading and writing. A common situation is that, for example, when a learner meets an unknown word in the text and fails to infer the meaning through context, they might be advised to consult a dictionary. Looking up a word in a dictionary is “far from performing a purely mechanical operation” (Scholfield 1982, p.185); instead, a proficient dictionary user “is often required to formulate and pursue several hypotheses and make use of prior knowledge of various sorts, especially information derived from context” (Scholfield 1982, p.185). Except for locating the unknown word in the alphabetic list, which seems to be the skill most dealt with in respect of training dictionary use, other important facets involving effective dictionary use receive little attention (Scholfield 1982). Since many lexical items in a language have more than one meaning, learners should be instructed how to reduce multiple options by elimination. Scanning all of the definitions in the entry before deciding which is the one that fits is a good idea proposed by Underhill (1980). After choosing a seemingly reasonable sense from the definitions in the entry, a user then needs to “understand the definition and integrate it into the context where the unknown was met” (Scholfield 1982, p.190). The most sophisticated parts involving dictionary use arise when none of the senses in the entry seems to fit the context or more than one fits. In these

situations, a user may need to infer a meaning that comes from the senses in the entry or “seek further contextual clues in the source text to disambiguate” (Scholfield 1982, p.193). Each of the above skills may be practiced separately through well-designed activities and only in this way can effective dictionary use be maximized and misunderstanding minimized.

#### 2.3.3.3 Word Part Analysis

A large number of English words have derivational forms by adding prefixes or suffixes to the word base. Some studies (e.g. White *et al.* 1989; Bauer and Nation 1993) have confirmed the frequent, widespread occurrence of derivational affixes, which makes it worthwhile learning word parts from the point of view of cost/benefit analysis. Nation (2001, p.264) contends that:

A knowledge of affixes and roots has two values for a learner of English: it can be used to help the learning of unfamiliar words by relating these words to known words or to known prefixes and suffixes, and it can be used as a way of checking whether an unfamiliar word has been successfully guessed from context.

The danger of using word part analysis as clues when guessing an unknown word has been mentioned in the previous discussion. Nevertheless, if used properly, this strategy will help the learning of thousands of English words, including high-frequency and low-frequency words, especially academic vocabulary (Nation 2001). The word part strategy involves two steps. Firstly, learners need to be able to recognize prefixes and suffixes so that they may break the unknown word into parts. Secondly, they need to relate the meaning of the word parts to the dictionary meaning of the word. To achieve this goal, learners have to know the meanings of the common word parts and “to be able to re-express the dictionary definition of a word to include the meaning of its prefix and, if possible, its stem and suffix” (Nation 2001, p.278).

## **2.3.4 Consolidation Strategies**

### **2.3.4.1 Memorization Strategies**

In general, memorization strategies refer to those involving making connections between the to-be-learned word and some previously learned knowledge, using some form of imagery or grouping. It is held that “the kind of elaborative mental processing that the Depth of Processing Hypothesis ( Craik & Lockhart 1972; Craik & Tulving 1975) suggests is necessary for long-term retention” (Schmitt 1997, p.213). Thus, memorization strategies play an important role in helping learners to commit new words into memory and in the whole process of vocabulary learning. Schmitt includes twenty-seven memorization strategies in his 58-item VLS taxonomy. Examples of memorization strategies contain “study word with a pictorial representation of its meaning”, “associate the word with its coordinates”, “use semantic maps”, “group words together within a storyline”, “study the spelling of a word”, “use Keyword Method”, or “use physical action when learning a word”, etc. Among the numerous mnemonics, the Keyword Method is also one of three strategies Nation (1990) proposes to apply when dealing with low-frequency words. This technique involves a learner finding a L1 word which sounds like the target L2 word and creating an image combining the two concepts. A number of studies (e.g. Pressley *et al.* 1982) have indicated that the Keyword method is an effective method of improving word retrieval.

### **2.3.4.2 Cognitive Strategies**

In Schmitt’s VLS taxonomy, cognitive strategies primarily refer to written and verbal repetition as well as some mechanical means involving vocabulary learning. Although repetition as a learning strategy is not much praised by those supporting the Depth of Processing Hypothesis, it is popular among learners and may help them achieve high levels of proficiency (Schmitt 1997). In Schmitt’s study, for example, up to 76% of

Japanese learners reported they used verbal and written repetition as consolidation strategies, making them the second and third most-used strategies separately. Other cognitive strategies involve using some kind of study aids, such as taking notes in class, taping L2 labels onto their respective physical objects, or making a tape recording of word lists and studying by listening. Vocabulary notebooks are also recommended by numerous scholars (e.g. Gairns and Redman 1986; Schmitt and Schmitt 1995; Fowle 2002) to be implemented by learners to facilitate vocabulary acquisition.

#### 2.3.4.3 Metacognitive Strategies

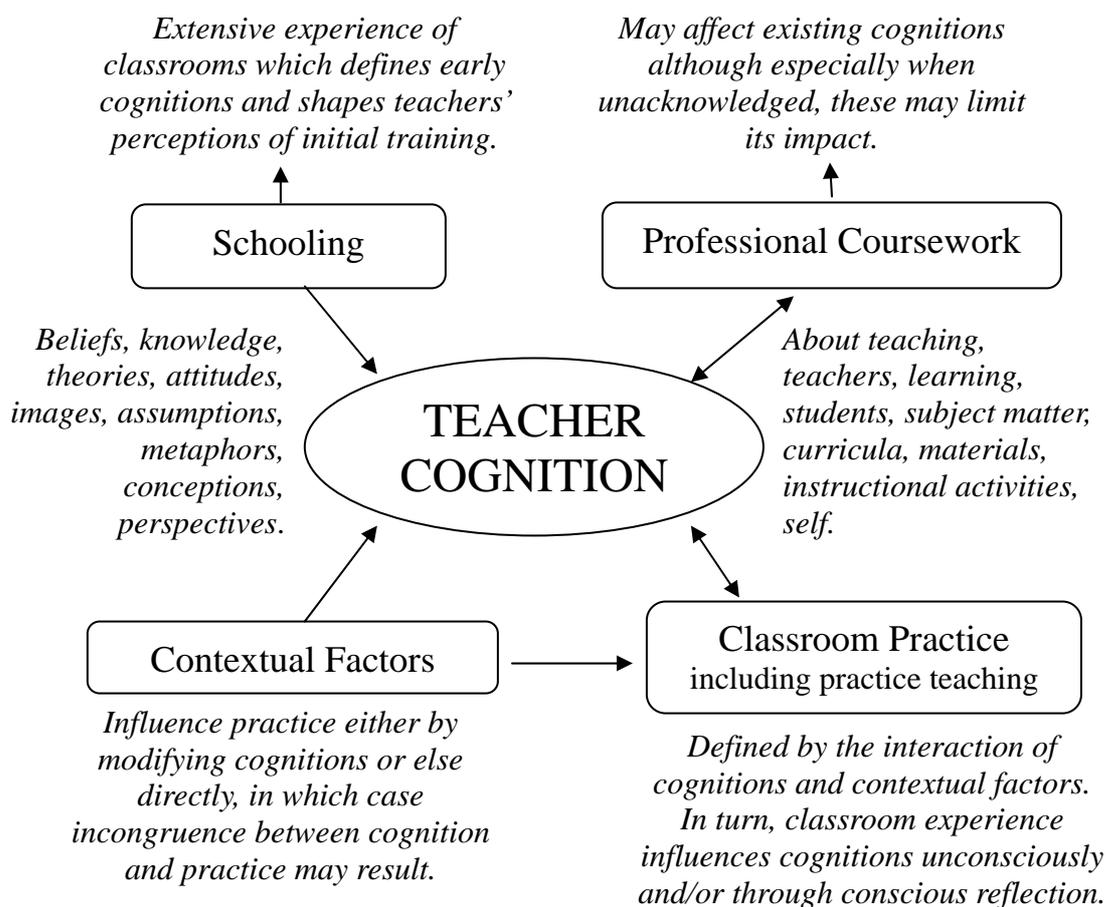
The study by Gu and Johnson (1996) has found that metacognitive strategies are positive predictors of vocabulary size and general English proficiency, showing the significant role the metacognitive strategies play in language learning. Thus, a need is seen to train students to control and evaluate their own learning through various ways, such as using spaced word practice, continuing to study word over time, or self-testing, all of which are included in Schmitt's taxonomy. In this way, learners will take more responsibility for their studies and overall learning effect may be improved. Another important strategy in this group involves the decision to skip or pass a new word when it is judged to be a low frequency one which may not be met again for a long time. The fact that even a native speaker only knows a portion of the huge amount of words in a language suggests that an efficient L2 learner is supposed to spend their time and efforts on those words most relevant and useful to them.

## **2.4 Teachers' Beliefs and Practices**

### **2.4.1 The Nature of Teachers' Beliefs**

Although over the past two decades mainstream educational research has recognized the influence of teacher cognition on teachers' professional lives, in the field of language

teaching, however, scholars did not endeavor to explore the impact of teachers' cognitive dimensions on their language instruction until the 1990s (Borg 2003). According to Calderhead (1987), interest in teachers' thinking was aroused against behavioral oriented views of teaching in the 1970s, during which period teaching was viewed as "the mastering of a series of effective teaching behaviours" (p.5, cited Richards 1998). Nowadays, teaching is more characterized as a "thinking activity" (Richards 1998, p.65) and "a common concern with the ways in which knowledge is actively acquired and used by teachers and the circumstances that affect its acquisition and employment" (Calderhead 1987, p.5 cited Richards 1998). Therefore, it is now commonly held that "teachers are active, thinking decision-makers who make instructional choices by drawing on complex, practically-oriented, personalised, and context-sensitive networks of knowledge, thought, and beliefs" (Borg 2003, p.81). To give a general idea about the nature of teacher cognition and its relationship with teacher learning and classroom practice, Borg (1997, cited Borg 2003) presents the following figure as a brief illustration.



It must be noted here that when discussing *teacher cognition* in the preceding figure, Borg (2003) is indeed referring to *teachers' beliefs* since he defines teacher cognition as “unobservable cognitive dimension of teaching – what teachers know, believe, and think” (p.81). Richards (1998, p.66) see teachers' belief systems as “the information, attitudes, values, expectations, theories, and assumptions about teaching and learning that teachers build up over time and bring with them to the classroom”. In other words, teachers' beliefs generally “refer to teachers' pedagogical beliefs, or those beliefs of relevance to an individual's teaching” (Borg 2001, p.186), and they are acquired through what Lortie (1975 cited Johnson 1994) called the “apprenticeship of observation”, or the “vivid memories of 10,000 hours in classrooms that help new teachers determine what they want to be and do in teaching” (p.160). As a result, teachers' beliefs are well formed by the time students receive training in the teacher education. Since teachers' beliefs are a substructure of an individual's overall belief systems, a better understanding of the nature of teachers' beliefs is made possible with reference to the studies on beliefs from cognitive psychology research (e.g. Rokeach, 1968; Nisbett & Ross 1980; Nespor 1987). For example, Rokeach (1968) argued that all beliefs have a cognitive, an affective, and a behavioral component, suggesting that beliefs have an evaluative aspect and influence individuals' perception and action. In addition, a review of research leads Pajares (1992, p.324) to contend that “beliefs are formed early and tend to self-perpetuate, persevering even against contradictions caused by reason, time, schooling, or experience”. Individuals' behaviors are greatly affected by their beliefs, and “the earlier a belief is incorporated into the belief structure, the more difficult it is to alter” (Pajares 1992, p.325). Based on the above generalizations, it may be argued that “when teachers enter professional development programs at either

the pre-service or the in-service level, they bring with them an accumulation of experiences that manifest themselves in beliefs that tend to be quite stable and rather resistant to change” (Johnson 1999, p. 30). Teachers’ beliefs act as a filter through which new information is interpreted and influence the way teachers react and respond to what happens in the classroom.

#### **2.4.2 Research on Teachers’ Beliefs and Teaching Practices**

A number of studies have attempted to examine the extent to which teachers’ beliefs influence their classroom practices. Findings from the mainstream research collectively suggest that language teachers’ instructional practices are affected by a wide range of interacting and often conflicting factors. Although teachers’ beliefs are consistently recognized to have a powerful influence on their instructional practices, they do not always reflect teachers’ stated beliefs, personal theories, and pedagogical principles (Borg 2003).

##### **2.4.2.1 Correspondence between Beliefs and Practices**

In a study on the relationship between thirty ESL teachers’ beliefs and practices during literacy instruction, Johnson (1992 cited Richards 1998) identified three different methodological positions among these teachers: a skills-based approach, which views language as being composed of four discrete language skills; a rules-based approach, which views language as a process of creative manipulation of grammar rules; and a function-based approach, which focuses on the communicative ability in real-life contexts. The majority of the teachers in the study were found to hold beliefs which consistently reflected one of these approaches and perform their instructional practices conforming to the corresponding theoretical orientation. Woods (1991 cited Richards 1998) conducted a longitudinal study of two ESL teachers with different approaches to

teaching, one of which was “curriculum-based” while the other “student-based”. The teacher with the curriculum-based view tended to implement classroom activities primarily according to what is organized in the curriculum. On the other hand, the teacher with the student-based view took account of factors principally concerning the particular group of learners in the particular context when making decisions during instructional practices. Woods found that “the decisions made in planning and carrying out the course were internally consistent, and consistent with deeper underlying assumptions and beliefs about language, learning and teaching” (p. 4). The above two studies have positively demonstrated the influence of teachers’ beliefs on their practices.

#### 2.4.2.2 Discrepancy between Beliefs and Practices

Although some studies have produced evidence to illustrate the correspondence between teachers’ beliefs and their teaching practices, still a large amount of research has indicated the inconsistency between them. Yim (1993 cited Richards 1998), for example, investigated ESL teachers in Singapore about their perceptions of the place of grammar and their classroom practices. It was found that those teachers tended to implement more exam-based and structured grammar activities which did not much reflect their stated beliefs toward a communicative orientation. After a review of research, Borg (2003) comments that factors such as parents, principals’ requirements, the school, society, curriculum mandates, classroom and school layout, school policies, colleagues, standardised tests and the availability of resources may hinder language teachers’ ability to carry out instructional practices reflecting their beliefs. Further evidence of how the context might conflict with beliefs comes from Richards & Pennington’s (1998) study of teachers in their first year of teaching in Hong Kong. All the teachers studied received training toward a communicative approach in their

pre-service education. However, their classroom practices did not reflect the principles they were trained to follow. Factors like large classes, unmotivated students, examination pressures, a set syllabus, pressure to conform from more experienced teachers, students' limited proficiency in English, students' resistance to new ways of learning, and heavy workloads were mentioned to account for the discrepancy. The researchers then conclude that:

Such factors discourage experimentation and innovation, and encourage a 'safe' strategy of sticking close to prescribed materials and familiar teaching approaches. Without any relief from these factors and without any reward for innovating in the face of them, the teachers would naturally be led back toward a conservative teaching approach to align themselves with the characteristics of the existing teaching context. (p. 187–88)

Another example is provided by Chang & Huang (2001 cited Nien 2002), who investigated the relationship between teachers' beliefs about Communicative Language Teaching (CLT) and their teaching practices. The study was conducted in Taiwan among 119 English teachers from Taipei public senior high schools. The subject was requested to evaluate current English teaching context and express their beliefs in CLT by filling in a questionnaire. The findings have shown that these teachers still adopted the more traditional teacher-centred and lecture-type approach in their classroom practices whereas they held positive beliefs toward CLT. The discrepancy was also attributable to some contextual factors mentioned previously, such as large classes and inadequacy of school facilities. Lack of opportunities to receive in-service training was another impediment in performing their ideal instructional practices.

Studies on pre-service or novice teachers' beliefs and practices have also shed light on our understanding in this area. After examining four ESL pre-service teachers' emerging beliefs and instructional practices, Johnson (1994) maintains that lack of alternative images of teachers and teaching to act as a model seems to primarily account for these pre-service teachers' difficulty in changing their behaviours. Richards (1998) thus proposes to incorporate case materials from expert teachers, either in written or

videotaped form, into the second language teacher education to help novice teachers develop more pedagogical reasoning skills.

## CHAPTER 3 METHODOLOGY

### 3.1 Objectives

The aim of the survey is to seek answers to the following questions:

1. In what aspects are Taiwanese English teachers in senior high schools aware of vocabulary learning strategies based on personal learning experience?
2. What vocabulary learning strategies are popular with Taiwanese English teachers in senior high schools in terms of personal choices (as students themselves) on the one hand, and pedagogically (as teachers) on the other?
3. Do Taiwanese English teachers in senior high schools teach vocabulary learning strategies they consider useful to their students? Why or why not?

### 3.2 Subjects

The twenty teachers involved in this survey were all in-service English teachers in senior high schools in Taiwan. To provide a more thorough description about the background information of the subjects, firstly I included some introduction about the senior high school teaching context in Taiwan.

#### 3.2.1 General Background

Generally speaking, English is an obligatory subject since students start their secondary education at age thirteen.<sup>1</sup> According to the curriculum standards issued by the MOE (Ministry of Education), after finishing three-year study in the first stage of secondary schooling, i.e. junior high school, students are expected to have acquired a repertoire of approximately 1,000 most common words in English. \_\_\_\_\_

<sup>1</sup> In Taiwan, some counties have announced that elementary school students start English learning in the third grade.

During the following stage, i.e. senior high school education, students are required to learn a much larger amount of vocabulary. A list of 6,480 English words is compiled by a group of scholars in collaboration with in-service teachers and announced by the CEEC (College Entrance Examination Center) as test specification for teachers' and students' reference in preparation for the college entrance exam. Words comprised in the list are further classified into six levels based upon their frequency. When commercial publishers compile textbooks for the use of senior high school students, words selected to be learned in each grade are supposed to follow the principle that the more frequent a word is, the earlier it is presented in the textbook. With an average of 40 new words per unit in a twelve-unit volume finished within a four-month semester, totally around 2,800 new words are included in the six volumes of English textbooks. The preceding statements help to explain the fact that even though a senior high school graduate has mastered all the vocabulary covered in the textbooks they study, still more words, especially those items with lower frequency in the officially-announced word list, are surely to appear in the English test of the entrance examination. As a result, with an aim to preparing students for the entrance exam adequately, teachers are inclined to encourage their students to learn as many words in the word list as possible. In addition to the textbooks, students may be required to read English newspapers or magazines as supplementary reading materials, depending on individual teacher's instructions or school policy. In short, there is a folklore belief among teachers that a positive relationship exists between vocabulary size/knowledge and reading ability. The more words students have at their disposal, the better performance they will achieve in the English test, which is predominantly composed of reading comprehension tests.

Following the above statements about textbook compilation, one thing to note is that although different publishers pick up slightly different selections of words to introduce in their series of textbooks, all to-be-learned words are conventionally

presented after the reading text in a bilingual word list with at least one example sentence and some of them accompanied by derivatives also with example sentences (see Appendix 1). Based upon my observation of how my students learn new words in a unit, I would say that many of them see vocabulary learning as merely committing new words to memory with the help of the bilingual word list and by rote learning, and they tend to face great difficulty in associating the meanings of the target words with their form and sound.

### 3.2.2 Personal Background

The participants in this survey were twenty senior high school EFL teachers in Taiwan based on convenience sampling. Their teaching experience in senior high schools ranged from one year to eighteen years, as shown in the following table.

**Table 3.1** Participants' background information: years of teaching

Year(s) of teaching	Frequency	Percentage (%)	Cumulative percent (%)
1	3	15	15
2	4	20	35
3	3	15	50
5	5	25	75
6	2	10	85
7	1	5	90
8	1	5	95
18	1	5	100
Total	20	100	

Among the twenty subjects, nine of them gave a positive response to the enquiry about their experience of receiving training on how to teach vocabulary learning strategies, whereas other ten teachers gave a negative response. One subject did not answer the question. Moreover, three teachers of the positive-response group specified

that they received training from teacher preparatory education or in-service workshop. Other three teachers gained the relevant knowledge by self-study from TESOL books or journals and the others did not indicate their training sources.

### **3.3 Instrument**

To collect data for my survey on these teachers' awareness, beliefs and practices on vocabulary learning strategies, a questionnaire was developed and implemented (see Appendix 2). The adoption of a questionnaire as a tool for data collection in studies on beliefs is a common practice in relevant literature (e.g. Horwitz 1985; Peacock 2001). In addition, questionnaires are generally used in collecting data from respondents about behavioral questions such as what they are doing or have done in the past (Dörnyei 2003).

#### **3.3.1 Questionnaire as a Tool for Data Collection**

In second language research, the use of questionnaires is one of the most often employed tools to collect data and information. The high popularity and main attraction of the use of questionnaires are probably due to the argument that "by administering a questionnaire to a group of people, one can collect a huge amount of information in less than an hour, and the personal investment required will be a fraction of what would have been needed for, say, interviewing the same number of people" (Dörnyei 2003, p.9). In addition, if constructed properly, the data collected from questionnaires may be processed efficiently and relatively straightforwardly, especially with the help of modern computers and sophisticated word processing software. Another feature of a questionnaire is its anonymity, which may contribute to elicitation of more candid answers from the respondent. Nevertheless, the seeming ease of the construction of a questionnaire causes some people to underestimate the difficulty

involving the practice of questionnaire design and thus probably leads to insufficient reliability and validity in the collected data. Another potential problem with a questionnaire is its suitability as a tool to probing into an issue with satisfactory profoundness since the wording of the questions is kept as simple and straightforward as possible to be easily understood by respondents (Dörnyei 2003). Awareness of the potential disadvantages of the use of questionnaires led me to include some open-ended questions for respondents to freely express their ideas without the constraints of fixed options. In this way, the questionnaire might be able to “provide a far greater ‘richness’ than fully quantitative data” (Dörnyei 2003, p.47).

### **3.3.2 Rationale for Questionnaire Design**

The items included in the questionnaire were based upon relevant literature review discussed in chapter two, mainly the taxonomy of vocabulary learning strategies compiled by Schmitt (1997), as well as consideration for the English learning and teaching context in senior high schools in Taiwan. The fact that senior high school students unavoidably encounter a number of low-frequency words during their study highlights the three learner strategies proposed by Nation (1990) — guessing words from context, mnemonic techniques, and word parts. As a result, compared to other strategies, these three main vocabulary learning strategies were dealt with more extensively in the framework of my questionnaire. More details on this part were presented later in this section.

Although it is conventionally advised to set open-ended questions near the end of the questionnaire rather than at the beginning in case the required time and efforts can put some respondents off, I listed several open-ended questions in the first part (i.e. Part A: Q1 to Q6) preceding those closed-ended entries due to the following reasons. Firstly, I hoped respondents would report their experiences or ideas based on their

personal reflections without being affected or guided by those vocabulary learning strategies described later in closed-ended items. If this was the case, even though respondents only shared a limited range of methods or strategies helpful to their vocabulary learning in the first question, what was mentioned in their answers might be those used more frequently or of more significance. Secondly, Dörnyei (2003) suggests that the open-ended questions placed at the end of a questionnaire are those requiring substantial and creative writing. However, in my questionnaire, what I would like to obtain was some genuine accounts from those respondents of their personal learning preferences as well as their ordinary practices of vocabulary teaching. These questions seemed not to involve much *creative* writing. Lastly, some entries (e.g. Q2; Q5; Q6) in this section were not typical open-ended questions. They were more like variations of filter questions accompanied with blanks to give explanation, which meant that not every respondent needed to go through each question and might reduce the negative consequences of open-ended questions set beforehand. Thus, it seemed to me that the content of these questions lent themselves to an initial position in the questionnaire rather than in the end.

In the following part, I elaborated on the relation between the items in the questionnaire and my research questions.

### **Part A: Question 1**

This question provided answers straightforwardly to the first research question: In what aspects are Taiwanese English teachers in senior high schools aware of vocabulary learning strategies based on personal learning experience?

### **Part A: Question 2-3**

Generally speaking, in Taiwanese senior high school teaching context, there is not a course particularly devoted to vocabulary teaching in the overall English curriculum. Therefore, teachers incline to teach vocabulary mainly by means of the resources

provided in the textbook. An investigation of teachers' implementation of some common features used in the textbook helped to reflect what they normally did in the practices of vocabulary teaching.

#### **Part A: Question 4-6**

It seems that any discussion concerning language teaching and learning cannot be complete without reference to the most popular tool in language acquisition — a dictionary. L2 learners are generally found to consult a bilingual dictionary more frequently (e.g. Laufer and Kimmel 1997; Schmitt 1997) despite the fact that a monolingual one is usually more promoted by language instructors. In addition, reference to a dictionary is an essential determination strategy in the taxonomy of VLS but the difficulty involved in the look-up process appears to be underestimated and little attention is paid to those aspects involved except searching for the unknown word in the alphabetic list (see 2.3.3.2). Thus, an investigation of which type of dictionary teachers recommended and whether they trained their students how to use it was an interesting issue to explore.

#### **Part B: Entry 1-30**

The thirty closed-ended questions were abstracted and adapted mainly from the taxonomy of VLS compiled by Schmitt (1997). Among the fifty-eight strategies in the taxonomy, I omitted social strategies in this questionnaire on the assumption that those behaviors mentioned within, such as 'ask teacher for an L1 translation' or 'ask classmates for meaning', are ordinary interactions in the language classroom in Taiwan. As a result, the removal of these social strategies in the questionnaire construction seemed not to affect my major intention and concern in the survey and would help keep the questionnaire within a reasonable length to increase response rate. Also, just as mentioned previously, many students tended to commit vocabulary into memory by rote learning with the help of the bilingual word list in the textbook and complained they

failed to remember words efficiently or effectively. This situation motivated me to focus more on what memory strategies teachers covered in their teaching practices, or whether teachers just left the memorization work to be done by learners themselves without giving them any guidance or advice. Therefore, I included fourteen memory strategies to collect data in this aspect. Among the memory strategies in Schmitt's taxonomy of VLS, some special mnemonics are included, such as Peg Method, Loci Method, and Keyword Method. However, I only listed Keyword Method in the questionnaire in that it is the most studied and discussed mnemonic technique in the field of VLS (see 2.3.1). Also, Keyword Method is among the three strategies Nation recommends teachers to instruct their learners to adopt when dealing with low-frequency words.

Concerning the cognitive and metacognitive strategies, I also omitted those that seemed to be routines in a Taiwanese senior high school teaching context, such as 'take notes in class', 'use the vocabulary section in your textbook' or 'continue to study word over time' based on the same reason mentioned above. I was particularly interested in finding out if teachers instructed their students to skip or pass an unknown word which seems inessential for adequate comprehension of a passage (Entry 20) since many students in Taiwan regard textbooks as 'bibles' which must be studied thoroughly to prepare well for the entrance examination. However, from a long-term perspective, learning to skip unimportant words wisely for more efficient reading seems to be of more significance.

Guessing from context is argued by Nation to be the most important of all sources of vocabulary learning (see 2.3.3.1). He also proposes a procedure of five steps to make an informed guess of an unknown word from context and cautions that the strategy of word part analysis should be left until the last step since using affixes and roots alone as a means of guessing meaning is not very reliable. Laufer's (1988, 1991)

study of synforms<sup>2</sup> shows that it is a common problem that learners may twist the interpretation of the context on the basis of what the word looks like. As a result, I designed two contrastive items (Entry 28 and 29) with an aim to finding which approach was more popular among teachers to see if their practices conformed to what research findings have suggested.

With respect to the rating scale employed in the questionnaire, two sets of scales were provided for respondents to evaluate each strategy firstly in terms of its usefulness and then the extent each strategy was included or introduced in the language classroom. The first group of choices were “Not at all useful,” “Slightly useful,” “Moderately useful,” “Useful,” “Quite Useful,” and “Very Useful.” These categories were assigned values of 1, 2, 3, 4, 5, and 6 respectively. This scale reflected respondents’ attitude/beliefs on these VLS. High scores indicated more agreement with the usefulness of the strategy. The second group of choices were “Never or almost never,” “Rarely or seldom,” “Sometimes,” “Often,” “Usually,” and “Always or almost always.” Similarly these categories were assigned numerical values to reflect respondents’ instructional practices, with the highest score representing the highest frequency of the strategy being included or introduced.

### **Part C: Follow-up question**

Some discrepancies were expected to appear among teachers’ beliefs and practices and thus a follow-up question was developed to probe into the reasons

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<sup>2</sup> In Laufer’s study, ‘synforms’ refer to similar lexical forms.

behind the inconsistency wherever involved.

### **Part D: Personal information**

Although it is common to see a questionnaire starting with a set of questions concerning personal information, I decided to place this section at the end of the

questionnaire based on the arguments by Oppenheim (1992), who notes that after going through the introductory phase, respondents are expecting some interesting questions dealing with the topic of the study, so the enquiries about personal information tend to be off-putting and lead to a kind of anticlimax in the respondents. Also, I avoided placing personal information questions in the beginning of the questionnaire in case that in Part A / Q2, the term 'vocabulary learning strategies' might not be readily interpretable before respondents go through the questionnaire.

### **3.4 Procedures**

Upon completion of my first draft of questionnaire, I made some minor alterations on wording based on a discussion with my supervisor. A major alteration came at the end part of the questionnaire by adding the follow-up open-ended question to explore the potential discrepancy between teachers' beliefs and their practices. Following the initial modification on my questionnaire, to pilot the item pool, collect feedback about how my questionnaire would work and whether it would perform the job that it was devised for, I sent the questionnaire to other three students who also studied in MA ELT at the University of Essex. One of them was very much similar to my target sample in that she had taught English in a senior high school in Taiwan for three years. Based on analysis of this piloting study and reactions of the subject, I modified the questionnaire in three aspects. Firstly, I divided the lengthy open-ended question concerning dictionary training into three shorter ones to make them clearer and easier to answer. Secondly, I rearranged the order of the close-ended items to make sure that easier questions were presented first before those complicated ones that might take respondents more time to contemplate and give answers. Lastly, I added the reference of rating scales on top of each page with closed-ended questions for the convenience of respondents. The second and third subjects involving the piloting study were two

Taiwanese junior high school English teachers, with three years' and ten years' teaching experience respectively. Even though they were not senior high school English teachers, they had basic understandings about the general teaching context since both junior high and senior high schools belonged to secondary education, as previously mentioned. Following the piloting study with these two subjects, I added a figure example to illustrate the sixth strategy in the closed-ended questions in case the wording 'semantic network' might cause confusion to some respondents. Moreover, I changed the wording in entry 13 from 'visualize' to 'imagine' to make the strategy description easier to interpret for respondents. After a final revision of the questionnaire, the survey was carried out in June 2005. Respondents involved in the study were required to complete the questionnaire when they were available without time limitation. The provision of the results of this survey was offered as an incentive to increase the willingness to respond to the questionnaire.

### **3.5 Analysis of the Data**

Statements made in the open-ended questions in Part A were summarized and tabulated wherever needed to provide answers to the research questions from a qualitative perspective. By means of SPSS, descriptive statistics (mean scores and standard deviations) as well as Pearson's correlation coefficients were computed for the data collected from the closed-ended items in Part B as quantitative evidence to the second and the former part of the third research questions. Two ranking lists, one of the usefulness of the strategies and the other the frequency of practice, were also encompassed as an overview of the comparison between teachers' beliefs and practices on VLS. Feedback collected from the follow-up question was summed up to provide answers to the latter part of the third research question.



## **CHAPTER 4 RESULTS & ANALYSIS**

This chapter presents the findings of the survey following the classification in the questionnaire. The first section compiles the reports obtained from the open-ended questions in Part A. The second section looks at the descriptive statistic results of the close-ended entries, followed by a summary of the responses from Part C.

### **4.1 Self-Reported VLS & Vocabulary Teaching Practices**

As Table 4.1 shows, the teachers involved in the survey reported a variety of approaches they considered helpful to their vocabulary learning based on personal experience. The statements were arranged in descending order of total report frequency for ease of reference. Two participants did not reply to the first question in Part A. Among the twenty-four entries reported by the other eighteen teachers, four strategies were mentioned most frequently — read a word repeatedly, write a word repeatedly, extensive reading, and consult a dictionary (each was brought up by five respondents). The next two most popular strategies were learning words in context and studying prefix/suffix in a word (each was mentioned by four respondents). Listening to words repeatedly and studying a word with its synonyms and antonyms were also considered conducive to vocabulary learning, separately referred to by three respondents. The other sixteen strategies, such as studying a word with a corresponding picture or implementing a vocabulary notebook, although mentioned by only one or two participants, also played a part in facilitating vocabulary learning among the teachers studied.

**Table 4.1** Participants' self-reported vocabulary learning methods or strategies

Statement	Frequency
1. Read a word repeatedly.	5
2. Write a word repeatedly.	5
3. Extensive reading (e.g. newspaper/magazines).	5
4. Learn words by consulting a dictionary.	5
5. Learn words in context.	4
6. Word analysis (i.e. study prefix/suffix).	4
7. Listen to a word repeatedly.	3
8. Study a word with its synonyms and antonyms.	3
9. Make a sentence to study a word.	2
10. Use pictures to learn a word.	2
11. Study the relation between spelling and pronunciation of a word.	2
12. Guess words in context.	2
13. Do a number of vocabulary exercises.	2
14. Study a word with other lexical items with similar pronunciation.	2
15. Deliberately study a vocabulary book.	2
16. Build oneself's word bank in notebooks.	2
17. Use physical action.	1
18. Watch movies.	1
19. Study a word with other lexical items of a relevant topic.	1
20. Use words in real-life situation.	1
21. Self-testing.	1
22. Study a word with other lexical items with similar form/spelling.	1
23. Use mnemonics to remember a word.	1
24. Use physical objects to help vocabulary learning.	1
Total	58

With respect to the implementation of different features in the textbook, participants presented various responses in their teaching practices (see Table 4.2). While up to 95% of the teachers in the survey claimed they made use of the word list in the textbook when teaching vocabulary, the majority in this group did not employ the gloss or supplementary tapes/CDs which record an audio version of the word list in their vocabulary teaching practices.

**Table 4.2** Frequency of implementation of five common features in the textbook

Feature	Frequency		Percentage (%)	
	Implemented	Unimplemented	Implemented	Unimplemented
1. Gloss	2	18	10	90
2. Word list	19	1	95	5
3. Prefix/suffix	11	9	55	45
4. Related words	8	12	40	60
5. Tapes/CDs	6	14	30	70

The major ways a word list was utilized included teachers explaining example sentences involved, or introducing other common usages of the to-be-learned word, as shown in Table 4.3. More than half of the respondents made use of the lists of prefix/suffix in the textbook. Two teachers stated that they explicitly taught the meanings of prefix/suffix and offered students exercises in recognizing word parts. One teacher presented some other examples containing the to-be-learned prefix/suffix and another teacher guided students to read aloud example words in the list. Relatively few accounts were given as to the ways teachers employed a list of words related to the topic of the unit. One teacher reported that students were led to read aloud all words in the list, assigned to memorize the words, and given a test on them in subsequent classes. Another teacher roughly stated that students were guided to associate those words with personal life experience.

**Table 4.3** Approaches to employing a word list in the textbook

Statement	Frequency
1. Explain example sentences of the new word.	8
2. Present supplementary information about the new word.	4
3. Request students to make sentences with the new word.	2
4. Explain the meaning of the new word.	2
5. Present derivatives of the new word not offered in the word list.	2
6. Lead students to read new words one by one.	1
7. Guide students to pay attention to the collocation of the new word in sentences.	1

Responses to Q3 in Part A seemed not to directly provide answers as it was originally devised for. Rather than presenting additional features not mentioned in Q2, what participants actually reported were some other personal instructional practices concerning vocabulary teaching, containing encouraging students to create their own word bank, introducing word family, teaching mnemonics, story-making, and playing videos in class.

When responding to the enquiry about which type of dictionary to recommend to their students, three teachers made two choices at the same time, so the total frequency count in the survey amounted to 23 rather than 20. A bilingual dictionary was the most recommended choice, receiving support from thirteen participants. A monolingual dictionary was proposed by nearly half of the teachers, with one of them also encouraging students to use a collocation dictionary and other two also a bilingual dictionary (see Table 4.4).

**Table 4.4** Recommended type of dictionary

Type of dictionary	Frequency
1. Bilingual dictionary	13
2. Monolingual dictionary	9
3. Collocation	1
Total	23

Among the twenty participants, six teachers have instructed their students on dictionary use while the other fourteen did not cover the training in class. Two teachers mentioned that they taught students how to find out the meaning as well as the usage of an unknown word in a dictionary. One teacher copied some pages from a dictionary, demonstrated the look-up technique to the students, and held dictionary-checking contests to encourage dictionary use among students. Another teacher made use of advertisements in the newspaper to train students on dictionary use.

This teacher asked students to guess some unknown words first and then check if the guessed meanings were correct by referring to a dictionary. The students also needed to take notes from the dictionary for subsequent review and the teacher would check the students' notebooks at irregular intervals.

## 4.2 Quantitative Survey Findings on Teachers' Beliefs and Practices

In this section, descriptive statistic results of the participants' evaluation of the usefulness of the thirty VLS and their self-reported frequency of covering those strategies in teaching practices were concurrently presented in Table 4.5. All strategies were listed in the same order as in the questionnaire, in front of which different short forms in capital letters were attached to specify the classification of each strategy (i.e. MEM = Memory strategy; COG = Cognitive strategy; MET = Metacognitive strategy; DET = Determination strategy). Mean score and standard deviation (SD) of the participants' responses to the entries in terms of two different scales were computed. Two lists (see Table 4.6 & 4.7), one of which ranked strategies according to the usefulness degree and the other the frequency in classroom practices, were presented with an aim to giving an overview of the results.

**Table 4.5** Participants' beliefs and practices on vocabulary learning strategies

	Statement	Usefulness Degree		Frequency in practices	
		Mean	SD	Mean	SD
MEM1.	To study a word with a picture of its meaning instead of definition.	4.05	1.47	2.05	0.89
MEM2.	To create oneself's own mental images of a word's meaning.	4.60	1.27	2.60	0.94
MEM3.	To connect a word to a personal experience.	4.50	1.24	3.10	1.41

MEM4.	To place the word in a group with other items based on topic, theme or function.	4.70	0.92	3.80	1.01
MEM5.	To connect a word to its synonyms and antonyms.	4.60	1.23	4.40	1.05
MEM6.	To create semantic networks of a word.	4.74	1.20	2.85	1.23
MEM7.	To use 'scales' for gradable adjectives.	4.15	1.39	3.15	1.04
MEM8.	To use new words in sentences.	5.10	1.17	4.80	0.77
MEM9.	To group words together within a storyline.	4.05	1.40	2.65	1.35
MEM10.	To use <i>Keyword Method</i> .	3.28	1.36	1.90	0.99
COG11.	To repeat a word aloud to oneself.	4.60	1.10	4.10	1.65
COG12.	To write a word repeatedly.	4.11	1.49	3.00	1.83
MEM13.	To imagine the written form of a word.	3.50	1.50	2.85	1.57
MEM14.	To paraphrase the word's meaning.	4.20	1.32	3.60	1.43
MEM15.	To learn the individual words of chunks and then use the whole chunk as a memory aid for remembering the individual word meanings.	4.70	0.98	3.90	1.52
MEM16.	To use physical action when learning a word.	3.85	1.46	2.70	1.34
COG17.	To listen to tapes/CDs of word lists.	3.40	1.67	2.80	1.44
COG18.	To keep a vocabulary notebook.	4.30	1.30	3.00	1.75
MET19.	To test oneself with word tests.	4.80	1.01	4.55	1.19
MET20.	To skip or pass an unknown word.	4.60	1.10	4.15	1.14
DET21.	To analyse the part of speech of an unknown word.	4.90	0.85	4.25	1.07
DET22.	To look at the clause or sentence containing the unknown word to find clues	4.90	0.97	4.15	1.04
DET23.	To examine how the clause containing the unknown word relates to other clauses, sentences, or paragraphs.	4.50	1.05	3.80	1.20
DET24.	To make use of common sense and knowledge of the world.	4.60	1.10	3.95	1.32
DET25.	To make use of knowledge of the topic.	4.45	1.32	3.75	1.45

DET26.	After guessing, check if the part of speech of the guessed meaning is the same as the part of speech of the unknown word.	4.30	1.26	3.65	1.35
DET27.	After guessing, replace the unknown word with guessed meaning to check if the sentence makes sense.	4.35	1.39	3.45	1.47
DET28.	To analyse affixes and roots of an unknown word in an <i>early</i> stage when guessing.	4.60	0.94	4.10	0.91
DET29.	To analyse affixes and roots of an unknown word in a <i>later</i> stage of guessing work.	4.00	1.08	3.35	1.09
DET30.	To deliberately learn the meanings of the most common affixes.	4.35	0.99	3.75	1.55

As shown in Table 4.5, twenty-six out of the thirty vocabulary learning strategies obtained an average score higher than 4 in the usefulness scale, indicating that the majority of strategies (86.7%) were considered *useful* to the students by these participants. On the other hand, only eight strategies were reported by respondents to be covered in teaching practices with an average frequency score higher than 4, constituting a relatively smaller proportion (26.7%) in the whole group. In other words, less than one-third of the strategies received attention in class frequently despite the fact that they were considered conducive to vocabulary learning. By and large, the findings suggested that the evaluated utility of each strategy by the participants comparatively outperformed their practice frequency in the classroom; that is, slight discrepancies appeared to exist between the teachers' beliefs and practices on VLS.

Table 4.6 & 4.7 show that the most useful and most-instructed twelve strategies<sup>3</sup>

<sup>3</sup>The original intention of presenting the top *ten* strategies in the two ranking systems was adjusted to accommodating the top *twelve* in the list due to the cluster results in some places.

spread across the four categories of VLS, with eleven of them overlapping each other.

Using new words in sentences to remember them (MEM8) was not only considered the most useful memory strategy but also ranked highest among all. Analysing the part of speech of an unknown word (DET21) and looking at the clause or sentence containing the unknown word to find clues (DET22) were assessed to be the most useful determination strategies, standing the second and third places in the overall usefulness ranking. The metacognitive strategy of self-testing (MET19) scored only slightly lower than the top three, followed by other three memory strategies — MEM6: Create semantic networks to remember words; MEM4: Place the word in a group with other items based on topic, theme, or function; MEM15: Study chunks as a memory aid. Five strategies across the four categories stood together in the eighth place. To use Keyword Method (MEM10) in learning vocabulary was evaluated to be the least useful strategy among all, with eight participants reporting they were not aware of this method before involving in the survey.

In terms of implementation frequency, using new words in sentences (MEM8) also ranked highest among all strategies, followed by the metacognitive strategy of self-testing (MET19). Connecting a word to its synonyms and antonyms (MEM5) was employed in teaching practices with the third highest frequency. Half of the ten determination strategies — DET21: Analyse the part of speech of an unknown word; DET22: Look at the clause or sentence containing the unknown word to find clues; DET23: Examine how the clause containing the unknown word relates to other clauses, sentences, or paragraphs; DET24: Make use of common sense; DET28: Analyse affixes and roots of an unknown word in an early stage when guessing — occupied five places in the most-instructed ranking list. Skipping or passing a word selectively (MET 20), repeating words aloud (COG 11), learning words in chunks (MEM15), and studying words with other items in a related topic, theme, or function (MEM4) were also introduced in class more often than other strategies. Similar to the usefulness

evaluation results, to use Keyword Method (MEM10) came at the bottom of the implementation frequency list.

The general parallel between the usefulness and practice frequency of the vocabulary learning strategies was supported by the Pearson's correlation coefficients computed for each strategy (see Appendix 3). There was a positive correlation between the two sets of results among the majority of the strategies (29 out of 30), with twenty-one strategies presenting a significant positive correlation ( $p < .05$ ). In other words, the quantitative results suggest that when a certain vocabulary learning strategy was evaluated to be more useful by the teachers, it tended to be implemented more frequently in their teaching practices.

As previously mentioned, the findings have implied that generally the frequency of a strategy being employed in the teaching practices was not as high as their evaluated usefulness. In Part C, six teachers provided reasons for not including those strategies they considered useful in teaching practices. The most mentioned factor involving the inconsistency was time constraints, reported by four respondents. Two teachers claimed that some strategies seemed inefficient to employ when taking learner factor into consideration. One teacher stated that whether those strategies fit into the lesson being taught played a part in the decision-making process. Another teacher briefly outlined the reason as a consideration in overall teaching context, arguing that the classroom setting did not seem suitable to accommodate a variety of vocabulary learning activities.

Table 4.6 Most- and least-useful strategies

Most useful strategies								
Rank /30	Determination strategy	Mean	Memory strategy	Mean	Cognitive strategy	Mean	Metacognitive strategy	Mean
1			Use new	5.10				

2	Analyze part of speech	4.90	words in sentences					
2	Examine a specific clause to find clues	4.90						
4							Test oneself	4.80
5			Create semantic networks	4.74				
6			Remember words in related group	4.70				
6			Remember words in chunks	4.70				
8			Learn synonyms /antonyms.	4.60				
8					Repeat words aloud	4.60		
8							Skip or pass a word	4.60
8	Use common sense to find clues	4.60						
8	Analyse affixes in an early stage	4.60						
<b>Least useful strategies</b>								
26	Analyse affixes in a later stage	4.00						
27			Use physical action	3.85				
28			Imagine the written form	3.50				
29					Listen to tapes/CDs	3.40		
30			Use Keyword Method	3.28				

Table 4.7 Most- and least-instructed strategies

<b>Most-instructed strategies</b>								
Rank /30	Determination strategy	Mean	Memory strategy	Mean	Cognitive strategy	Mean	Metacognitive strategy	Mean
1			Use new words in sentences	4.80				
2							Test oneself	4.55

3			Learn synonyms /antonyms	4.40				
4	Analyze part of speech	4.25						
5							Skip or pass a word	4.15
5	Examine a specific clause to find clues	4.15						
7					Repeat words aloud	4.10		
7	Analyse affixes in an early stage	4.10						
9	Use common sense to find clues	3.95						
10			Remember words in chunks	3.90				
11			Remember words in related group	3.80				
11	Examine relation between clauses to find clues	3.80						
<b>Least-instructed strategies</b>								
26			Use physical action	2.70				
27			Group words within a storyline	2.65				
28			Create mental images	2.60				
29			Study meaning with a picture	2.05				
30			Use Keyword Method	1.90				

## CHAPTER 5 DISCUSSIONS

The preceding chapter presents an overview of the survey results of the participants' awareness, beliefs and teaching practices on vocabulary learning strategies. This chapter draws upon the findings to address the three research questions involved in the current study.

### 5.1 Teachers' Awareness of VLS Based on Personal Learning Experience

According to the responses freely expressed in the open-ended questions in Part A, the teachers studied were aware of VLS in a range of aspects. Among all, procedures involved some form of repetition seemed to be the most readily accessed and identified strategies in respect of vocabulary learning, even though they are not much recommended by researchers supporting the Depth of Processing Hypothesis (see 2.3.4.2). In fact, many learners have reached high levels of proficiency by means of written and verbal repetition; these strategies are established firmly among learners in many parts of the world (Schmitt 1997). Comparing the self-reported results (see Table 4.1) with the findings in Part B / Entry 11 (see Table 4.6 & 4.7), it can be found that the cognitive strategy of repeating words loudly appeared in both sections, obtaining high acknowledgement in its usefulness and being practiced frequently in the classroom. As a result, it might be said that oral repetition as a vocabulary learning strategy was not only widely recognized but also commonly practiced among these Taiwanese senior high school English teachers.

Extensive reading being a useful approach to learning vocabulary was also identified by the participants in this survey. Owing to the fact that vocabulary permeates listening, speaking, reading, and writing, it seems obvious that vocabulary

learning is inseparable from the four skills in the language classroom. The new research-based approach by Oxford and Scarcella (1994) (see 2.1.3) has proposed that “fully contextualized” activities are supposed to play an important part in vocabulary teaching in that they provide students with authentic communication opportunities to experience the function of the language. Nation (2001) also shows his concern with a balanced language course by emphasizing the integration of four strands in a well-designed course, which are “meaning-focused input”, “form-focused instruction”, “meaning-focused output”, and “fluency development”. Extensive reading falls into the domain of meaning-focused input, in which students may “learn new language items through listening and reading activities where the main focus is on the information in what they are listening to or reading” (Nation 2001, p.2). The aspects involving knowing a lexical item are various and in different levels (see 2.1.2), which makes it difficult to acquire all knowledge of a word within one single encounter. Therefore, it might be said that the value of repeated meeting through extensive reading to enhance vocabulary learning was readily seen by the language practitioners in this survey, as suggested by researchers in this field. To the knowledge of the researcher, English newspapers and magazines particularly compiled for language learning are conventionally employed as supplementary reading materials in a number of senior high schools in Taiwan as they provide students with latest information about everyday life in varied aspects and practical English words to discuss those issues involved. Tapes/CDs that record an audio version of the text are also available accompanied with the publications, which increases their utility in language learning. Also, English magazines are generally issued in cooperation with radio programs, in which elaboration of the reading texts are provided so that students may study the magazine on their own after school. Some schools even include the content of the English newspaper or magazine in periodic regulated tests. The phenomenon somewhat shows

the place of extensive reading in Taiwanese senior high school English teaching context. Learning words in context as a strategy, to some degree, overlaps with the idea of extensive reading in that reading presents a word in the context in a visual form while listening an audio form. Therefore, it might be argued that extensive reading as a meaning-focused input activity in the language classroom was highly valued in vocabulary learning and teaching in senior high schools in Taiwan.

As previously mentioned, Nation (2001) argues that form-focused instruction also warrants attention in a language course. The two VLS brought up in the participants' responses — referring to a dictionary and studying the parts (i.e. prefix/suffix and root) of a word — suggest that these language practitioners were also aware of the significance of direct vocabulary learning activities in a balanced language course. However, when employed in the guessing task, analysing affixes of a word were more considered and introduced by the teachers to be used in an earlier stage to offer clues, which is contrary to the suggestion by researchers since learners make incorrect guesses due to their heavy reliance on word form and might twist the interpretation of the context on the basis of what the word looks like (see 2.3.3.1). Despite the fact that word analysis was acknowledged as a useful strategy in vocabulary learning, the teachers studied seemed not to be sufficiently aware of an appropriate way to employ it.

The other strategies identified by the participants — mostly involving committing words into memory and thus falling into the consolidation strategy in Schmitt's taxonomy — were rather diverse and generally conformed to those specified in relevant literature (see Table 4.1), such as using pictures or physical action to enhance memory. To sum up, it may be said that the Taiwanese English teachers in senior high schools involved in the survey were aware of a variety of vocabulary learning strategies commonly employed and proposed in language acquisition based on their personal learning experience. The results also seem to support the argument that teachers have

built up their values and assumptions about language learning and teaching by the time they receive training in teacher education (see 2.4.1).

## **5.2 Popular VLS among the Teachers**

Discussions in the preceding section have revealed some messages about what VLS were popular with the teachers studied in terms of personal choices. Cognitive strategies involving repetition as well as learning words in context through reading were the most used approaches, followed by direct vocabulary learning through consulting a dictionary or word part analysis. Memory strategies possibly varied depending on individual characteristics and learning styles; therefore, it appeared rather difficult for the participants to reach a consensus in this aspect.

With respect to the popular pedagogical strategies, results collected from Part B (see Table 4.5 & 4.6) show that memory strategies involving using words in “partially contextualized” activities, to use Oxford and Scarcella’s term, such as classifying words according to topics or functions, or connecting a word to its synonyms and antonyms, were assessed comparatively more useful among all vocabulary learning strategies. Nevertheless, some studies (e.g. Tinkham 1993) have indicated that it is dangerous to present closely related new words at the same time since some students might have difficulty keeping two semantically related words separate and not mixing them up (Gu & Johnson 1996). Nation (1990) and Cohen (1990) advise that teachers introduce words that are loosely connected (e.g. words associated with a given topic) rather than words that are directly related (e.g. synonyms and antonyms) to avoid the possible confusion among students (Oxford & Scarcella 1994). In this survey, the teachers implemented the strategy of connecting a word to its synonyms and antonyms more frequently than learning words in related grouping. As a result, it is likely that the teachers imparted their knowledge about vocabulary learning mainly based on personal

learning experience and without sufficient awareness of the possible dangers informed by relevant research.

Similar findings were revealed on one of the determination strategies as mentioned previously. Analysing the part of speech of an unknown word, making use of common sense and clues in the context to make a guess, and analysing affixes in an early stage when guessing, were all considered useful and frequently practiced in the classroom, but scholars have recommended the analysis of word form be used as a way to check the guessed meaning rather than offering clues in an initial stage. The inconsistency involved might again result from a lack of informed knowledge about the guessing strategy from relevant research.

The two metacognitive strategies— self-testing and skipping or passing a word that seems inessential for immediate comprehension— were also relatively popular among the teachers in the survey. Secondary education in the Taiwanese context has been characterized as well as criticized as exam-oriented pedagogy. With an aim to preparing students adequately for entrance examinations, teachers may need to follow the prescribed curriculum under time pressure at the expense of diverse learning activities, and students are repetitively evaluated by tests as a major way to consolidate acquired knowledge. Therefore, the high ranking of self-testing as a useful and frequently employed skill seemed obvious since tests in whatever form tend to be inseparable from teaching and learning in a formal education setting. Some learners might be suspicious of the value of skipping or passing a word as a useful vocabulary learning strategy due to a belief that the more words they acquire, the higher language proficiency they will achieve. The findings, however, have indicated to some extent that the teachers studied have seen the value of this metacognitive strategy and attempted to disclose the information to the students in their teaching practices.

One interesting point to note here is that the Keyword Method, albeit being

indicated in some studies to be an effective memory strategy (see 2.3.4.1) and proposed by Nation (1990) to be one of the three major vocabulary learning strategies deserving attention in the language classroom, the teachers in the survey seemed not to show much agreement on this argument. With eight teachers reporting that they were not aware of the Keyword Method before involving the survey, it appeared that the mnemonic technique was not extensively recognized by the language practitioners. In this case, as teachers themselves were not equipped with pertinent knowledge about this strategy — probably because they were not taught on it when they were students and did not receive any relevant training in the teacher education program — it seemed rather difficult for them to see much utility in this skill, let alone introducing it in their instructional practices. The divergence between the reality in the teaching context and implications informed by research appeared to echo Macaro's (2003) survey results that secondary language teachers view vocabulary as a topic they most need research to shed light on to enhance the teaching and learning in their classroom (see 2.1.1).

### **5.3 Correlations between Teachers' Beliefs and Practices on VLS**

The significance of appropriate dictionary use in vocabulary learning has been pointed out by some participants in the survey. Also, relevant literature (e.g. Schmitt 1997) gives evidence of the popularity of the dictionary among language learners. Scholars have noted that looking up a word in a dictionary is far from a mechanical operation and users need to make judicious decisions in the checking process to achieve an adequate comprehension (see 2.3.3.2). In this survey (see 4.1), however, only 30% (i.e. 6 out of 20) of the English teachers instructed their students how to use a dictionary. It somewhat implied that the complexity of checking a word in a dictionary might be underestimated by the language practitioners on the assumptions that senior high school students have studied English for at least three years and may have equipped with the

skill of using a dictionary appropriately. Without adequate guidance and sufficient practice on dictionary use in class, it is likely that some students are not able to make use of the reference material wisely as a facilitator in their independent learning. The English teachers in this survey indicated a slight preference of a bilingual dictionary to a monolingual one to be consulted by their students in language learning. Nation (2001) maintains that a major benefit of bilingual dictionaries is that “they provide meanings in a very accessible way” (p.290). Although monolingual dictionaries generally include more information about each word than bilingual dictionaries, a number of studies have suggested that learners acquire vocabulary much more effectively using L2-L1 pairs than through L2-L2 definition pairs (e.g. Laufer and Shmueli 1997) and there is much evidence (e.g. Nesi and Meara 1994) that shows the difficulties non-native speakers have in understanding the English definition (Nation 2001). While the language teachers studied may have been aware of the advantages of bilingual dictionaries, it appeared that the majority of them need to allocate sufficient time in class to train the students how to use a dictionary speedily and accurately, with particular reference to some aspects (both receptive and productive use) neglected in the look-up process noted by scholars.

As discussed above, strategies involving direct vocabulary learning were generally assessed useful by the teachers in the survey. The relatively high proportion of implementation of the word list and prefix/suffix list in the textbook (see Table 4.2 & 4.3) has to some extent corroborated the teachers’ beliefs in this aspect. Similarly, the noticeable parallel between the two ranking lists (see Table 4.6 & 4.7), one of the evaluated usefulness degree and the other their corresponding practice frequency, suggested that the teachers generally performed instructional practices conforming to their underlying assumptions and beliefs on vocabulary learning. The significant positive correlations between the teachers’ beliefs and practices identified by Pearson’s

correlation coefficients among the majority of the vocabulary learning strategies also supported the previous argument. However, still some strategies were considered conducive to vocabulary acquisition but not introduced in the classroom rather frequently, such as creating a semantic network to help remember a word. The teachers attributed the inconsistency to contextual factors, mostly time constraints. Learner factors and teaching materials were also taken into consideration when the teachers evaluated whether a strategy should be incorporated in the teaching practices. Overall speaking, the findings corresponded to the arguments in relevant literature (see 2.4.2.2) that beliefs have a behavioral component and influence individuals' action. Nevertheless, contextual factors may impede teachers' ability to perform instructional practices following their espoused beliefs. The lack of pertinent training in pre-service or in-service program, revealed from the teachers' self-reported background information, was also a possible factor that handicapped the teachers in completely realizing their personal theories of effective teaching. Some researchers have pointed out that no alternative images to act as a model to apply might be the reason why some teachers are trapped in a traditional pedagogical approach and not able to fulfill their ideal images of themselves during actual language instruction (see 2.4.2.2).

## CHAPTER 6 CONCLUSION

The current survey was originally motivated by an interest in the awareness and instructional practices of Taiwanese English teachers in the same context as the researcher's, namely senior high schools, with respect to vocabulary teaching. Through the process of constructing a research-informed questionnaire, the researcher has to some extent appreciated the potential intricacy involving a comprehensive study in the field of second language teaching. The operationalization of the three research questions brought the survey into an integration of two significant issues in contemporary language teaching pedagogy, that is, vocabulary learning strategies and teachers' beliefs. Responses from the twenty participants have provided some answers to the research questions formulated in the beginning of the survey. The findings have shown that the Taiwanese senior high school English teachers involved were aware of a range of vocabulary learning strategies which have been identified in relevant literature based on their personal learning experience, including both direct and indirect vocabulary learning approaches. Besides that, a small proportion of the participants also acquired some pertinent knowledge through self-study from ELT publications or teacher preparation education. Oral repetition, extensive reading, self-testing and a variety of partially contextualized vocabulary learning activities were rather popular among the teachers. The quantitative results collected from the closed-ended items in the questionnaire have to some extent suggested that generally the more useful a vocabulary learning strategy was evaluated by the teachers from a pedagogical perspective, the more frequently it was implemented in the language classroom. Nevertheless, some strategies or aspects concerning vocabulary learning appeared to be neglected in the actual language instruction, such as dictionary use training or the

Keyword Method, and others were practiced by the teachers with a different orientation from the one informed by research, such as the presentation of directly related words (e.g. synonyms and antonyms) in the teaching practices, or the timing of analysing word parts when applied to the guessing work. In addition, some strategies were considered useful while not implemented comparatively frequently in the teaching practices. Some teachers have attributed the discrepancy to contextual factors, largely time constraints and partially learner factors and overall teaching context.

Despite the fact that the current survey results could not be generalized to entail the beliefs and practices of other English teachers in Taiwanese senior high school contexts due to its small scale, still some implications may be offered to contribute to the second language teaching context. As discussed in the preceding chapter, even though dictionaries are popularly used by language learners, the complexity involving the look-up process seem to be underestimated by language practitioners and thus learners are not much instructed in this aspect. As a result, a need is readily seen that language practitioners incorporate dictionary use training in their teaching practices to develop independent learning among language learners outside the classroom. In addition to the prefix/suffix list or related word group, the textbook writers may also include some exercises involving dictionary look-up activities to make language practitioners more aware of the need to instruct learners how to use a dictionary appropriately. Moreover, the lack of relevant knowledge concerning vocabulary learning strategies introduced in teacher education programs suggested that the issue of learner strategy training was still in its infancy and did not receive significant attention. With the notion of autonomous learning becoming more recognized, teachers may need to take the new role of a learning facilitator rather than simply a knowledge-provider. Therefore, awareness-raising activities concerning the issue of incorporating learning strategy training in the classroom are to be expected among language practitioners in pre-service

teacher education programs or in-service workshops.

In addition, although the implementation of a questionnaire as a tool to collect data in the survey made it possible to gather responses from more participants than other instruments, it appeared that the teachers' self-reported frequency of employing the strategies in the classroom might be more convincing with the support from findings collected through actual classroom observation. Learner factors have been brought up to play a role in teachers' instructional practices and Schmitt's study has suggested that not each strategy is equally useful at all stages of one's learning. Thus, a possible further study is to compare teachers from contexts of two different stages, for example, junior high schools and senior high schools, to find out how the learner factor has influenced the range of vocabulary learning strategies employed in the actual language instruction.

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## QUESTIONNAIRE ON TEACHING VOCABULARY LEARNING STRATEGIES

*This questionnaire is an attempt to gather information about how much Taiwanese English teachers in senior high schools know about vocabulary learning strategies and in what ways they have made efforts to help students with vocabulary learning. Your ideas are highly valued and your cooperation genuinely appreciated. The data thus collected only serves this particular research and will remain confidential. Please feel free to share your opinions and report frankly your real situation when answering the following items. If you are interested in the results of this survey, please do not hesitate to leave your e-mail address in the end. A copy of the results will be sent to you afterwards.*

### **Part A: Open-ended questions**

**This part may take you some time to complete. Whatever you share will provide information of great use for this research. You are welcome to answer either in English or in Chinese.**

**1.** Thinking back on your own experience of learning English, what methods or strategies do you consider helpful to your *vocabulary* learning? Please share your experience.

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**2.** Of the following features commonly used in senior high school English textbooks, which one(s) do you generally cover in your practice of vocabulary teaching? Please tick in the box and explain how you make use of them in the following space.

**gloss** (only new words and K.K. phonetic symbols listed) which accompany the reading text

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**word lists** (which mainly offer English definitions, Chinese translations, word families, and example sentences)

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**Lists of prefix/suffix**

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**Lists of words related to the topic of the lesson**

(e.g. A list of Words related to *a Theater* in the unit *The Phantom of the Opera*)

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**Tapes/CDs which record word lists**

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**3.** Following Q2, please **specify** any feature(s) that have not been included above and **explain**.

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**4.** What type of dictionary do you **recommend** your students to use? (Please tick)

a bilingual dictionary                      a monolingual dictionary

others \_\_\_\_\_

**5.** Have you ever designed any exercises or activities to train your students how to use a dictionary? (Please tick)

**Yes**  $\implies$  go to **Q6**

**No**  $\implies$  go to **Part B**

6. Please ①specify what type of dictionary you train your students to use and

②explain what exercise(s) or activity(ies) you include in the training.

① a bilingual dictionary a monolingual dictionary

others\_\_\_\_\_

②\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

**Part B: Close-ended questions**

<Instructions> For each statement, there are *two scales* for you to *place a tick*(✓).

The first scale is for you to specify *how useful you consider the strategy is* to your students. The second scale is for you to specify *to what degree you ACTUALLY include or introduce the strategy in class.*

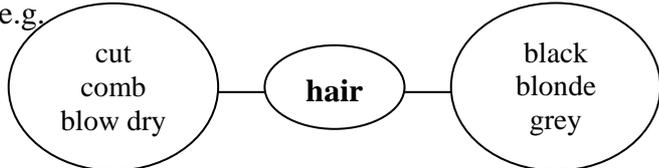
**The first scale ( I ):**

<b>not at all useful</b>	<b>slightly useful</b>	<b>moderately useful</b>	<b>useful</b>	<b>quite useful</b>	<b>very useful</b>
<b>1</b>	<b>2</b>	<b>3</b>	<b>4</b>	<b>5</b>	<b>6</b>

**The second scale ( II ):**

<b>never or almost never</b>	<b>rarely or seldom</b>	<b>sometimes</b>	<b>often</b>	<b>usually</b>	<b>always or almost always</b>
<b>1</b>	<b>2</b>	<b>3</b>	<b>4</b>	<b>5</b>	<b>6</b>

No.	Strategy Description	Scale	1	2	3	4	5	6
		(I)	not at all useful	<---->				very useful
		(II)	never/ almost never	<---->				always / almost always
(1)	To study a word with a picture of its meaning instead of definition to remember it.	(I)						
		(II)						
(2)	To create oneself's own mental images of a word's meaning to remember it.	(I)						
		(II)						
(3)	To connect a word to a personal experience to remember it. (e.g. Connecting the word <i>snow</i> to a memory of playing in the snow for the first time)	(I)						
		(II)						

(4)	To place the word in a group with other items based on topic, theme or function (e.g. items about food/art/request)	(I)							
		(II)							
(5)	To connect a word to its synonyms and antonyms to remember it.	(I)							
		(II)							
(6)	To create semantic networks of a word to remember it. e.g. 	(I)							
		(II)							
(7)	To use 'scales' for gradable adjectives to remember them. (e.g. huge/big/medium-sized/small/tiny)	(I)							
		(II)							
(8)	To use new words in sentences to remember them.	(I)							
		(II)							
(9)	To group words together within a storyline to remember them.	(I)							
		(II)							
(10)	To use <i>Keyword Method</i> to remember words. ** Before you read the following explanation, if you've never heard anything about it, place a cross <b>here</b> ( ), and <b>then reply</b> to the scale.	(I)							
		(II)							
(10)	<b>Keyword Method:</b> This technique involves finding a Chinese word (keyword) which sounds like the target English word, e.g. the Chinese word 洗手 (wash hands) for the English word 'seesaw'. Then a mental image combining the two concepts is created, such as a boy <u>washing his hands</u> after playing <u>seesaw</u> . When the English word seesaw is later heard, the sound similarity invokes the created image which prompts the English word's meaning.								
No.	Strategy Description	Scale	1	2	3	4	5	6	
		(I)	not at all useful		<---->		very useful		
		(II)	never/ almost never		<---->		always / almost always		
(11)	To repeat a word aloud to oneself to remember a word.	(I)							
		(II)							
(12)	To write a word repeatedly to remember a word.	(I)							
		(II)							
(13)	To imagine the written form of a word to remember it.	(I)							
		(II)							

(14)	To paraphrase the word's meaning to remember it.	(I)						
		(II)						
(15)	To learn the individual words of chunks (e.g. phrases, idioms, or proverbs) and then use the whole chunk as a memory aid for remembering the individual word meanings.	(I)						
		(II)						
(16)	To use physical action (like Total Physical Response) when learning a word to enhance memory.	(I)						
		(II)						
(17)	To listen to tapes/CDs of word lists.	(I)						
		(II)						
(18)	To keep a vocabulary notebook to facilitate vocabulary learning.	(I)						
		(II)						
(19)	To test oneself with word tests.	(I)						
		(II)						
(20)	To skip or pass an unknown word which seems inessential for adequate comprehension of a passage.	(I)						
		(II)						
(21)	To analyse the part of speech (e.g. noun/verb) of an unknown word when guessing the meaning.	(I)						
		(II)						
(22)	To look at the clause or sentence containing the unknown word to find clues when guessing the meaning. (e.g. If the unknown word is a noun, pay attention to adjective(s) which describe the noun.)	(I)						
		(II)						
(23)	To examine how the clause containing the unknown word relates to other clauses, sentences, or paragraphs when guessing the meaning. (e.g. To pay attention to conjunctions like <i>but</i> , <i>because</i> , <i>if</i> , <i>when</i> , or adverbs like <i>however</i> , <i>thus</i> .)	(I)						
		(II)						
No.	Strategy Description	Scale	1	2	3	4	5	6
		(I)	not at all useful	<---->				very useful
		(II)	never/ almost never	<---->				always / almost always
(24)	To make use of common sense and knowledge of the world when guessing the meaning of an unknown word.	(I)						
		(II)						
(25)	To make use of knowledge of the topic when guessing the meaning of an unknown word.	(I)						
		(II)						

(26)	After guessing, check if the part of speech of the guessed meaning is the same as the part of speech of the unknown word.	(I)							
		(II)							
(27)	After guessing, replace the unknown word with guessed meaning to check if the sentence makes sense.	(I)							
		(II)							
(28)	To analyse affixes and roots of an unknown word in an <i>early</i> stage when guessing, i.e. making use of the meanings of affixes or roots to <i>offer clues</i> to help guess the meaning of the unknown word.	(I)							
		(II)							
(29)	To analyse affixes and roots of an unknown word in a <i>later</i> stage of guessing work, i.e. making use of the meanings of affixes or roots to <i>check</i> the guessed meaning.	(I)							
		(II)							
(30)	To deliberately learn the meanings of the most common affixes.	(I)							
		(II)							

**Part C: Follow-up question**

§ After giving response to the above items, if you consider certain strategies useful, but you don't actually include or introduce those strategy(ies) in class, please explain why here.

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**Part D: Personal Information**

- How many years have you taught English in a senior high school?  
\_\_\_\_\_ year(s)
- Have you received any training on **how to teach vocabulary learning strategies**?  
Yes (Please specify what type of training: \_\_\_\_\_)  
No

\*\* If you are interested in the results, please leave your e-mail: \_\_\_\_\_

☺ **Thank you very much for your time and cooperation.** ☺

**T-test****Paired Samples Correlations**

		N	Correlation	Sig.
Pair 1	usefulness of studying a word with a picture of its meaning & frequency of covering the strategy in class	20	.725	.000*
Pair 2	usefulness of creating oneself's own mental images of a word's meaning to remember it & frequency of covering the strategy in class	20	.387	.092
Pair 3	usefulness of connecting a word to a personal experience to remember it & frequency of covering the strategy in class	20	.453	.045*
Pair 4	usefulness of placing the word in a group with other items based on topic, theme, or function & frequency of covering the strategy in class	20	.386	.093
Pair 5	usefulness of connecting a word to its synonyms and antonyms to remember it & frequency of covering the strategy in class	20	.703	.001*
Pair 6	usefulness of creating semantic networks of a word to remember it & frequency of covering the strategy in class	19	.464	.046*
Pair 7	usefulness of using scales for gradable adjectives to remember them & frequency of covering the strategy in class	20	.640	.002*
Pair 8	usefulness of using new words in sentences to remember them & frequency of covering the strategy in class	20	.082	.730
Pair 9	usefulness of grouping words together within a storyline to remember them & frequency of covering the strategy in class	20	.346	.136
Pair 10	usefulness of using Keyword Method to remember words & frequency of covering the strategy in class	18	.398	.101
Pair 11	usefulness of repeating a word aloud to oneself to remember a word & frequency of covering the strategy in class	20	.372	.106
Pair 12	usefulness of writing a word repeatedly to remember a word & frequency of covering the strategy in class	19	.594	.007*
Pair 13	usefulness of imagining the written form of a word to remember it & frequency of covering the strategy in class	20	.838	.000*
Pair 14	usefulness of paraphrasing the word's meaning to remember it & frequency of covering the strategy in class	20	.518	.019*
Pair 15	usefulness of learning the individual words of chunks and use the whole chunk as memory aid for remembering & frequency of	20	.368	.110

	covering the strategy in class			
Pair 16	usefulness of using physical action when learning a word to enhance memory & frequency of covering the strategy in class	20	.540	.014*
Pair 17	usefulness of listening to tapes/CDs of word lists & frequency of covering the strategy in class	20	-.009	.971
Pair 18	usefulness of keeping a vocabulary notebook to facilitate vocabulary learning & frequency of covering the strategy in class	20	.740	.000*
Pair 19	usefulness of testing oneself with word tests & frequency of covering the strategy in class	20	.712	.000*
Pair 20	usefulness of skipping or passing an unknown word which seems inessential for comprehension & frequency of covering the strategy in class	20	.389	.090
Pair 21	usefulness of analysing the part of speech of an unknown word when guessing the meaning & frequency of covering the strategy in class	20	.722	.000*
Pair 22	usefulness of looking at the clause or sentence to find clues when guessing the meaning & frequency of covering the strategy in class	20	.539	.014*
Pair 23	usefulness of examining how the clause relates to other clauses, sentences, or paragraphs when guessing & frequency of covering the strategy in class	20	.628	.003*
Pair 24	usefulness of making use of common sense and knowledge of the world when guessing & frequency of covering the strategy in class	20	.752	.000*
Pair 25	usefulness of making use of knowledge of the topic when guessing & frequency of covering the strategy in class	20	.808	.000*
Pair 26	usefulness of checking the part of speech after guessing & frequency of covering the strategy in class	20	.746	.000*
Pair 27	usefulness of replacing the unknown word with guessed meaning to check if the sentence makes sense & frequency of covering the strategy in class	20	.642	.002*
Pair 28	usefulness of analysing affixes and roots of an unknown word in an early stage when guessing & frequency of covering the strategy in class	20	.602	.005*
Pair 29	usefulness of analysing affixes and roots of an unknown word in a later stage when guessing & frequency of covering the strategy in class	20	.449	.047*

Pair 30	usefulness of deliberately learning the meanings of the most common affixes & frequency of covering the strategy in class	20	.609	.004*
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\*  $p < .05$

### Paired Samples Test

		Paired Differences					t	df	Sig. (2-tailed)
		Mean	Std. Deviation	Std. Error Mean	95% Confidence Interval of the Difference				
					Lower	Upper			
Pair 1	usefulness in studying a word with a picture of its meaning - frequency of covering strategy 1 in class	2.0000	1.02598	.22942	1.5198	2.4802	8.718	19	.000
Pair 2	usefulness in creating oneself's own mental images of a word's meaning to remember it - frequency of covering strategy 2 in class	2.0000	1.25656	.28098	1.4119	2.5881	7.118	19	.000
Pair 3	usefulness in connecting a word to a personal experience to remember it - frequency of covering strategy 3 in class	1.4000	1.39170	.31119	.7487	2.0513	4.499	19	.000
Pair 4	usefulness in placing the word in a group with other items based on topic, theme, or function - frequency of covering strategy 4 in class	.9000	1.07115	.23952	.3987	1.4013	3.758	19	.001
Pair 5	usefulness in connecting a word to its synonyms and antonyms to remember it - frequency of covering strategy 5 in class	.2000	.89443	.20000	-.2186	.6186	1.000	19	.330

Pair 6	usefulness in creating semantic networks of a word to remember it - frequency of covering strategy 6 in class	1.7895	1.22832	.28180	1.1974	2.3815	6.350	18	.000
Pair 7	usefulness in using scales for gradable adjectives to remember them - frequency of covering strategy 7 in class	1.0000	1.07606	.24061	.4964	1.5036	4.156	19	.001
Pair 8	usefulness in using new words in sentences to remember them - frequency of covering strategy 8 in class	.3000	1.34164	.30000	-.3279	.9279	1.000	19	.330
Pair 9	usefulness in grouping words together within a storyline to remember them - frequency of covering strategy 9 in class	1.4000	1.56945	.35094	.6655	2.1345	3.989	19	.001
Pair 10	usefulness of using Keyword Method to remember words - frequency of covering strategy 10 in class	1.5000	1.29479	.30518	.8561	2.1439	4.915	17	.000
Pair 11	usefulness in repeating a word aloud to oneself to remember a word - frequency of covering strategy 11 in class	.5000	1.60591	.35909	-.2516	1.2516	1.392	19	.180
Pair 12	usefulness in writing a word repeatedly to remember a word - frequency of covering strategy 12 in class	1.1053	1.52369	.34956	.3709	1.8397	3.162	18	.005
Pair 13	usefulness in imagining the written form of a word to remember it - frequency of	.6500	.87509	.19568	.2404	1.0596	3.322	19	.004

	covering strategy 13 in class								
Pair 14	usefulness in paraphrasing the word's meaning to remember it - frequency of covering strategy 14 in class	.6000	1.35336	.30262	-.0334	1.2334	1.983	19	.062
Pair 15	usefulness in learning the individual words of chunks and use the whole chunk as memory aid for remembering - frequency of covering strategy 15 in class	.8000	1.47256	.32927	.1108	1.4892	2.430	19	.025
Pair 16	usefulness in using physical action when learning a word to enhance memory - frequency of covering strategy 16 in class	1.1500	1.34849	.30153	.5189	1.7811	3.814	19	.001
Pair 17	usefulness in listening to tapes/CDs of word lists - frequency of covering strategy 17 in class	.6000	2.21003	.49418	-.4343	1.6343	1.214	19	.240
Pair 18	usefulness in keeping a vocabulary notebook to facilitate vocabulary learning - frequency of covering strategy 18 in class	1.3000	1.17429	.26258	.7504	1.8496	4.951	19	.000
Pair 19	usefulness in testing oneself with word tests - frequency of covering strategy 19 in class	.2500	.85070	.19022	-.1481	.6481	1.314	19	.204
Pair 20	usefulness in skipping or passing an unknown word which seems inessential for comprehension - frequency of covering strategy 20 in class	.4500	1.23438	.27601	-.1277	1.0277	1.630	19	.119

	class								
Pair 21	usefulness in analysing the part of speech of an unknown word when guessing the meaning - frequency of covering strategy 21 in class	.6500	.74516	.16662	.3013	.9987	3.901	19	.001
Pair 22	usefulness in looking at the clause or sentence to find clues when guessing the meaning - frequency of covering strategy 22 in class	.7500	.96655	.21613	.2976	1.2024	3.470	19	.003
Pair 23	usefulness in examining how the clause relates to other clauses, sentences, or paragraphs when guessing - frequency of covering strategy 23 in class	.7000	.97872	.21885	.2419	1.1581	3.199	19	.005
Pair 24	usefulness in making use of common sense and knowledge of the world when guessing - frequency of covering strategy 24 in class	.6500	.87509	.19568	.2404	1.0596	3.322	19	.004
Pair 25	usefulness in making use of knowledge of the topic when guessing - frequency of covering strategy 25 in class	.7000	.86450	.19331	.2954	1.1046	3.621	19	.002
Pair 26	usefulness in checking the part of speech after guessing - frequency of covering strategy 26 in class	.6500	.93330	.20869	.2132	1.0868	3.115	19	.006

Pair 27	usefulness in replacing the unknown word with guessed meaning to check if the sentence makes sense - frequency of covering strategy 27 in class	.9000	1.20961	.27048	.3339	1.4661	3.327	19	.004
Pair 28	usefulness in analysing affixes and roots of an unknown word in an early stage when guessing - frequency of covering strategy 28 in class	.5000	.82717	.18496	.1129	.8871	2.703	19	.014
Pair 29	usefulness in analysing affixes and roots of an unknown word in a later stage when guessing - frequency of covering strategy 29 in class	.6500	1.13671	.25418	.1180	1.1820	2.557	19	.019
Pair 30	usefulness in deliberately learning the meanings of the most common affixes - frequency of covering strategy 30 in class	.6000	1.23117	.27530	.0238	1.1762	2.179	19	.042