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RESEARCH PAPER

Effect of Aligned Vocabulary Teaching to Learners' Strategy Preferences on Grade 11 Students' Perceptions of Strategy Use

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Abstract

The study investigated the effects of aligning vocabulary teaching practices with learners' learning strategy preferences on their perceptions of strategy use. The study consisted of two phases. In the first descriptive phase, data was collected from 74 students through a questionnaire and interviews with eight top-performing students. The questionnaire used a zero-to-five scale, and a one-sample t-test compared the observed mean with the expected mean (X=3). The interview data was thematically interpreted alongside the questionnaire data. The majority of students preferred 18 different vocabulary learning strategies assessed through questionnaire and interview. In the second phase, a quasi-experimental design was adopted using these 18 strategies. The experimental group received intervention aligned with their learning strategy preferences, while the control group used the conventional method. Pre- and post-questionnaires and interviews were used to assess the groups' perceptions of the learning strategies. An independent sample t-test analyzed the questionnaire data, and the interview data were qualitatively analyzed. Before the intervention, the experimental and control groups' average mean scores were not statistically significant ($p > 0.05$), indicating similar perceptions of vocabulary learning strategies ($X= 2.892$ and $X = 2.878$), respectively. After the intervention, the groups' mean scores were statistically significant ($p < 0.05$). The experimental group had a significantly higher average mean score ($X = 4.364$) compared to the control group ($X = 2.878$). This highlights the significant contribution of aligning vocabulary teaching practices with students' learning strategy preferences in improving their perceptions of strategy.

Keywords: learning strategy preferences, vocabulary teaching practices, perceptions of strategies use

Introduction

The development of communication abilities in any second or foreign language depends heavily on vocabulary skills. In this sense, Rouhani and Purgharib (2013) contend that rich vocabulary will help students master English and its four major skills which cover listening, speaking, reading, and writing. Similarly, Teng (2014) indicates that sufficient knowledge of the words enables learners to comprehend what they have read or heard. Moreover, Walters (2004) adds that language learners who have vast and rich vocabulary knowledge can develop their thinking, speaking, reading and writing skills. According to Schmitt (1997) cited in Douglas (2004), effective communication can occur quite intelligibly when people simply string words together without paying particular attention to grammatical rules at all.

The ability to communicate fluently and acquire the desired language depends on students' vocabulary skills. As a result, learning vocabulary is one of the most crucial components of learning a language. However, as Takač (2008) argues, developing the desired vocabulary skills is difficult in the context of learning English as a foreign language unless supported by effective learning strategies. Vocabulary learning strategies, according to

Nation (2013), are mechanisms (processes and strategies) used to learn vocabulary as well as steps or actions taken by students to find out the meaning of unknown words. Different writers classified vocabulary-learning strategies differently in different contexts. The current study would bring into focus the strategies that were proposed by Schmitt (2000), as it is a more comprehensive taxonomy of vocabulary learning strategies. Schmitt (2000) suggested five categories of L2 vocabulary learning strategies: discovery, social, memory, cognitive, and meta-cognitive strategies, with 40 strategies in all. According to Tseng and Schmitt (2008), the strategies make learning simpler, quicker, more pleasant, self-directed, and more transferable to different settings. More specifically, as Catalán (2003) argues, vocabulary learning strategies help students discover the meaning of new words, give them the ability to store it in long-term memory, help them to remember it instantly, and to apply it in spoken and written forms. Results of various studies (e.g., Gu, 2010; Farokh, 2012 & Sanaz, 2015) also indicated that vocabulary learning strategies are correlated to learners' vocabulary development. Gu's (2010) study, for example, investigated how vocabulary learning strategies are related to the development of vocabulary proficiencies. Results of the study indicated that vocabulary learning strategies are a significant predictor of word development.

The foregoing description highlights that vocabulary learning strategies serve as crucial tools for resolving learners' difficulties in vocabulary acquisition. The pedagogical implication of the highlighted concept is that learners' vocabulary learning strategies should be promoted. One of the mechanisms to do so is through aligning vocabulary teaching practices with learners' learning strategy preferences. In this regard, Cohen and Macaro (2007) note that as students appear to succeed in learning the English language regardless of the teaching methods, much attention should be paid to learners' learning strategies in language classroom instruction. Similarly to this, Oxford (2002) contends that language education is more successful when it is more relevant to learners' preferred learning styles and strategies. The framework and methods teachers select to aid students in their learning should be based on the student's preferred learning strategies and styles (Ghazal, 2007). This demonstrates that learning occurs most effectively when teaching practices are aligned with students' learning strategy preferences. This is not to say that the best thing one can do for one's students is to use their preferred modes of instruction exclusively but to indicate that learners' independence in learning a foreign language can be more enhanced when instructional practices match with learners' learning strategy preferences.

Teaching practices that give due attention to learners' vocabulary learning strategies promote learners' perceptions of using a wider range of strategies (Brown, 2007). Learners' use of more strategies alone may not guarantee successful vocabulary learning unless they are implemented effectively. Toward this end, Ghazal (2007) contends that using more strategies is not always better; what matters is how well they are implemented in learning new vocabulary items of the targeted language. That is, what seems to make the difference is using strategies that are appropriate to the learning goal. Regarding this, Douglas and Brown (2007) argue that learners' perception of using a wide range of strategies is improved when a teacher helps them use their strategy preferences effectively. Ellis (1997) points out that vocabulary learning is the area where strategic instruction would be particularly beneficial to raise students' perceptions of strategies used. Since most vocabulary learning takes place outside of the language classroom, it is important to raise learners' perceptions of the knowledge involved in knowing lexical items and the strategies used to learn them (Nation, 2001).

Studies, for example, Kaya and Charkova (2011) and Maghsouid and Golshan (2017) have investigated learners' vocabulary learning strategies. Kaya and Charkova's (2014) study explored the most and least frequent vocabulary learning strategies that English language teachers encourage students to use and the strategies that students use to build their vocabulary. The study revealed that contextual guessing and dictionary use were the

most frequently encouraged and used strategies, whereas pronunciation and flashcards were the least frequently encouraged and used, which showed that there was no significant difference between the teacher-encouraged and the student-used strategies. Maghsouid and Golshan (2017) explored the relationship between vocabulary learning strategy and vocabulary size among Iranian EFL learners. The results of the study showed that students with good perceptions of vocabulary learning strategies developed their vocabulary more easily and effectively.

The point discussed above provides evidence of the important role that a language teacher can play in students' learning in general and to enhance their perceptions of learning strategy use in particular. If so, it is worthwhile to investigate the potential effect of aligning vocabulary teaching practices on learners' perceptions of vocabulary learning strategies use in the EFL vocabulary learning context of Ethiopian high schools. Regarding vocabulary learning strategies, it is necessary to see what is stated in the English syllabus for grade eleven, the grade that is the focus of this study. The syllabus states that vocabulary is one of the language elements that students are supposed to master, particularly to cope with the communication demands of the language and to succeed in their academic studies since English is the medium of instruction in high schools and above. The students are supposed to use a variety of learning strategies to develop their vocabulary knowledge. Teachers are also encouraged to support students as much as possible in their learning strategies. Above all, as the syllabus indicates, vocabulary teaching should aim at helping learners to raise their perceptions of more strategies use which in turn enhance their target language vocabulary skills (the revised English syllabus for grades 11–12, 2008).

Based on the researcher's teaching experiences at various high schools, it was noted that the majority of Ethiopian students display limited perceptions regarding the use of learning strategies. One of the reasons could be the mismatch between teachers' vocabulary teaching practices and learners' learning strategy preferences. Some local studies (e.g., Kibire, 2017; Yonata, 2020) indicate this gap. Kibire's exploratory study, for example, assessed grade 11 EFL teachers' vocabulary teaching strategies at Felege Birhan General Secondary and Preparatory School. The findings revealed that teachers' vocabulary teaching techniques did not consider learners' vocabulary learning strategy preferences. Yonata's descriptive study assessed the alignment of teachers' vocabulary teaching and students' preferences for vocabulary learning strategies with grade 10 learners at Ginchi Secondary School in focus. The findings indicated that there was a mismatch between teachers' vocabulary teaching and learners' preferences for vocabulary learning strategies.

The findings of the local studies discussed above clearly reveal that there is a mismatch between teachers' vocabulary teaching practices and learners' learning strategies. This resulted in difficulty in acquiring the intended perceptions of learning strategies use which help learners discover the meanings of the new words. This research gap, therefore, led the researcher to conduct this study.

To this end, the study addressed the following research questions:

1. What are English vocabularies learning strategies most preferred by grade 11 students?

2. Does aligning vocabulary teaching practice with learners' learning strategy have significant effects on learners' perceptions of strategies use?.

Materials and methods

Research design

This study examined the effects of aligning vocabulary teaching practices with learners' learning strategy preferences on learners' perceptions of vocabulary learning strategies use. To achieve this objective, the study was conducted in two phases. The first phase employed a descriptive survey research design to assess the strategies learners prefer to discover and consolidate the meanings of new

vocabulary items. In this regard, the descriptive research design was chosen among different non-experimental research designs. As Dornyei (2007) states, students' language learning strategies preferences, and use can best be explored through descriptive survey. For this reason, the current study adopted a descriptive research design.

After the vocabulary learning strategies of most students were assessed and identified via descriptive survey, the study aimed at examining if aligning vocabulary teaching practices with learners' learning strategies preferences has a significant effect on learners' perceptions of strategies use. As can be understood from this objective, there are two different variables with a cause-effect relationship among them (i.e., aligned vocabulary teaching practices with learners' learning strategies preferences and perceptions of strategies use). Concerning this, Creswell (2003) argues that an experimental research design is employed when the study investigates the cause-effect relationship between certain variables, or when one independent variable is manipulated and its effect is measured by some dependent variables. Therefore, this encouraged the researcher to use experimental research design (i.e., quasi) to conduct the second phase of the study.

Research Setting

This study was carried out at the Ambo Secondary School (the previous preparatory school) of the Ambo Town Administration. The school is located in the western part of the country, about 120 kilometers from Addis Ababa, the capital city. This School was purposely selected as a study site among the five existing Secondary schools in the town for three main reasons. The first reason was the prevalence of the problem under investigation. From his teaching experiences at this school, the researcher observed that most students fail to perceive the role that vocabulary learning strategies play to enhance their word power. Second, the school had a diverse student body which was helpful for the research. The third reason was the researcher's familiarity with the school environment and community which helped him conduct the study smoothly.

Participants and Sampling Techniques

The participants were grade 11 students. Grade 11 students were chosen as the study participants for two main reasons. The first reason was the researcher's lived experience. The researcher has been giving tutorial classes for grade 11 students since 2009 E.C. During the tutorial session, the researcher observed that students hold poor perceptions toward vocabulary learning strategies use which possibly resulted in difficulty in learning the meanings of new vocabulary items. This prompted the researcher to examine whether students' perceptions of strategies use can be improved via conscious intervention.

To choose the sample participant for the first phase of the study, the two sections (sections B & F) of grade 11 students were randomly selected among seven sections of the year. Then, the researcher had to obtain and evaluate carefully lists of students from which a sample could be drawn (called a sampling frame) from the vice-director of the school. Using a simple random sampling technique, 36 samples (20 male & 16 female) from 72 students of section B and 38 samples (17 male & 21 female) from 75 students of section F, a total of 74 sample students were randomly chosen to fill the questionnaire. Again with the help of the department head, 8 of the top ten students from the two sections (4 from each section) were purposely selected based on their first-semester English language results and interviewed. The top ten students from each section were selected because it was believed that they could provide more reliable and valid information.

For the second quasi-experimental phase of the study, the two randomly selected sections were again randomly assigned to experimental (11B) and control groups (11F) using a lottery system.

Data Gathering Tools

Questionnaires and interviews were used to collect relevant data in both phases of the study. The first descriptive survey phase of the adopted to identify the strategies that most learners prefer to comprehend the meanings of newly introduced vocabulary items. To collect quantitative data in this regard, Takac's (2008) vocabulary learning strategy questionnaire was adapted and thirty four close-ended questionnaire items under five vocabulary learning strategy categories (i.e., discovery, social, memory, cognitive and meta-cognitive) were developed and relevant data were collected. In all, the items were close-ended requiring respondents to rate on a zero- to –five point scales ranging from never to (always) (1= never, 2= rarely, 3= sometimes, 4= usually, 5= always). The average response was 3 by considering '0' as staring point. Therefore, the expected or average mean of the study was 3. To validate data collected through questionnaire and to probe far beyond and get in-depth information from participants through face-to-face contact, ten items of semi-structured interview guide were designed and pertinent data were gathered.

After vocabulary learning strategies were identified via descriptive survey, quasi-experimental research design was adopted to examine the effects of the intervention on learners' perceptions of strategies use. To collect relevant data in this regard, pre-and post-questionnaires and interviews were used. The questionnaire consists of twelve close-ended items requiring the respondents to rate on a one- to - five scale (1=never, 2= rarely, 3= sometimes, 4=usually, 5=always). Semi-structured interview guides consist of six items which were thematically the same with the questionnaire items were also developed. The purpose of the pre-questionnaire and interview was to collect data and to check if there were any similarities or differences between the groups' (experimental and controlled) previous perceptions of strategies use. After the courses of intervention, data were collected from both experimental and control groups through post-questionnaire and interview and to examine if the intervention had brought any significant differences between the groups' perceptions of strategies use.

The interviews were used to validate the data collected through questionnaires and to collect in-depth information on learners' perceptions of strategies use.

Data Collection Procedures

This study has two phases. The first descriptive survey phase was conducted to investigate learners' preferences of vocabulary learning strategies while the second experimental phase was employed to examine if the aligned vocabulary teaching to learners' strategy preferences had a significant effect on students' perceptions of strategy use. For the convenience of data collection and analysis the following procedures were used:

The strategies that the majority of the students prefer to learn and consolidate meanings of new vocabulary items were identified through a questionnaire. The data were analyzed and the strategies that major of the students prefer to learn the meanings of new vocabulary items were identified. An interview was conducted with the randomly selected sample participants to triangulate or clarify information obtained through the questionnaire. Based on the learning strategies identified, vocabulary lessons were prepared for the intervention and a quasi-experimental research design was adopted. Data were collected from both experimental and controlled group to see the similarities or differences between the groups' previous perceptions of using vocabulary learning strategies use though pre-questionnaire and interview. Students in the experimental group were taught the vocabulary lesson along with learning strategies identified while the controlled croup was taught through conventional method. After the course of the intervention, data were collected from both group through post-questionnaire and interview to check if the intervention had brought a significant change between the groups' perceptions of strategies use.

Method of Analysis

The Statistical Package for the Social Sciences (SPSS) version 25 was used to analyze the quantitative data.

Regarding the questionnaire data in the descriptive survey part of the study, descriptive statistics such as the mean and standardization were applied to discuss the level of students' preferences for vocabulary learning strategies on a scale of zero to five points. The one-sample t-test was applied to compare whether the mean of a sample (observed mean) was significantly different from a population mean (expected mean) which was 3.

Respondents' response to the questionnaires data in the experimental part of the study was measured on a one to five scale. An independent sample t-test was used to compare the pre and post-questionnaires data results of the two groups (experimental and comparison). The groups' means were used to discuss and interpret the data.

Qualitative data obtained through interviews in both parts of the study were thematically analyzed with questionnaire data through narration.

Results and discussions

Students' Preferences for Vocabulary Learning Strategies

Students' preferences for vocabulary learning strategies were first determined using a descriptive survey. This was done by collecting pertinent data through a questionnaire and interviews. One sample t-test results are presented in Tables 1-6.

Note: (X= sample's mean, SD= standard deviation, Ex= expected mean & sig= level of significance)

Table 1. Students' Discovery Vocabulary Learning Strategies Results

Strategies	Mean (X)	SD	Ex. mean	T-value	Sig
I prefer to imagine the context in which the new word is used to guess the meaning of a word.	3.91	1.075	3	7.246	.000
I prefer to guess the meanings of new words using	4.05	.978	3	9.274	.000
I prefer to guess the meanings of new words using	3.58	1.047	3	4.775	.000
I prefer to guess the meanings of new words using	3.76	1.168	3	5.573	.000
I prefer to guess the meanings of new words using	4.00	.979	3	8.785	.000
I guess meanings of new words using punctuation	3.97	.860	3	9.736	.000
I prefer to analyze a word's parts to guess the meaning.	4.05	.826	3	10.980	.000
I prefer to analyze the parts of speech of a new word belongs to guess the meaning	4.05	.949	3	9.552	.000
I prefer to guess the meanings of new words based on my knowledge of word forms	3.70	1.144	3	5.286	.000
I prefer to use my knowledge of the world to discover the meaning of the new word I encountered while reading or listening	3.53	1.173	3	3.865	.000
I prefer to learn unfamiliar words using dictionaries	4.32	.778	3	14.638	.000
Weighted mean	3.9	.997	3	14.25	.000

As shown in Table 1, among the 11 different discoveries of vocabulary learning strategies assessed, the observed means of all the strategies were greater than the expected mean(X=3). This implies that the majority of students preferred all of the discovery learning strategies assessed to learn and consolidate the meanings of new vocabulary items. The results of the interview support the findings. For example, student 6 replied on the following:

When I come across an unfamiliar word, I always prefer to look at any clues like synonyms, antonyms, and punctuation that help me to determine the meaning of the word. Since a word belongs to certain parts of speech, I always prefer to analyze its parts to guess its meaning. If I am unable to determine the meaning of a new word and I know that the word has more than one part, I always prefer to break it into possible parts and then guess its meaning. I sometimes consider the form of a new word to find its meaning. If I cannot determine the meanings of new words using other strategies, for example, imagining the context and using contextual clues strategies, I tend to prefer a dictionary (S6).

The results of the sample interview above indicated that students preferred almost all the determination vocabulary learning strategies assessed. The results obtained from the questionnaire and interviews, thus, indicated that eleven different determination, or discovery learning strategies assessed such as contextual clues, dictionaries, analyzing words' parts and parts of speech, etc, were found to be the learning strategy preferences of the majority of the students. The findings are consistent with the finding of İlte (2019) which indicated that the experimental group of students who were trained to use context clues to infer the meaning of new words demonstrated higher levels of improvement in the vocabulary knowledge than the control group. The findings also go along Nagy and Scott (2000) and Robb (2003) who state that contextual clues strategies such as definitions, examples, synonyms, antonyms, and punctuations which are pedagogically or naturally put into the texts support students to understand the meaning of novel words and they are considered as essential strategies that help students to figure out the meanings of unknown words. Since a dictionary can be used for various purposes and contains information about a word, according to Nation (2001), students need to use dictionaries, bilingual or monolingual ones, which will help them to understand a lot about the word. Nation (2001) further states that in many languages content words can change their form and meaning by adding prefixes and suffixes. So, knowing prefixes and suffixes can also assist students in the process of determining the meaning of new vocabulary items.

Table 2. Students' Social Vocabulary Learning Strategies Results

Strategies	Mean (X)	SD	Ex. Mean	T-value	Sig
I prefer to ask my teacher to explain the meaning of the new word.	3.70	1.017	3	5.946	.000
I ask my classmates and friends to explain the meaning of the word	3.43	1.325	3	2.807	.000
I prefer to ask members of my family such as my father, mother, brothers, or sisters to learn the meaning of the new words.	1.81	0.839	3	-12.197	.000
I prefer to ask some fluent speakers of English to learn the meaning of the new	1.47	0.687	3	-19.123	.000
Weighted mean	2.60	0.967	3	-22.567	.000

Table 2 above depicts the results of data regarding four different social vocabulary learning strategy preferences of the majority of students. As shown in the table, the mean score of two of the strategies asked by their teachers and classmates (X=3.70 and X=3.43) was above the expected mean. This suggests that most students prefer strategies to learn new vocabulary items. The results are consistent with the interview data. For example, student 5 responded as follows:

When we are in class, I usually prefer to discuss the meanings of newly learned words with nearby classmates. I also prefer to ask my teacher about new words. But there is one in my family who could tell me the meanings of new words (S5).

This interview data indicates that students usually prefer to ask their teacher and classmate about new words' meanings. Thus, the questionnaire and interview results complement each other:

However, as to data in Table 2, the observed means of two of the strategies (i.e., asking for the meanings of the newly acquired words of their family members and some fluent speakers of English) were found to be below the expected group mean value(X=1.47). This indicates that strategies were rarely preferred by students to learn the meaning of newly adopted words. Similar results were also obtained from the interview data in which almost all of the respondents replied that asking their family members and some fluent speakers of English the meanings of newly acquired vocabulary items was not the strategy they preferred to master. Although Ellis (2012) acknowledged the role of families to improve educational outcomes of their children in general and to learn the meanings of new vocabularies items in particular, the findings of the present study showed that learners are not assisted by their families.

Table 3. Students' Memory Vocabulary Learning Strategies Results

Strategy	**Mean (X)**	**SD**	**Ex. Mean**	**T-value**	**Sig**
I prefer to write the meaning of new words in my mother tongue to remember them.	2.28	1.00	3	-6.159	.000
I prefer to link the new words to visual images (pictures) to remember their meaning	1.89	0.769	3	-12.401	.000
I prefer to link new vocabulary items to real objects and remember the meanings.	2.32	1.124	3	-5.171	.000
I prefer to make a mental picture of a new word's written form to remember the meanings.	1.77	0.693	3	-15.257	.000
I prefer to link the new words to other English words with similar sound structures (, e.g, prank,	1.82	0.709	3	-14.261	.000
I prefer to link the new words to other English words that have similar beginning letters (e.g. prank: pray, pretty)	2.23	.129	3	-5.868	.000
I prefer to relate the new words to other words I already know	1.88	0.682	3	-14.158	.000
I prefer to say the meaning of new words out loud repeatedly to remember them.	1.66	0.727	3	-15.836	.000
Weighted mean	1.98	0.854	3	-11.141	.000

As displayed in Table 3 above, the results of the one-sample t-test revealed that the observed mean of six different memory learning strategies explored through the questionnaire was lower than the expected mean (. This indicated that the memory vocabulary learning strategy was not preferred by the majority of 11 students. Interview data collected in this regard was also similar to these findings. For instance, student 4 responded as follows:

When I was in lower grades (i.e., grades 1 and 2, etc.), sometimes I used to prefer to learn the meaning of various words by linking them to visual images (pictures) or real objects. Our teachers also let us say some words loudly to remember their meanings. But I do not normally prefer these strategies since they are more appropriate for elementary students than high school students (S4).

As the extract of interview data above shows, although students used different memory vocabulary learning strategies to learn meanings of newly acquired vocabulary items when they were in kindergarten and elementary classes, they have not preferred them since then. As far as the participants of this study were high school students, the results of both the questionnaire and the interview are consistent with Taka (2008)'s findings who argue that memory vocabulary learning strategies like visual aids and pictures are more effective with beginners or young learners than veterans.

Table 4. Students' Cognitive Vocabulary Learning Strategies Results

Strategy	**Mean (X)**	**SD**	**Ex. Mean**	**T-value**	**Sig**
I prefer to write the meanings of new vocabulary items in a separate notebook and study them	4.11	.820	3	11.619	.000
I prefer to group newly learned words according to similarity of pronunciation to remember them	1.72	.652	3	-6.936	.000
I prefer to group newly learned words according to similarity spelling of to remember them	1.70	.679	3	-6.012	.000
I prefer to group newly learned words according to opposite meanings to remember them	1.73	.746	3	-4.653	.000
I prefer to group newly learned words according to similarity of meanings to remember them	1.54	.623	3	-0.136	.000
I prefer to group newly learned words according to word families to remember its meaning	3.72	.914	3	6.738	.032
Weighted mean	2.42	.739	3	-1.593	.005

Table 4 above shows the results of different cognitive vocabulary learning strategy preferences of students to learn and remember new words. The observed mean of two of the cognitive strategies investigated, writing the meanings of newly acquired vocabulary items in a separate notebook and grouping them according to word families was found to be greater than the expected mean. This implies that most students always write new vocabulary items in separate notebook. They also prefer to group newly discovered words according to word families to remember meanings.

Results of data obtained from the majority of students during the interview support the results. Most respondents noted that they always preferred writing the meanings of new words in a separate notebook and grouping them according to word families. This was to remember the words' meanings. The results were complemented by the findings of Nation (2001) who reported that taking notes in class invites learners to create their own personal structure for newly learned words, and also affords additional exposure during reviews.

Table 4 shows that each observed mean scores of four of the strategies (i.e., grouping newly learned words according to their similarity in pronunciation, spelling, meanings, and their opposite meanings) was, however, below the expected mean. The findings indicate that most students prefer not to learn and remember the words' meanings. Most respondents' interviews support these questionnaire results. For example, student 1 said:

When I come across new words, I usually write their meanings at the back of my exercise book and read them later. I also prefer to group newly learned words according to their word families so that I am more likely to remember them. However, I never enjoy grouping newly discovered words according to their similarities in pronunciation, spelling, meanings, and opposite meanings. This is to learn and recall them later.

The results obtained from the questionnaire and the interview show that the majority of students prefer very limited cognitive learning strategies to enhance their vocabulary skills. However, Hedge (2000) suggests that learners need a range of cognitive strategies to learn the meanings of many more unfamiliar words to meet the language's communicative demand.

Table 5. Students' Preferences of Meta-cognitive Vocabulary Learning Strategies

Strategy	Mean (X)	SD	Ex. mean	T-value	Sig
I prefer to do vocabulary related questions after class to learn more vocabulary items	3.31	1.335	3	5.232	.000
I prefer to read novels and short stories to remember newly learned words	1.65	.816	3	-9.125	.000
I prefer to read newspapers and magazines to remember newly learned words by	1.45	.620	3	14.79	.000
To remember the newly learned words, I prefer to use them when I speak in English	3.55	1.388	3	4.782	.000
I prefer to construct my own sentences using newly learned words to remember their meaning.	3.67	1.329	3	6.300	.000
Weighted mean	.73	0.193	3	4.397	.000

Table 5 above shows data collected regarding students' preferences for five different meta-cognitive vocabulary learning strategies. The observed mean score of three of the strategies such as constructing own sentences using newly learned words, using the words while speaking English, and doing different vocabulary activities after class were found to be greater than the expected mean of this study. This indicates that the majority of the students

usually preferred strategies to remember the meanings of newly learned words.

Among the strategies investigated the observed means of strategies like reading novels or short stories and newspapers or magazines (X= 1.64 and 1.44 respectively) were found to be lower than the expected mean which implies that most of the students rarely preferred these strategies to learn the meanings of new words.

Results from both the questionnaire and interview indicate that doing different vocabulary activities after class and constructing their own sentences using newly learned words were the strategies preferred by the majority of students. The findings are compatible with that of Webb (2005) who argues that students learn new words more when they can use them in their speaking or writing, or when it becomes their active vocabulary.

Generally, the results of data obtained through administering questionnaires and interviews in the first descriptive survey part of the study revealed that the majority of students tended to prefer eleven different discoveries, two social, two cognitive, and three meta-cognitive, a total of eighteen vocabulary learning strategies to determine and consolidate meanings of new vocabulary items. As the results indicate, students' learning strategies preferences level to each of the five themes of the strategies also varies (i.e., discovery, social, memory, cognitive, and meta-cognitive). Table 6 summarizes the weighted mean of each theme of the strategies.

Table 6. Students' learning strategies preferences level to each five themes of the strategies

Strategy	Weighted mean	SD	Ex. mean	T. value	Sig.
Discovery	3.39	.997	3	14.25	.000
Social	2.60	.967	3	-22.567	.000
Memory	1.98	.854	3	-11.141	.000
Cognitive	2.42	.739	3	-1.593	.000
Meta-cognitive	2.73	.193	3	4.379	.000

Table 6 displays the students learning strategies preference level to each themes of the five strategies. As can be seen from the table, the great majority of the students preferred discovery learning strategy the most (weight mean= 3.39) whereas memory learning strategies the least (weight mean =1.98) to learn meanings of new vocabulary items.

Based on the learning strategies preferences of the majority of the students identified in the descriptive phase of the study above, therefore, vocabulary lessons were prepared for intervention. Then, the second quasi-experimental phase of the study was conducted to check the potential effects of aligning the learning strategies preferred of the students on their perceptions of strategies use.

Students' Perceptions of Strategies use

The findings of the descriptive part of this study showed that students tended to prefer verities of vocabulary learning strategies to increase their word power. Based on the strategies preferred by the majority of the students, material for intervention was prepared and the second quasi-experimental phase of the study was conducted to investigate if the intervention had any significant effects on learners' perceptions of strategies use by collecting data through pre- and post-questionnaires and interviews. The following tables reveal the results of the independent sample t-test.

Table 7. Comparison of Experimental and Controlled Groups Means Results of Pre- and Post-Perceptions of Using Vocabulary Learning Strategies to Learn Vocabulary items

Perceptions	Groups	items	Mean	Std. Dev.	T-value	Sig
Pre- perception of using VLSs to learn new words	Experimental	7	2.892	1.411	.063	0.778
	Control	7	2.878	1.374	.066	0.779
Post-perception of using VLSs to learn new words	Experimental	7	4.364	0.680	16.457	0.00
	Control	7	2.872	0.560	16.557	0.00

As illustrated in Table 6 above, , there were no statistically significant differences between the mean scores of the students two groups (X=2.892 & X=2.878) regarding their perceptions of using different vocabulary learning strategies to learn the meanings of new vocabulary items before the intervention. The two groups held similar perceptions of using the strategies to learn new vocabulary items. The results of the interview data also support this finding. Most of the respondents argued that they rarely perceived using different VLSs while learning the meanings of new words. Student 3 from the experimental group and student 4 from the control group, for example, stated:

S3*: Looking at the context is the only strategy that I rarely perceiving when I discover the meanings of new vocabulary items.*

S4: I rarely perceive that I have been using more strategies to learn the meanings of new words. For example, imagining the context is the only strategy I sometimes use.

The above data signified that students in both groups both rarely perceived the importance of strategies use to learn the meaning of new vocabulary items.

Table 6 also presents data results of the two groups' concerning their perceptions of using various vocabulary learning strategies to learn the meanings of new vocabulary items at the end of the intervention. The average mean score of the groups was statistically significant since $p < 0.05$, in which the experimental group's mean was greater than (X=4.364) the control group (X=2.878). This signified that the teaching of vocabulary along with students' learning strategies and preferences altered students' perceptions of using various vocabulary learning strategies to learn the meanings of new vocabulary items.

The results of the data from interviews bear out this finding. Most respondents from the experimental group verified that their perceptions of using various vocabulary learning strategies and learning the meanings of new vocabulary items were improving, although all interviewees from the control group still had poor perceptions in this regard. Student 3 from the experimental group and student 6 from the control group, for example, confirmed:

S3: Before the second semester, a dictionary was the only strategy that I perceived I always used to learn the meaning of new words, but I have always been using different mechanisms or strategies to learn the meanings of new vocabulary items since then.

S6: I don't think my perception of using various strategies to learn the meanings of new words has improved because I have still been using a dictionary to determine the meanings of new vocabulary items.

As can be understood from the sample interview data above, after the course of the intervention, experimental students' perception to learn meanings of new vocabulary using the strategies was more enhanced than the control group. This inferred that the aligning of vocabulary teaching practices with students' learning strategies preferences can upgrade students' perception of using VLSs to learn meanings of new vocabulary and. The findings are compatible with Brown (2007) who argues that teaching practices that give due attention to

learners' vocabulary learning strategies promote learners' perceptions of using a wider range of strategies.

Table 8. Comparison of Experimental and Controlled Groups' Means Results of pre-and post - perceptions of using vocabulary learning strategies to answer vocabulary related questions

Perception	**Group**	**items**	**Mean**	**SD.**	**T- Value**	**Sig**
Pre- perception of using vocabulary learning strategies to answer vocabulary related questions	Experimental	5	2.923	1.337	0.42	2.808
	Control	5	2.863	1.370	0.43	2.808
Post-perception of using vocabulary learning strategies to answer vocabulary related questions	Experimental	5	4.531	0.551	19.532	0.00
	Control	5	2.922	0.896	19.321	0.00

Table 7 above displays the data results obtained from the second category of questionnaire items, which assessed students' perceptions of using vocabulary learning strategies to vocabulary related questions before and after the intervention. The mean scores of the two groups were not statistically insignificant before the intervention since $p > 0.05$. This indicates that perceptions of the two groups regarding using vocabulary learning strategies to improve their vocabulary achievement results were almost the same. Further, similar results were obtained from interview data in which the majority of the respondents stated that they rarely perceived that they had used various strategies to answer vocabulary related questions. The following sample experiment with student 2 from the experimental group and student 4 from the control group could be a good example.

S2: *My perception of using different vocabulary learning strategies while performing vocabulary tests is not so good because I don't think that using various strategies help me to answer different vocabulary related questions and improves my vocabulary test results.*

S4: I always score low marks on my vocabulary test. If I use different vocabulary learning strategies while I am performing vocabulary tests, my test result may be improved.

This inferred that the intervention has brought a significant change in the groups' perception of using VLSs to improve their vocabulary achievement results. Results from the interview support this finding. Student 3 from the experimental group and student 4 from the control group, for example, stated:

S3: I have been using *various mechanisms or strategies to determine the meanings of new vocabulary items while performing vocabulary tests since the second semester. As a result, my vocabulary test result is relatively better than before.*

S4: *I haven't tried most strategies to improve my vocabulary test results. The only strategy I have always used while performing vocabulary tests is imaging the context. This doesn't bring about any significant change in my vocabulary achievement results.*

Table 7 above also illustrates the results of questionnaire data on learners' perceptions of using VLSs to improve their vocabulary achievement results after the intervention. As the table indicates, the mean scores of the experimental group ($X = 4.531$) is greater than that of the control group ($X = 2.922$). The mean scores of the groups were statistically significant at alpha level 0.05 since the average mean score of the students in the experimental group was considerably greater than that of the students in the control group.

Results of the sample interview data above indicated that although the perceptions of students in the experimental groups to use various VLSs to improve their vocabulary achievement results became enhanced, of

those students in the control group remained constant. Hence, it is possible to suggest that the intervention had a significant effect on

Conclusion and recommendation

The results of one sample test revealed that 18 different vocabulary learning strategies were he strategies that the majority of students used to learn and consolidate the meanings of novel vocabulary items. Results of independent sample t-test revealed that the average mean scores of perceptions of strategies use of students in both experimental and control groups were not statistically significant at alpha level 0.05 before the intervention which implied that the two groups held similar perceptions of vocabulary learning strategies use. At the end of the intervention, however, the mean scores of the groups were statistically significant ($P<0.05$). In other word, the average mean score of students in the experimental group was greater than that of students in the control group. This clearly signifies that the aligning of vocabulary teaching practices with students' learning strategy preferences has a considerable contribution to improve learners' perceptions of strategies use.

Based on the key findings and conclusions, the following recommendations are made.

 As far as vocabulary learning strategies enable learners to determine and consolidate the meanings of new vocabulary items and help them develop their word power, every student should know the importance of using different learning strategies.

 Some learners may be uncertain about which strategy works best for them. Therefore, teachers should provide a wide range of instructional support so that students can use their learning strategies in the most effective way.

 To improve learners' perceptions of strategies use, instead of focusing solely on conventional methods of presenting vocabulary to students, aligning vocabulary teaching practices with learners' learning strategies would be worth considering.

 Teachers should be given different seminars and workshops on the current principles and theories of vocabulary teaching to enhance their students' vocabulary learning and perceptions of learning strategies use.

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