



IC-16

Correlation between Perceived Vocabulary Learning Strategies and English Learning Achievement among Grade 12 Students: A Case Study of a Small-sized Secondary School

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Abstract

The purposes of this present study were to investigate: 1) perceived vocabulary learning strategies, and 2) the correlation between perceived vocabulary learning strategies and English learning achievements among Grade 12 Students. The samples were 25 Grade 12 Students in the 1st Semester, 2022 Academic Year. The research instrument was a questionnaire form for investigating vocabulary learning strategies. The research findings revealed that: 1) Grade 12 Students perceived that they used vocabulary learning strategies in overall 3 strategies in the more helpful level. When ranking the mean scores, it found that the independent learning strategy revealed the highest mean score; the latter strategy was the explicit instruction learning strategy. Finally, the one with the lowest mean score became the incidental learning strategy respectively, and 2) the students' vocabulary learning strategies in the incidental learning strategy, explicit instruction strategy, independent strategy and in overall strategies did not find correlated to English learning achievement. In contrast, it was likely to be negatively correlated but non-significant in the incidental learning strategy, independent strategy, and in overall three strategies.

Keywords: Vocabulary Learning Strategy, English Learning Achievement, Grade 12 Students

1. Introduction

According to the Basic Education Core Curriculum B.E.2551 (A.D. 2008), it mentions the importance of the implementation of this curriculum because the rapid economic and social change together with scientific and technological advancement had made it imperative for adaptation of basic education provision, which must be harmonized with such change and progress. Innovative strategies must be identified to improve the quality of education, which necessarily serves the needs of individuals as well as those of Thai society (Ministry of Education, 2008:1).

In Foreign Language Learning Strand, each level contains four learning strands with the following intentions: Strand 1 being for competency in English language communication, Strand 2 for appreciation of the language and its parent culture, Strand 3 for the utilization of the language as related to other learning needs, Strand 4 for integrating local community interests into the growing "Global Community". In Strand 4, then, English is a learning instrument that enriches the individual: in his self-actualization as a human being, in his career (economic) opportunities, and as a productive participant in his society. Focusing on each learning strand, the aims are to use English in practical, real-life communication situations, in pursuit of life-long education goals, technologic learning, career enhancement, and living as a productive partner in our growing global communities. Necessarily, it is to justify the promotion of English competency to achieve the specific goals of information access, facilitating technologic learning within subjects that require such knowledge, for continuing educational goals, and in expanding career (economic) opportunities. After Grade 12 graduation, these objectives are routinely encouraged at institutes of higher education such as colleges, universities, vocational schools, etc., because they clearly benefit individuals and Thai society (Ministry of Education, 2008:21-22).

Based on the learning achievement of the foreign language learning strand (English) from the Ordinary National Education Test (ONET) of Grade 12 Students, English subject mean scores can be summarized in Table 1 below:



Table 1: Mean Score of English and other 4 subjects from O-NET

Subject	Academic Year 2019		Academic Year 2020		Academic Year 2021	
	Mean	S.D.	Mean	S.D.	Mean	S.D.
English	23.57	6.72	23.37	6.82	20.99	7.00
All 5 subjects	26.73	7.76	27.63	8.26	28.53	8.36

From Table 1, it shows the English subject mean scores in the Years 2019, 2020 and 2021, from 100 total score implying that the mean scores are quite low in each year. Additionally, the mean scores from all three years are lower than the mean scores of all 5 subjects, including Thai Language, social studies, mathematics and science and English. This can point out that Grade 12 students' English learning achievement has still been a problematic issue in learning English as a foreign language. Students' learning strategies of English may be one of the problems as well as vocabulary competencies. Also, vocabulary learning strategies may cause students' English learning achievement.

Due to a linguist' viewpoint, to teach English for communication well requires analyzing language-specific words appearing within context. In the process of using language all learners and their teachers are actually aware of the fact that learning a second or foreign language involves learning a large number of words. As Nation & Coady (1988:2-3) state that there are a variety of approaches to learn vocabulary, both 'direct' and 'indirect' learning. In a 'direct' method, the learners do exercises and activities that concentrate their attention towards vocabulary. For the 'indirect', the learners' attention is directed to some other features, with the vocabulary to be ascertained from context.

It is a common aspect of classroom language learning that many teachers give little or no attention to vocabulary, because they assume that students will learn words incidentally. In lesson practice, Courtright & Wesolek (2001:2) imply that many school students do not have sufficient opportunities to take intensive vocabulary-building classes. Assuming the validity of this reasoning, let us consider the problems involved in learning English for the purposes of successfully taking the advantage of using English both for learners' further studies, careers and daily life communication.

One of the current research and practice in teaching vocabulary that Hunt and Beglar (1998) recommend the approaches and principles that have a role in vocabulary instruction. The learners' proficiency level should be considered when deciding the relative emphasis to be placed on each approach. The authors believe that the following main points and principles could be properly used: 1) *incidental learning*, providing opportunities for the incidental leaning of vocabulary, maybe caused from by learners' experiences themselves or teachers' learning atmosphere management, 2) *explicit instruction*, as teachers' roles to find out suitable methods for students' vocabulary learning in language curriculums and learners at all levels (Swanborn and De Glopper, 2002). However, the learners should be graded, and teaching materials should be fitly selected, and 3) *independent strategy development*, for the experiment with guessing from context, this strategy is a complex and often difficult to carry out successfully, because learners need to know some related words previously, as well as using different types of using dictionaries or any types of vocabulary learning from online sources.

One problem of English language leaning and teaching in Thai settings, the school sizes can be an indicator of high or low learning achievement as Polhiamharn, Ittipol's (2019) study. It indicated that the small-school sized schools are located in remote areas with insufficient administrative factors, influencing the guardians' beliefs in allowing their children to study in. Thus, they take their children to study in larger and schools for better learning processes and achievements for further study and future working. As a result, the small sized schools become the places with insufficient learning and teaching processes together with poor quality in terms of learning achievement.

As the earlier point, students' learning, educational achievement, and English language learning and teaching becomes the main point of students' guardians' decision in allowing their children to study in the secondary level basing on the ideas of students' learning achievement and communicative competency. However, the small-sized schools have been still ready for the educational management in raising the educational quality to meet the governmental policies. Additionally, for the English language instruction in each small-sized school, it has been improved in different components, such as teachers with English major, enough instructional media in learning English and others concerning with English language teaching. In depth of students' learning English, we cannot assume that teachers of English, teaching in Grade 12 level have done in what and how they teach English for learning vocabulary and English communication until they meet their learning achievement from school learning processes.



In this study as a pilot investigation, the researcher assumes to examine that any types of vocabulary learning strategy as earlier mentioned of Hunt and Beglar's concepts (1998), may be correlated to learners' English learning processes both in class and their own learning relating to final learning achievement of Grade 12 students. The results from this study might therefore indicate suitable vocabulary-learning strategies that should be incorporated in learning and teaching processes. We advocate the notion that better educational opportunities for all final year of upper secondary students not only further academic studies, but also better English knowledge (no matter *how* it is acquired!) is a powerful learning instrument to achieve a brighter future in working careers and is in the best interests of the national welfare in an increasingly international environment.

2. Purposes

In accordance with the stated problems, the research aimed to study the following aspects:

2.1 The perceived vocabulary learning strategies among Grade 12 Students: A case study of a small sized secondary school,

2.2 The correlation between students' perceived vocabulary learning strategies and English learning achievement of Grade 12 Students in a small sized secondary school.

3. Significance of the Study

3.1 Like other factors of learning strategies, Grade 12 Students vocabulary learning strategies can be resultant of the tendency for some teachers to incorporate vocabulary-learning activities in their learning syllabus.

3.2 The results of the students' perceptions in vocabulary-learning strategies should be traceable in its effects on their English learning or preparation for the future English learning and everyday uses.

3.3 Lastly, vocabulary-learning strategies can be incorporated into the English learning and teaching syllabi of other class levels to facilitate student English learning. Finally, this research can be a foundation on which to base other research on vocabulary learning strategies that assess other factors.

4. Research Methodology

4.1 Target group

In this study, it aimed to investigate as a pilot study for an extensive one; therefore, 25 target group members were chosen as a case study from Grade 12 Students in Semester 1, 2022 Academic Year, selected from the purposive sampling in a small-sized secondary school, specified in Srapangwittayakom School, Ban Thae District, Chaiyaphum Province.

4.2 Research instrument

1. Type of instrument

This investigation was the descriptive research to present the students' perceived vocabulary learning strategies they used in actual English acquisition and the correlation between the students' perceived vocabulary learning strategies and the students' English learning achievement from their class learning. Thus, the research instrument was the five-rating scaled questionnaires with three vocabulary learning strategies, covering:

1.1) Part 1: it was the English learning achievement (Grades) from 2 English courses based on the school syllabus (2008 Basic Core Curriculum), Ministry of Education, in terms of the mean score calculation from 2 courses, in Semester 1, 2022 Academic Year.

1.2) Part 2: it covered the statements in the questionnaires, including the vocabulary learning strategies as follows:

2.1) incidental learning strategy with 11 items, from No. 1 – 11,

2.2) explicit instruction strategy with 11 items, from No. 12 – 22, and

2.3) independent strategy development with 11 items No. 23 – 33.

In this questionnaire paper, it contained 11 items, totally 33 items written in Thai Language for students' easy reading to respond. For the interpretation of the questionnaire, it contained 5 interpretative levels, with the helpful perceived vocabulary learning students always used, consisting of: 5 meant most helpful strategy, 4 meant helpful strategy, 3 meant moderately helpful, 2 meant somewhat helpful and 1 meant least helpful.

2. Quality assessment of the questionnaire

For the quality assessment of the questionnaires, the subsequent details are as follows:

1) Firstly, it was made up through the linguists' theories based on vocabulary learning strategies, covering: 1) incidental learning strategy, 2) explicit instruction strategy, and 3) independent strategy based on the concepts of Hunt and Beglar (1998) and Swanborn and De Gloppe (2002).

2) It was drafted based on the first step with the questionnaires emphasized on the theories stated written in English language to focus on English language learning integrated in research study.

3) For checking its content validity, the researcher had it checked by 3 specialists, 2 of them were English language lecturers and the other one was the research lecturer working in Rajabhat Universities.

4) When allowing 3 specialists to check the questionnaires, they checked the questionnaires following the criterion of the Index of Item Objective Congruence: IOC as the following criteria:

+1 represents that it is certain that the question matched with the setting objectives

0 represents that it is not certain that the question matched with the setting objectives

-1 represents that it is certain that the question did not match with the setting objectives

After completing the specialists' checks, it was calculated for the IOC values and it indicated the values between 0.66 – 1.00. This can finally be determined the appropriate values for continuing steps by checking the reliability of the questionnaire paper.

5) In this process, the researcher intended to check the questionnaire reliability with 25 Grade 12 Students in Nongsungwittayayon School, Kaengkro District, Chaiyaphum Province, the same size and the same agency with the target group in this study. Finally, the analysis of the reliability coefficient alpha revealed 0.78. As for the statistical technique, this value was believed to be reliable.

3. Data Collection

In this process, the details are as follows:

1) The researcher had the official memorandum to the school director for the reason of allowing Grade 12 Students to respond the questionnaires.

2) The researcher met and told the students for responding the questionnaires and they accepted to willingly respond by listening while checking with Thai language translation.

3) The students' responses took around half an hour, and finally gave the questionnaires back to the researcher for the next step of the data analysis.

4. Data Analysis

The data analysis in this study includes the following processes:

1) The assessment of the questionnaire quality was analyzed for the content validity by 3 specialists to check the Index of Item Objective Congruence: IOC values.

2) The general data were analyzed by the descriptive statistics, covering the percentage, mean and standard deviation. For 5 helpful levels of perceived vocabulary learning strategies, it focused on the following interpretative mean intervals:

4.51 – 5.00 represents the vocabulary learning strategy in the most helpful

3.51 – 4.50 represents the vocabulary learning strategy in more helpful

2.51 – 3.50 represents the vocabulary learning strategy in the moderately helpful

1.51 – 2.50 represents the vocabulary learning strategy in somewhat helpful

1.00 – 1.50 represents the vocabulary learning strategy in the least helpful

3) The correlation of variables concerned was calculated by the Pearson Product Moment Correlation Co-efficiency

5. Results

The results from this study can be concluded emphasizing on the investigation purposes as details:

5.1 Target Group

The target group of this study are show in Table 2:

Table 2 The target samples of Grade 12 Students

Group members	Sexes	Amounts	Percents (%)
Grade 12 Students	Male	10	40
	Female	15	60
	Total	25	100

From Table 1, it shows the number of Grade 12 Students, explaining that there were 10 male students, equaled 40% and 15 female students, equaled 60%.

5.2 The Perceived Vocabulary Learning Strategies among Grade 12 Students

Due to the purposes of the study, herein No. 1, it aimed to study the perceived vocabulary learning strategies, including three strategies concluded in each strategy and students' English GPA as in Table 3:

Table 3 Mean, standard deviation and helpfulness levels of perceived vocabulary learning strategies and students' English GPA

V. Learning Strategies % Grade Point Average	Mean (\bar{X})	S.D.	Interpretation	Ranking
Incidental Learning Strategy	4.080	.493	More helpful	3
Explicit Instruction Strategy	4.160	.943	More helpful	2
Independent Strategy	4.280	.678	More helpful	1
In overall 3 strategies	4.173	.086	More helpful	--
English Grade Point Average	3.140	.965	--	--

Table 3 indicated that Grade 12 Students as the target group perceived using vocabulary learning strategies in overall 3 strategies in the more helpful level ($\bar{X} = 4.173$, S.D.=.086). When ranking the mean scores, it found that the independent study learning strategy revealed the highest mean score ($\bar{X} = 4.280$, S.D.=.678); the latter strategy was the explicit instruction learning strategy ($\bar{X} = 4.160$, S.D.=.943); finally, the one with the lowest mean score became the incidental learning strategy ($\bar{X} = 4.080$, S.D.=.493) respectively. Lastly, the English grade point average of 2 English courses studying in Semester 1, 2022 Academic Year was calculated from overall 25 students equaled 3.140, to calculate the correlation with vocabulary learning strategies.

5.3 The correlation between Students' Perceived Vocabulary Learning Strategies and English Learning Achievement of Grade 12 Students

As earlier stated in the research purpose No. 2, it intended to find out the correlation between Grade 12 Students' three perceived vocabulary learning strategies and their English grade point average (GPA) from 2 English courses, analyzed by the Pearson Product Moment Correlation Co-efficient. The findings are in Table 4:

Table 4 Correlation analysis between vocabulary learning strategies and English learning achievement

Variables of the study	Mean (\bar{X}) N=25	S.D.	Correlations
Incidental Learning Strategy	4.080	.493	-.287 (ns)
Explicit Instruction Strategy	4.160	.943	.009 (ns)
Independent Strategy	4.280	.678	-.062 (ns)
In overall 3 strategies	4.173	.086	-.152 (ns)
English Grade Point Average	3.140	.965	---

p< .05 (ns = non-significant)



Table 4 indicated that the vocabulary learning strategies in the incidental learning strategy, explicit instruction strategy, the independent strategy and in overall strategies did not find correlated to English learning achievement (English GPA). In contrast, it was likely to be negatively correlated but non-significant in the incidental learning strategy, independent strategy, and in overall three strategies.

6. Discussions

To discuss the research findings, the researcher focused on the purposes of the study.

6.1 In this part, it bases on the research objective No. 1, to investigate the perceived vocabulary learning strategies covering three strategies. It indicated that Grade 12 Students as the target group perceived using vocabulary learning strategies in overall 3 strategies in the more helpful level. When ranking the mean scores, it found that the independent study learning strategy revealed the highest mean score; the latter strategy was the explicit instruction learning strategy. Finally, the one with the lowest mean score became the incidental learning strategy respectively. The mentioned findings were similar to those studies on the correlation between vocabulary learning and reading performance have been conducted in various methods. Qian (2018), Watanabe (2016), and Fraser (2010) conducted the studies on the relationship between vocabulary or lexical knowledge and academic reading performance, and the results revealed the extent to which vocabulary depth, size and learning strategies could impact performance on academic reading, and confirmed the importance of the vocabulary factor in reading assessments. From this study, it implied that Grade 12 Students always used various vocabulary learning strategies in terms of learning with independent study by themselves, the explicit instruction basing on their teachers in classrooms or teachers' learning situations and the incidental learning strategy focusing on students' experiences by themselves. As for upper secondary students, they might learn by mixed-strategies both by themselves through differently technological media. However, they still depended on their teachers to enhance their English language learning together with their independent strategy from everyday experiences. For the target group, they studied in a small-sized secondary school without learning competitors and their intentions did not emphasize on any exactly learning strategies. Therefore, different strategies here did not imply obviously for using learning strategies. It can be said that those students might depend only in classrooms because of their living burden in local areas.

6.2 To discuss this part, it focuses on the research purpose No. 2, saying that to find out the correlation between students' perceived vocabulary learning strategies and English learning achievement of Grade 12 Students in a small sized secondary school. It illustrated that the vocabulary learning strategies in the incidental learning strategy, explicit instruction strategy, and independent strategy and in overall strategies were not correlated to students' English learning achievement (English GPA). In vocabulary learning, Chaowarat (2019) and Oupra (2017) analyzed vocabulary appearing in upper secondary education textbooks and found high frequencies of vocabulary in all textbooks employed synonym, collocation and features common in the semantic fields. It implied that in the textbooks in English lessons of secondary education, there were different types of vocabulary learning even learning strategies. It was likely to be related to using different learning strategies in vocabulary practices in this study. The target group seemed to use all three strategies for various texts new words appeared inside. In contrast, in an international context as Alsharif (2022) studied the relationship between vocabulary learning strategies and vocabulary size: evidence from Saudi female EFL learners to develop effective learning environment that may stimulate high quality learning outcomes. The instruments included the questionnaire and the vocabulary size test. The study on vocabulary suggested that participants largely rely on metacognitive learning strategies to English vocabulary and all participants seemed to have no problems with high- and mid-frequency words. From the relationship test also suggested that the increase in using metacognitive strategy was likely to enhance vocabulary knowledge for vocabulary learning strategies and vocabulary size.

In this study, it intended to study the vocabulary learning strategies, covering the incidental learning strategy, explicit instruction and independent strategies. All student responders responded in using each strategy in the much helpful level, showing that Grade 12 Students might use every strategy studied herein, not specific in each of three strategies. In the study finding, it implied that the students might use each strategy in different learning situations, focused on their English teachers. Normally, Thai students, especially in local areas learn English basing on their classrooms, managed by their teachers, relating inside and outside classrooms. From the students' responses in questionnaires, vocabulary learning strategies in the incidental learning strategy, and independent strategy emphasized on the learners' own-practices, relating to Alsharif's (2022) study on the metacognitive learning strategy, relating to learners' own-practices in English learning and enabling to enhance the vocabulary learning strategies and vocabulary



size. In terms of the negative correlation in the incidental learning strategy, and independent strategy of vocabulary learning, it might occur with the students' grade by measuring factors and unintentional rating the questionnaires by some students. However, the students might rate with the high score levels, while their GPA score appeared low, so the results appeared negative.

7. Conclusions

The research findings included 2 points as presented:

7.1 Grade 12 Students perceived that they used vocabulary learning strategies in overall 3 strategies in the more helpful level. When ranking the mean scores, it found that the independent learning strategy revealed the highest mean score; the latter strategy was the explicit instruction learning strategy. Finally, the one with the lowest mean score became the incidental learning strategy respectively, and

7.2) The students' vocabulary learning strategies in the incidental learning strategy, explicit instruction strategy, the independent strategy and in overall strategies did not find correlated to English learning achievement. GPA). In contrast, it was likely to be negatively correlated but non-significant in the incidental learning strategy, independent strategy, and in overall three strategies.

8. Recommendations

The recommendations herein, covered 2 aspects of the implementation and in the future research as follows:

8.1 This investigation discussed in three vocabulary learning strategies, covering the incidental learning strategy, based on individual learning or teachers' environmental management, explicit instruction, focused on teachers' instruction or instructional management and independent strategy, relying on individual learning practices. Thus, students' vocabulary learning competencies rely on Teachers of English to find any strategies suitable for students' learning strategies both in classroom teaching and school environment with English language shown inside. Besides, there are many channels for learning English via different media both online and other channels that teachers should guide them to learn individually. Importantly, teachers of English language should stimulate the students to love English and be aware of its usefulness with vocabulary as the main base in learning.

8.2 In this study, it aimed to be a pilot study, so different limitations and unclear variables may occur. In each learning strategy, it discussed only in overall with out showing each item in learning strategies. In the future study, there should be various items in the questionnaires and expressed in the research results. Besides, there should be the study in the qualitative data with learners for vocabulary learning strategy. Not only for vocabulary learning strategy, there should be the study on English language learning strategy to encourage learners' different factors. In terms of the correlation analysis, in the future research there should be the study on the factors influencing to English learning and vocabulary learning strategies.

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