A Study of L2 Vocabulary Learning Strategies of the First-Year Students from the Different Fields of Health Sciences

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Abstract

        This study explores the vocabulary learning strategies among a group of EFL learners at Rangsit University. A sample of 115 respondents participated in the study. Data collection was carried out using questionnaires. The results revealed that there were distinctive strategy uses to vocabulary learning among the learners. To conclude, the paper will discuss the implications of the findings and some pedagogical considerations for the teaching and learning of vocabulary within an EFL context.

Keywords: Vocabulary Learning Strategies, Second Language Learning, Undergraduate Students

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บทคัดย่อ

        วัตถุประสงค์ การศึกษานี้เป็นการศึกษาการใช้กลยุทธ์ในการเรียนรู้คำศัพท์ในกลุ่มของผู้เรียนภาษาอังกฤษเป็นภาษาต่างประเทศที่มหาวิทยาลัยรังสิต วิธีดำเนินการวิจัย กลุ่มตัวอย่างจำนวน 115 คนเข้าร่วมในการศึกษาครั้งนี้ การเก็บรวบรวมข้อมูลได้ดำเนินการผ่านการแจกแบบสอบถาม ผลการวิจัย พบว่า มีกลยุทธ์ที่โดดเด่นที่ใช้ในการเรียนรู้คำศัพท์ในหมู่ผู้เรียน ข้อสรุป/ข้อเสนอแนะ โดยสรุปแล้วการศึกษาครั้งนี้จะอภิปรายถึงผลของการค้นพบ และข้อเสนอแนะ ในการเรียนการสอน ที่เกี่ยวข้องกับการเรียนรู้คำศัพท์ภายในบริบทการเรียนภาษาอังกฤษเป็นภาษาต่างประเทศ

คำสำคัญ: กลยุทธ์ในการเรียนรู้คำศัพท์ การเรียนรู้ภาษาที่สอง นักศึกษาระดับปริญญาตรี

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1. Introduction

        English plays a crucial role in daily life and is also recognized as the language, which has been taught in universities in Thailand for a long period of time. Not only English majors, but also many non-English major students, at university level are required to learn English as a compulsory course.

        In learning a language, Nation (1993) states that vocabulary knowledge plays a vital role in effective language use. If learners have inadequate vocabulary knowledge, it can be one of the factors, which leads to learners' unpleasant language performance (McCarthy, 1998; Fan, 2003). In Thailand, one of the primary problems among Thai learners is a lack of sufficient vocabulary knowledge, contributing to their difficulties in reading, listening, speaking, and writing skills (Sawangwaroros, 1984; Sukkrong, 2010).

        Most of Thai learners cannot understand what they read and they also take several hours to complete reading tests. It means that they are lack of reading competence. According to Nongnat Chawwang (2008), Thai students were found that the reading ability of the participants in the three areas of sentence structure, vocabulary, and reading comprehension was at a low level. Moreover, some students, while learning a word, find it difficult to select the right word and when they want to convey meaning, they may have difficulties in choosing the appropriate one. As a consequence, the organization of the mental lexicon is known to be a good method for learners to acquire vocabulary more successfully. Wenden and Rubin (1987) state that learners, in the process of language learning, bring a varied repertoire of learning skills. In other words, learners should master some learning strategies to make their L2 learning more effective.

        On exploring ways to develop learners' vocabulary knowledge, a number of research studies have emphasized on the fact that one of the best methods employed is to use vocabulary learning strategies. It has long been recognized that vocabulary learning strategies are an effective tool to improve learners' vocabulary skill (Cunningsworth, 1995; Gu and Johnson, 1996; Nation, 2001). According to Nation (2001), with the help of vocabulary learning strategies, learners can obtain large vocabulary repertoire. These

strategies will be useful for learners in all language levels. Cunningworth (1995) also suggests that an effective way to improve learners' vocabulary knowledge is to develop their own vocabulary learning strategies whereas Gu and Johnson (1996) stated that successful vocabulary learners are likely to use vocabulary learning strategies more frequently than less successful ones.

Besides, vocabulary learning strategies let learners take more control of their own vocabulary learning (Nation, 2001) and also improve their learning autonomy, independence, and self-direction (Oxford and Nyikos, 1989). A significant number of researchers have focused on the importance of learner independence in vocabulary learning. For example, Sokmen (1997) indicates that it is hard for learners to be able to remember all words they need in the classroom; therefore, in order to acquire large vocabulary repertoire, learners need to take their own responsibilities in vocabulary learning. Also, it is firmly believed that learners must take responsibilities of their learning (Gairns and Redman, 1986). This is because, after elementary level, learners will learn thousands of unfamiliar words, and it would be very difficult for teachers to choose which words are useful for students.

Since vocabulary learning strategies have been shown to enhance vocabulary knowledge, it is tremendously valuable to study vocabulary learning strategies employed by the first-year students from the different fields of health sciences at Rangsit University. The frequency of vocabulary learning strategies employed by the students was also investigated.

2. Objectives

This study aims to investigate learners' L2 vocabulary learning strategies. It also discusses the effect these strategies may have on learners' learning process. Briefly, some advice is given in the discussion section based on the previous reflection on strategies for teachers.

3. Materials and methods

The participants in this study are 115 first-year students from the faculties of Medicine, Dental Medicine, Nursing, and Pharmaceutical Science at Rangsit University. Random assignment is used in the study. The selected participants must earn a grade of at least B from English foundation courses.

- 25 medical students participating in the study, out of which were 72% (n=18) were female and 28% (n=7) were male. The majority of the respondents (56%) were 20-21 years old. Lastly, 84% of the respondents have been studying English for more than 10 years.
- 30 dental students participating in the study, out of which were 60% (n=18) were female and 40% (n=12) were male. The majority of the respondents (80%) were 18-19 years old. Lastly, 80% of the respondents have been studying English for more than 10 years.
- 30 nursing students participating in the study, out of which were 90% (n=27) were female and 10% (n=3) were male. The majority of the respondents (90%) were 18-19 years old. Lastly, 83% of the respondents have been studying English for more than 10 years.
- 30 pharmaceutical students participating in the study, out of which were 63.3% (n=19) were female and 36.6% (n=11) were male. The majority of the respondents (63.3%) were 18-19 years old. Lastly, 70 % of the respondents have been studying English for more than 10 years.

The method consists of one part: questionnaire. Questionnaires on vocabulary learning strategies adapted from Schmitt's taxonomy on vocabulary learning strategies in 1997. In this study, the questionnaire is used as the only step in data collection. The questionnaire consisted of 25 statements, which are concerned with the strategies the students use when they learn English vocabulary. The students were asked to choose from the 5-likert scales based on their own studying experience. The data were analyzed by using the Microsoft Excel to calculate the percentages and mean of vocabulary learning strategies. The results were presented by using tables and diagrams to describe the information.

4. Results and Discussion

This section analyzes the data collected according to the method applied in the present research: questionnaire. The questionnaire section analyses the data from students' responses to the multiple choices.

The results from the L2 vocabulary learning strategies will be presented according to the actual number of responses as well as in percentage form. The total number of participants is 115. The percentage has sometimes been rounded-off for convenience.

Table 1 Results of vocabulary learning strategies

Statements	Group	Always 5	Often 4	Sometimes 3	Rarely 2	Never 1
1. I use a bilingual dictionary to help me translate English words into Thai language.	1. Medical	10 (40%)	9 (36%)	5 (20%)	1 (4%)	0 (0%)
	2. Dental	5 (16.7%)	11 (36.7%)	10 (33.3%)	3 (10.00%)	1 (3.3%)
	3. Nursing	11 (37%)	5 (50%)	4 (13%)	0 (0%)	0 (0%)
	4. Pharmaceutical	15 (50%)	4 (13.3%)	7 (23.3%)	4 (13.3%)	0 (0%)
2. I use pictures illustrated in the textbook to find the word meanings.	1. Medical	3 (12%)	3 (12%)	7 (28%)	9 (36%)	3 (12%)
	2. Dental	5 (16.7%)	8 (26.7%)	12 (40.0%)	4 (13.3%)	1 (3.3%)
	3. Nursing	3 (10%)	4 (13%)	16 (53%)	5 (17%)	2 (7%)
	4. Pharmaceutical	11 (36.6%)	9 (30%)	8 (26.6%)	2 (6.6%)	0 (0%)
3. I learn the meaning of words by identifying its part of speech.	1. Medical	1 (4%)	5 (20%)	11 (44%)	5 (20%)	3 (12%)
	2. Dental	3 (10.0%)	14 (46.7%)	8 (26.7%)	3 (10.0%)	2 (6.7%)
	3. Nursing	3 (10%)	8 (27%)	14 (46%)	3 (10%)	2 (7%)
	4. Pharmaceutical	12 (40%)	10 (33.3%)	7 (23.3%)	1 (3.3%)	0 (0%)
4. I ask the teacher to translate the words into Thai.	1. Medical	3 (12%)	6 (24%)	8 (32%)	7 (28%)	1 (4%)
	2. Dental	3 (10.0%)	7 (23.3%)	9 (30.0%)	8 (26.7%)	3 (10.0%)
	3. Nursing	5 (17%)	11 (36%)	9 (30%)	5 (17%)	0 (0%)
	4. Pharmaceutical	11 (36.6%)	9 (30%)	7 (23.3%)	2 (6.6%)	1 (3.3%)
5. I ask the teacher to put an unknown word into a sentence to help me understand the word meaning.	1. Medical	1 (4%)	8 (32%)	5 (20%)	7 (28%)	4 (16%)
	2. Dental	4 (13.3%)	4 (13.3%)	11 (36.7%)	7 (23.3%)	4 (13.3%)
	3. Nursing	5 (17%)	5 (17%)	15 (50%)	3 (10%)	2 (6%)
	4. Pharmaceutical	12 (40%)	9 (30%)	8 (26.6%)	1 (3.3%)	0 (0%)
6. I ask my classmate for word meaning.	1. Medical	6 (24%)	12 (48%)	3 (12%)	4 (16%)	0 (0%)
	2. Dental	9 (30.0%)	11 (36.7%)	6 (20.0%)	3 (10.0%)	1 (3.3%)
	3. Nursing	8 (27%)	10 (33%)	9 (30%)	3 (10%)	0 (0%)
	4. Pharmaceutical	20 (66.6%)	6 (20%)	4 (13.3%)	0 (0%)	0 (0%)
7. I know some new words when working in group works.	1. Medical	3 (12%)	13 (52%)	8 (32%)	1 (4%)	0 (0%)
	2. Dental	9 (30.0%)	10 (33.3%)	8 (26.7%)	3 (10.0%)	0 (0%)
	3. Nursing	5 (17%)	10 (34%)	13 (43%)	1 (3%)	1 (3%)
	4. Pharmaceutical	9 (30%)	18 (60%)	3 (10%)	0 (0%)	0 (0%)

Medical Students

According to the Table 1, the first-year medical students always use a bilingual dictionary to help them translate English words into Thai language (40%) and rarely use pictures illustrated in the textbook to find the word meaning (36%). However, it had been found that they sometimes learn the meaning of words by identifying its part of speech (44%) and ask the teacher for translating words into Thai (32%). Moreover, they often ask the teacher to put an unknown word into a sentence to help them understand the word meaning (32%) and they often ask the classmate for word meaning (48%), and often know some new words when working in group works (52%).

In addition, medical students sometimes practice English in group work activities about vocabulary (40%). Surprisingly, they rarely ask native speakers for help about word meaning (32%). They sometimes learn words about the culture of English speaking countries (32%). Moreover, they rarely speak the new words out loud when studying (36%).

On practicing, it has been found that they often use physical actions when learning words (24%) and they sometimes repeatedly practice new words (48%). Nevertheless, they never write a new word on a flash card or make vocabulary cards (32%), rarely learn words by listening to vocabulary CDs (44%), and never record vocabulary from English soundtrack movies in the notebook (44%). Moreover, they often try to remember a word (36%). In addition, they rarely review their own English vocabulary cards before the next lesson starts (36%) and sometimes memorize new words from English magazine (44%). They rarely use on-line exercise to test their vocabulary knowledge (40%). Finally, they sometimes listen to English songs and news (32%) and sometimes, they are not worried about the difficult words found when reading or listening (44%).

Table 1 Results of vocabulary learning strategies (continued)

Statements	Group	Always 5	Often 4	Sometimes 3	Rarely 2	Never 1
8. I practice English in group work activities about vocabulary.	1. Medical	1 (4%)	8 (32%)	10 (40%)	5 (20%)	1 (4%)
	2. Dental	5 (16.7%)	6 (20.0%)	13 (43.3%)	2 (6.7%)	4 (13.3%)
	3. Nursing	3 (10%)	9 (30%)	13 (43%)	5 (17%)	0 (0%)
	4. Pharmaceutical	10 (33.3%)	10 (33.3%)	10 (33.3%)	0 (0%)	0 (0%)
9. I ask native speakers for help about word meaning.	1. Medical	1 (4%)	6 (34%)	7 (28%)	9 (36%)	2 (8%)
	2. Dental	5 (16.7%)	5 (16.7%)	9 (30.0%)	9 (30.0%)	2 (6.7%)
	3. Nursing	1 (3%)	4 (14%)	9 (30%)	12 (40%)	4 (13%)
	4. Pharmaceutical	11 (36.6%)	10 (33.3%)	7 (23.3%)	2 (6.6%)	0 (0%)
10. I learn words about the culture of English speaking countries.	1. Medical	1 (4%)	5 (20%)	8 (32%)	6 (24%)	5 (20%)
	2. Dental	3 (10.0%)	13 (43.3%)	5 (16.7%)	8 (26.7%)	1 (3.3%)
	3. Nursing	1 (3%)	5 (17%)	10 (33%)	14 (47%)	0 (0%)
	4. Pharmaceutical	13 (43.3%)	12 (40%)	3 (10%)	2 (6.6%)	0 (0%)
11. I write a new word in a sentence so I can remember it.	1. Medical	0 (0%)	7 (28%)	10 (40%)	6 (24%)	2 (4%)
	2. Dental	6 (20.0%)	8 (26.7%)	8 (26.7%)	3 (10.0%)	5 (16.7%)
	3. Nursing	4 (13%)	5 (17%)	18 (60%)	3 (10%)	0 (0%)
	4. Pharmaceutical	12 (40%)	14 (46.6%)	4 (13.3%)	0 (0%)	0 (0%)

Statements	Group	Always 5	Often 4	Sometimes 3	Rarely 2	Never 1
12. I study how to spell new words.	1. Medical	0 (0%)	9 (36%)	9 (36%)	6 (24%)	1 (4%)
	2. Dental	7 (23.3%)	11 (36.7%)	6 (20.0%)	4 (13.3%)	2 (6.7%)
	3. Nursing	2 (7%)	10 (33%)	14 (47%)	3 (10%)	1 (3%)
	4. Pharmaceutical	15 (50%)	13 (43.3%)	2 (6.6%)	0 (0%)	0 (0%)
13. I speak the new words out loud when studying.	1. Medical	2 (8%)	4 (16%)	8 (32%)	9 (36%)	2 (8%)
	2. Dental	6 (20.0%)	2 (6.7%)	15 (50.0%)	2 (6.7%)	5 (16.7%)
	3. Nursing	2 (7%)	11 (36%)	11 (37%)	4 (13%)	2 (7%)
	4. Pharmaceutical	15 (50%)	11 (36.6%)	4 (13.3%)	0 (0%)	0 (0%)
14. I use physical actions when learning words.	1. Medical	4 (16%)	6 (24%)	5 (20%)	5 (20%)	5 (20%)
	2. Dental	7 (23.3%)	3 (10.0%)	13 (43.3%)	4 (13.3%)	3 (10.0%)
	3. Nursing	7 (23%)	7 (23%)	7 (23%)	5 (17%)	4 (14%)
	4. Pharmaceutical	12 (40%)	11 (36.6%)	6 (20%)	1 (3.3%)	0 (0%)

Dental Students

Table 1 demonstrates the strategy, which is most frequently used by the first-year dental students, is the determination strategies for learning the new word's meaning. They often use a bilingual dictionary to help them translate English words into Thai language (36.7%). These students seem to rarely know the meaning of vocabulary; they will use a dictionary for translation.

According to Table 1, the determination strategies are used to determine meaning of new words when encountering them for the first time. Some examples of these strategies are most respondents sometimes use pictures illustrated in the textbook to find the word meanings (40%) and often learn the meaning of words by identifying its part of speech (46.7%).

However, the cognitive strategies, which ranked the lowest percentage in frequency of strategy use, are strategies that include repetition, and the use of mechanical methods in immediate tasks to acquire and retain the information. Some examples of these strategies are most respondents sometimes make vocabulary cards (30%), sometimes earn words by listening to vocabulary CDs (46.7%) and sometimes record vocabulary from English soundtrack movies (44%).

Table 1 Results of vocabulary learning strategies (continued)

Statements	Group	Always 5	Often 4	Sometimes 3	Rarely 2	Never 1
15. I repeatedly practice new words.	1. Medical	2 (8%)	5 (20%)	12 (48%)	6 (24%)	0 (0%)
	2. Dental	6 (20.0%)	11 (26.7%)	9 (30.0%)	2 (6.7%)	2 (6.7%)
	3. Nursing	3 (10%)	8 (27%)	15 (50%)	3 (10%)	1 (3%)
	4. Pharmaceutical	14 (46.6%)	12 (40%)	4 (13.3%)	0 (0%)	0 (0%)
16. I write a new word on a flash card so I can remember it.	1. Medical	1 (4%)	5 (20%)	5 (20%)	6 (24%)	8 (32%)

Statements	Group	Always 5	Often 4	Sometimes 3	Rarely 2	Never 1
	2. Dental	3 (10.0%)	7 (23.3%)	11 (36.7%)	5 (16.7%)	4 (13.3%)
	3. Nursing	0 (0%)	9 (30%)	10 (33%)	5 (17 %)	6 (20%)
	4. Pharmaceutical	13 (43.3%)	11 (36.6%)	6 (20%)	0 (0%)	0 (0%)
17. I learn words by listening to vocabulary CDs.	1. Medical	0 (0%)	3 (12%)	4 (16%)	11 (44%)	7 (28%)
	2. Dental	4 (13.3%)	3 (10%)	14 (46.7%)	4 (13.3%)	5 (16.7%)
	3. Nursing	0 (0%)	6 (20%)	10 (33%)	9 (30%)	5 (17%)
	4. Pharmaceutical	13 (43.3%)	10 (33.3%)	6 (20%)	1 (3.3%)	0 (0%)
18. I record vocabulary from English soundtrack movies in my notebook.	1. Medical	0 (0%)	6 (24%)	3 (12%)	5 (20%)	11 (44%)
	2. Dental	3 (10.0%)	8 (26.7%)	10 (33.3%)	4 (13.3%)	5 (16.7%)
	3. Nursing	2 (7%)	5 (17%)	5 (17%)	14 (46%)	4 (13%)
	4. Pharmaceutical	15 (50%)	10 (33.3%)	4 (13.3%)	1 (3.3%)	0 (0%)
19. When I try to remember a word, I write or say it repeatedly.	1. Medical	3 (12%)	9 (36%)	9 (36%)	3 (12%)	1 (4%)
	2. Dental	8 (26.7%)	11 (36.7%)	9 (30.3%)	1 (3.3%)	1 (3.3%)
	3. Nursing	3 (10%)	9 (30%)	10 (33%)	5 (17%)	3 (10%)
	4. Pharmaceutical	18 (60%)	6 (20%)	5 (16.6%)	1 (3.3%)	0 (0%)
20. I make vocabulary cards and take them with me wherever I go.	1. Medical	1 (4%)	2 (8%)	2 (8%)	9 (36%)	11 (44%)
	2. Dental	3 (10.0%)	5 (16.7%)	9 (30.0%)	5 (16.7%)	8 (26.7%)
	3. Nursing	0 (0%)	4 (13%)	1 (3%)	12 (40%)	13 (44%)
	4. Pharmaceutical	14 (46.6%)	8 (26.6%)	7 (23.3%)	1 (3.3%)	0 (0%)
21. I review my own English vocabulary cards before the next lesson starts.	1. Medical	0 (0%)	3 (12%)	6 (24%)	9 (36%)	7 (28%)
	2. Dental	3 (10.0%)	6 (20.0%)	11 (36.7%)	4 (13.3%)	6 (20.0%)
	3. Nursing	0 (0%)	5 (17%)	7 (23%)	13 (43%)	5 (17%)
	4. Pharmaceutical	17 (56.6%)	8 (26.6%)	5 (16.6%)	0 (0%)	0 (0%)

Nursing Students

Like the dental students, Table 1 shows the strategy, which is most frequently used by the first-year nursing students at Rangsit University; it is the determination strategies for learning the new word's meaning. They often use a bilingual dictionary to help them translate English words into Thai language (50%). These students seem to rarely know the meaning of vocabulary; they use a dictionary for translation.

As can be seen from the Table 1, the determination strategies are used to determine meaning of new words when encountering them for the first time. Some examples of these strategies are that most respondents

sometimes use pictures illustrated in the textbook to find the word meanings (53%) and sometimes learn the meaning of words by identifying its part of speech (46%).

Nevertheless, ranked the lowest percentage in frequency of strategy use, cognitive strategies include repetition and the use of mechanical methods in immediate tasks to acquire and retain the information. Some examples of these strategies are most respondents never make vocabulary cards (44%), rarely earn words by listening to vocabulary CDs (30%) and never record vocabulary from English soundtrack movies (44%).

Table 1 Results of vocabulary learning strategies (continued)

Statements	Group	Always 5	Often 4	Sometimes 3	Rarely 2	Never 1
22. I memorize new words from English magazines.	1. Medical	1 (4%)	4 (16%)	11 (44%)	9 (24%)	3 (12%)
	2. Dental	3 (10.0%)	10 (30.3%)	8 (26.7%)	5 (16.7%)	4 (13.3%)
	3. Nursing	2 (7%)	6 (20%)	10 (33%)	8 (27%)	4 (13%)
	4. Pharmaceutical	17 (56.6%)	10 (33.3%)	2 (6.6%)	1 (3.3%)	0 (0%)
23. I use on-line exercise to test my vocabulary knowledge.	1. Medical	1 (4%)	3 (12%)	8 (32%)	10 (40%)	3 (12%)
	2. Dental	3 (10.0%)	8 (26.7%)	9 (30.0%)	6 (20.0%)	4 (13.3%)
	3. Nursing	1 (4%)	7 (23%)	14 (47%)	7 (23%)	1 (3%)
	4. Pharmaceutical	14 (46.6%)	6 (20%)	7 (23.3%)	3 (10%)	0 (0%)
24. I listen to English songs and news.	1. Medical	6 (24%)	7 (28%)	8 (32%)	3 (12%)	1 (4%)
	2. Dental	12 (40.0%)	11 (36.7%)	2 (6.7%)	5 (16.7%)	0 (0%)
	3. Nursing	9 (30%)	10 (33%)	8 (27%)	3 (10%)	0 (0%)
	4. Pharmaceutical	18 (60%)	6 (20%)	5 (16.6%)	1 (3.3%)	0 (0%)
25. I am not worried about the difficult words found when reading or listening. I skip them.	1. Medical	3 (12%)	5 (20%)	11 (44%)	5 (20%)	1 (4%)
	2. Dental	11 (36.7%)	10 (33.3%)	5 (16.7%)	3 (10.0%)	1 (3.3%)
	3. Nursing	3 (10%)	10 (33%)	9 (30%)	5 (17%)	3 (10%)
	4. Pharmaceutical	19 (63.3%)	5 (16.6%)	6 (20%)	0 (0%)	0 (0%)

Pharmaceutical Students

From Table 1**,** the first-year pharmaceutical students always use a bilingual dictionary to help them translate English words into Thai language (50%) and always use pictures illustrated in the textbook to find the word meaning (36%). Furthermore, it had been found that they always learn the meaning of words by identifying its part of speech (40%) and always ask the teacher for translating words into Thai (36%). Besides, they always ask the teacher to put an unknown word into a sentence to help them understand the word meaning (40%) and they always ask the classmate for word meaning (66%), and often know some new words when working in group works (60%).

In addition, they always ask native speakers for help about word meaning (36%) and they sometimes learn words about the culture of English speaking countries (43%). Moreover, they always speak the new words out loud when studying (50%).

On practicing, they always use physical actions when learning words (40%) and they always repeatedly practice new words (43%). Moreover, they always write a new word on a flash card or make

vocabulary cards (32%), and always learn words by listening to vocabulary CDs (43%). They always record vocabulary from English soundtrack movies in the notebook (50%) and always try to remember a word (60%). In addition, they always review their own English vocabulary cards before the next lesson starts (56%) and always memorize new words from English magazine (56%). They always use on-line exercise to test their vocabulary knowledge (46%). Finally, they always listen to English songs and news (60%), and they are not always worried about the difficult words found when reading or listening (63%).

5. Discussion

It can be found that the research results of the current study indicated that the most used vocabulary learning strategy is dictionary strategies. This was in accordance with the theory of Schmitt (1997) that the strategy most frequently used by junior high school, high school and university students is the use of a bilingual dictionary, which is one of the elements of the Determination strategies. This is also in line with the results of the study conducted by Seddigh and Shokrpur (2012) among medical students at Shiraz University.

Ahmad (1989) believed that dictionary strategies were among the strategies most used by successful students. This result can also suggest that the participants of the study have already advances in their learning that they have shifted from using bilingual dictionaries to the use of monolingual ones. This trend can also be seen in the use of note-taking strategies where the students preferred writing down meaning in English as opposed to writing them down in Thai.

In addition, Schmitt (1997) suggests that vocabulary acquisition is speeded up when the learners interact with native English speakers because of the exposure, which gives input in English as a good method for studying vocabulary. Nevertheless, in the case of the participants of the current study, it is questionable as to how effective they will find watching movies to learn medical terminology. As a general English learning tool, movies and magazines may be helpful; but to learn academic terms for a specific subject, such as medicine, its effectiveness has to be researched.

6. Conclusion

The present study investigates learners' L2 vocabulary learning strategies. It also discusses the effect these strategies may have on learners' learning process. According to the data from questionnaire, the study shows that most of the participants always use bilingual dictionaries to help them understand the meaning. As a consequence, when teaching vocabulary, teachers can teach students these strategies explicitly and guide them to use these strategies in their learning process based on their English abilities.

The result from this research could be quite limited; however, more subject size should be taken into consideration if we want to get a more definite conclusion.

7. Acknowledgements

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