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The type of vocabulary learning strategies used by students to improve speaking skills at a private high school in the city of Loja.

TRABAJO DE TITULACIÓN

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Septiembre, 2016

APROBACIÓN DEL DIRECTOR DEL TRABAJO DE TITULACIÓN

Magister

Lida Mercedes Solano Jaramillo

DOCENTE DE LA TITULACIÓN

De mi consideración:

El presente trabajo de titulación: *The type of vocabulary learning strategies used by students to improve speaking skills at a private high school in the city of Loja*, realizado por Vélez Aguilar Andrés Isrrael, ha sido orientado y revisado durante su ejecución, por cuanto se aprueba la presentación del mismo.

Loja, Marzo 2016

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DECLARACIÓN DE AUTORÍA Y CESIÓN DE DERECHOS

“Yo, Vélez Aguilar Andrés Isrrael declaro ser autor del presente trabajo de titulación: The type of vocabulary learning strategies used by students to improve speaking skills at a private high school in the city of Loja, de la Titulación de Ciencias de la Educación mención Inglés, siendo la Mgs. Lida Mercedes Solano Jaramillo directora del presente trabajo; y eximo expresamente a la Universidad Técnica Particular de Loja y a sus representantes legales de posibles reclamos o acciones legales. Además certifico que las ideas, conceptos, procedimientos y resultados vertidos en el presente trabajo investigativo, son de mi exclusiva responsabilidad.

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Vélez Aguilar Andrés Isrrael

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DEDICATION

I dedicate the present work to my parents who have given me unconditional love and support in every single moment of my life, and for guiding me through the right path to success. I also dedicate my work to my best friends for being there during my schooling period, for all the amazing memories that we have lived together.

Andrés

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CONTENTS

Cover	i
APROBACIÓN DEL DIRECTOR DEL TRABAJO DE TITULACIÓN	ii
DECLARACIÓN DE AUTORÍA Y CESIÓN DE DERECHOS	iii
DEDICATION	iv
ACKNOWLEDGMENT	v
CONTENTS	vi
ABSTRACT	1
RESUMEN	2
Introduction	3
Discussion.....	6
Literature review	6
Method.....	23
Description, analysis and interpretation of results.....	25
Conclusions	38
Recommendations	39
References	40
Annexes	44

ABSTRACT

The present study examined the type of vocabulary learning strategies used by students to improve speaking skills at a private high school in the city of Loja. The purpose of this study was to determine the most and least used strategies by students and to analyze the effectiveness of strategies in students' speaking.

The sample selected for the study was 32 students from a private high school of Loja. Based on the aim of this research, qualitative and quantitative methods were used to determine and understand the use of vocabulary learning strategies. Additionally, the instruments applied were observations, questionnaires, and individual interviews for both students and teachers.

The results showed that "to listen to English songs", "to use English websites"; and "to watch English television programs/films" were the most used strategies by students. On the other hand, the least used strategies were "to keep a vocabulary notebook" and "to make a group of words for reviewing". Finally, it was found that the most beneficial strategy for improving speaking skill is "interaction" because students can learn and practice English features.

Key words: vocabulary, learning, strategies, speaking, interaction.

RESUMEN

En la presente investigación se examinó el tipo de estrategias de aprendizaje de vocabulario utilizadas por los estudiantes para mejorar las habilidades de habla en un colegio privado en la ciudad de Loja. El propósito del estudio fue determinar las estrategias más y menos utilizadas por los estudiantes y analizar la eficacia de las mismas en el habla de los estudiantes.

La muestra seleccionada para el estudio fueron 32 estudiantes de un colegio privado de Loja. En base al objetivo de esta investigación, se utilizaron métodos cualitativos y cuantitativos para determinar y comprender el uso de las estrategias para aprender vocabulario. Además, los instrumentos aplicados fueron observaciones, cuestionarios y entrevistas individuales para los estudiantes y profesores.

Los resultados mostraron que "escuchar canciones en inglés", "usar sitios web en inglés"; y "ver programas de televisión/películas en inglés" fueron las estrategias más utilizadas por los estudiantes. Por otro lado, las estrategias menos utilizadas fueron "mantener un cuaderno de vocabulario" y "hacer un grupo de palabras para revisión". Finalmente, se encontró que la estrategia más beneficiosa para mejorar la habilidad de hablar es "interacción" porque los estudiantes pueden aprender y practicar características del inglés.

Palabras clave: vocabulario, aprendizaje, estrategias, habla, interacción.

Introduction

English has become a widely used language in the world. Through many years, linguists, psychologists, and researchers have been trying to explain how language is learned. For learners, it is important to understand how language works in order to use it. Most of the time, English proficiency is directly associated with a wide vocabulary. In any language, vocabulary is a very important component. Thus, learners need large and rich vocabulary knowledge in order to use language effectively.

Moreover, students' reluctance to speak is a major challenge when teaching English. In fact, students should master speaking because it is an important skill that provides them the ability to inform, to persuade and to communicate. Therefore, the deficiency to communicate is one of the main problems related to English learning and it is caused by learners' low vocabulary.

In this concern, it has been proposed a research topic, whose title is the type of vocabulary learning strategies used by students to improve speaking skills at a private high school in the city of Loja. The purpose of this research was to determine the most and least used vocabulary learning strategies by students of a private high school to improve speaking skill. The specific objectives were to determine the most common vocabulary learning strategies used by students, to determine the least common vocabulary learning strategies used by students and to analyze the effectiveness of vocabulary learning strategies in students' speaking.

Previous studies have been conducted in order to identify the vocabulary learning strategies used by students and the relationship between vocabulary knowledge and speaking.

An interesting study was conducted in Mexico by Marín (2006), which focused on answering the following research questions: (1) what are the most and least frequently

reported vocabulary learning strategies? And (2) what are the most and least frequently reported vocabulary learning strategy categories? The population was 185 students from English Major at the University of Veracruz. Also, two instruments were used for data collection: open Vocabulary Learning Strategies (VLS) questionnaire and a 78-item VLS questionnaire. According to the results, further consolidation appeared as the most used vocabulary learning strategies category, followed by dictionary use and repetition strategies. On the other hand, the least used categories were skipping and association strategies.

Another important study was the one conducted in Thailand by Nirattisai and Chiramanee (2014), who explored the relationship between the students' vocabulary learning strategies and their vocabulary size. The population was 257 University students. The methodology of the research included the use of 2 instruments: the vocabulary learning strategy questionnaire, adapted from Schmitt (1997) and a bilingual English-Thai version of vocabulary size test. The results showed that out of 39 vocabulary learning strategies, 2 strategies were used at a high level, 18 at a moderate level, and 19 at a low level. Regarding the overall use of VLS, it was moderately correlated with vocabulary size.

Finally, the study carried out in Malaysia by Asgari and Mustapha (2010) examined the type of vocabulary learning strategies used by students. The qualitative research design was adopted as the method for this investigation. Data collection included an individual open-ended interview with 10 students majoring at Teaching English as a Second Language (TESL). The results showed that strategies related to memory, determination, and metacognitive categories were popular strategies among students, for instance learning a word through reading, the use of monolingual

dictionary, the use of English language media, and applying new English words in daily conversations.

Regarding our country, there has not been a lot of research on this theme. By studying the vocabulary learning strategies used by students, they can understand the roles of vocabulary learning strategies for improving speaking skills. Additionally, students can get knowledge regarding vocabulary learning strategies that they can use in order to acquire autonomy and independence in their own learning. Also, teachers can introduce the most used strategies in their lessons in order to help students learn new English words, to reinforce the least used strategies through meaningful tasks, and to encourage them to participate actively during speaking assignments. In addition, the present research can serve as the basis for future investigations on vocabulary learning strategies in which the topic can be studied in a broader way.

For the development of the present research, all the bibliographic materials and resources were available. There was opening by the private institution for the application of the instruments and participants collaborated with the questionnaires and interviews without problem.

Discussion

Literature review

The topics covered in this section present an overview of English learning and the use of strategies by students. Also, the importance of vocabulary and speaking skill is emphasized. It is important to have a clear idea about these topics because it served as the foundation for the present research. The topics were covered sequentially and were focused on English vocabulary learning strategies and its relationship with speaking skill.

Foreign and second language acquisition

According to Lightbown and Spada (2011), language acquisition is a captivating and spectacular aspect of human development. This aspect of human beings has attracted the attention of linguists and psychologists for many years. The first step that occurs in human beings is first or native language acquisition, which is described as an unconscious process where children start to produce words. Their homes or an early education are the scenarios for language acquisition. When this process has partly or entirely been achieved, a necessity for acquiring a second language emerges. Second language acquisition occurs in a similar way, but through different stages. There are some theories in second language acquisition that give more importance to learners' capacity for language acquisition. Others focus on the role of the environment, interaction, and learners' engagement with the social context.

Generally, second language acquisition, also known as second-language learning, is the process in which people learn a second language. This process involves the learning of any other language incorporated to a person's first language. However, the

concept of second language learning may incorporate the learning of a third, fourth, or subsequent languages (Gass & Selinker, 2008).

Second language and foreign language are terms that do not differ in a major way. That is the reason why not many writers differentiate these two terms. Richards and Schmidt (2002) define second language as any language learned after one's native language. On the other hand, they define foreign language as a language that is not the native language of a large population in a country, it is not used for instruction in schools, and it is not used for communication in other social aspects such as politics or media. In addition, foreign languages are taught in school as subjects in order to communicate with foreigners or to read materials printed in the language. Crystal (2003) explains that the distinction between second and foreign language is not universally accepted.

Finally, some authors emphasize the role of learning environment in teaching non-native languages. Thereby, there is a geographical and environmental distinction between second language and foreign language. In addition, it can be said that second language and foreign language are not two kinds of language but situations of learning (Fasold & Connor-Linton, 2006).

Language skills

When learning a new language, there are four primary language skills that are required for communication. According to Haycraft (1996), in the process of learning, people usually learn to listen in the first place, then to speak, next to read, and finally to write. These are known as the four language skills. Listening, speaking, reading, and writing are known as the macro-skills, which differ from the micro-skills such as grammar, vocabulary, pronunciation and spelling. As these macro-skills demand several abilities, it is important to differentiate them, especially because English pronunciation is very different from its written form.

According to Shelby (2013), listening and speaking are integral parts of oral communication. For learners, it is important to be exposed to different kinds of English input, such as films, TV and radio programs, internet podcasts, etc., in order to learn different accents and features of English language in real life settings. Listening to various authentic English materials helps learners to produce sentences in an easier way in terms of pronunciation, grammar, vocabulary, and style (formal and informal). In addition, reading is an essential skill for language learners because it helps to improve the other skills. There are some reasons why reading is a very essential skill. The continuous repetition of patterns and words while reading help students to acquire and remember vocabulary and grammar structures. Reading also allows students to improve on their own; it helps to learn and remember the correct spelling of words as well as to write.

Finally, writing is a very relevant skill because written communication has become widely used nowadays with the use of technology and social media. For professionals and academics, proper grammar has been considered very important; however, in the recent years, to have good writing skills has increased its importance. Through writing, people can communicate and convey meaning in a better way. As a result, for learners, writing skill improves language acquisition; it develops critical thinking and helps learners to express freely as in their mother tongue (Wright, 2011).

The speaking skill

Communication is the goal of learning a second or foreign language and to promote communicative efficiency is the objective of speaking. Bilash (2009) argues that it is important for learners to be able to use the language in a correct and purposeful way. Speaking is frequently more valued than other skills by students; however, they

feel more anxiety related to their oral production. The development of speaking skill results in the development of the other skills because they are interrelated.

Additionally, speaking a second or foreign language requires more than just the knowledge of grammar and semantic rules. In order to speak, learners must acquire the knowledge of the way that native speakers use the language. Foreign language learners have difficulties when speaking the target language because an ability to use the language appropriately is required for effective oral communication in social interactions. Interaction involves not only verbal production but also paralinguistic elements of speech such as pitch, stress, and intonation. Also, non-linguistic elements such as gestures, facial expressions, and body language are required to convey meaning (Richards & Schmitt, 2002).

Aspects considered in speaking skills

Speaking, as the rest of the other language skills, has to be learned and practiced. So, English learners need explicit instruction in speaking. Within the speaking skill, there are some competences that learners must domain in order to develop speaking proficiency. Richards and Schmitt (2002) provide four competences for speaking proficiency.

First, the Grammatical Competence, which refers to the knowledge of learners regarding the structure of English Language. Learners should master the grammar, including morphology and syntax, vocabulary, and mechanics of the language. Learners should have knowledge of words and sentences in order to convey meaning (Richards & Schmitt, 2002). The aim of grammatical competence is to acquire the knowledge and the ability to use forms of expression that are grammatically correct and accurate. Grammatical competence also contributes to learners' fluency because it allows learners to use and understand the language structures accurately (Gao, 2001).

Second, the Discourse Competence refers to cohesion and coherence while speaking. Whether it is a formal or informal situation, these rules are applied in order to hold a conversation in a meaningful way. This also includes the ability to convey information appropriately and coherently to those who are listening. Effective speakers should learn structures and discourse markers in order to express ideas, show relationships of time, and indicate cause, contrast, and emphasis. This helps learners to manage turn taking in conversations (Richards & Schmitt, 2002).

Third, the Sociolinguistic Competence, which according to Freeman and Freeman (2014), refers to the knowledge and understanding of how to speak in a particular context. Learners have to learn how to produce and understand language in different circumstances, taking into consideration different factors such as the audience, the purpose of interaction, and the norms or conventions of interaction.

Fourth, the Strategic Competence is related to the way in which learners manage the language in order to reach communicative goals. This is the main competence of speaking proficiency because it involves the ability of the learner to compensate its lack of previous competences. This competence allows learners to know when and how to handle a conversation, and also to know how to manage comprehension problems (Richards & Schmitt, 2002).

Apart of these four important competences, there are other factors that are considered for speaking proficiency. These factors are pronunciation and fluency. According to Schmitt (2002), pronunciation involves the way in which people use speech sounds for communication. It is a crucial factor that has to be taken into account when speaking in order to convey meaning because there are different ways of pronouncing individual sounds for producing an utterance. In the scope of

pronunciation, other elements, such as intonation and stress, are arranged. All these elements constitute the way we sound to our interlocutors. In English teaching, a lesson that involves speaking instruction also involves pronunciation instruction.

Finally, fluency refers to the ability of people to speak easily, smoothly, and expressively. In other words, people can speak, understand, and respond clearly and concisely while relating meaning and context. Generally, as learners progress from beginning to advanced speakers, fluency increases (Chambers, 1997).

Vocabulary and its influence in speaking

Vocabulary is defined as the set of words in a language that a person knows or uses. Vocabulary grows with age and it is considered as an essential tool for communication and acquiring knowledge. An extensive vocabulary acquisition is one of the biggest challenges when learning a foreign language (Joseph, 2012).

In addition, Barnhart (1997) provides four types of vocabulary. From broad to limited, the types of vocabulary are reading vocabulary, listening vocabulary, speaking vocabulary, and writing vocabulary. Regarding reading vocabulary, it is defined as the words that a person is able to recognize when reading. This is the largest vocabulary because the reader is exposed to more words by reading than by listening. The second type is listening vocabulary. It is defined as the words that a person recognizes when listening to speech. People may use cues such as tone, gestures or context of conversations in order to understand the words they have not been exposed before. Speaking vocabulary refers to the words a person uses in speech. It is probably a subset of listening vocabulary. Misuse of words is often a consequence of the spontaneous nature of speech. Finally, writing vocabulary relates to the words that a person uses in several forms of writing, from formal to informal. People usually use a limited set of

words to communicate. This type of vocabulary is limited because people do not have a wide knowledge on specific subjects.

Vocabulary instruction has been extensively focused on writing rather than the other skills; however, it is evidently necessary for the rest of the language skills. In speaking, vocabulary errors tend to prevent comprehension more than grammatical errors. Lexical errors are more frequent. Native speakers tend to punctuate lexical errors as more serious than grammatical errors. The main issue when learners produce the target language is that they often use basic vocabulary while native speakers use more precise lower-frequency words. In order to solve this problem, learners have to improve their vocabulary size until it becomes effective. Learners can improve their vocabulary size through the use of vocabulary learning strategies (Schmitt, 2000).

Language Learning Strategies (LLS)

According to Lessard-Clouston (1997), learning strategies (LS) are described as the conducts and thoughts that learners dedicate in learning in order to influence learners' encoding process. A more specific definition by the same author is that learning strategies are behaviors of learners that influence the way in which they process information. Similarly, Griffiths (2001) defines learning strategies as the use of techniques which learners use in order to acquire knowledge.

In fact, Oxford (1989) emphasizes that learning strategies must be appropriate to materials, tasks, goals, necessities, and learning stage in the learners in order to improve their performance. Students will develop their own learning strategies over time. This includes the way students learn and recover information, how they study, and how they use their learning strengths. Most of the time, students are not aware of the use of learning strategies; subsequently, it will become a natural and automatic process. On the

other hand, there are strategies that learners need to be taught or brought to their attention (Chamot & Kupper, 1989).

Regarding language learning strategies (LLS), those have been defined by many researchers. According to Richards and Platt (1992), language learning strategies are deliberate behaviors and thoughts that learners use during the learning process in order for them to comprehend, learn or remember new information. Another definition by O'Malley and Chamot (1990) is that language learning strategies are the particular thoughts or behaviors that students use to help them to understand, acquire, or hold on to new information. In addition, Oxford (1990) defines LLS as concrete actions, behaviors, stages or techniques that learners deliberately use to enhance their advancement in expanding second language skills. Through the use of LLS students are able to control their own learning independently (Lessard-Clouston, 1997).

Language learning strategies can be considered as the most important variables that influence second language performance. Teachers must be conscious of language learning strategies by means of proper teaching training in order to improve the use of learning strategies in students. In addition, teachers can help learners with the use of strategies by taking into consideration their needs and preferences (Oxford, 1989).

The importance of Vocabulary learning

The first step in learning a second or foreign language is to learn vocabulary. However, a learner never completes vocabulary acquisition. Vocabulary acquisition is a continuous process. There are many techniques or strategies that help people to acquire new vocabulary.

In English teaching, vocabulary is a main aspect because students will not be able to understand ideas without sufficient vocabulary. Wilkins (1972, p. 111) argues that “without grammar, very little can be conveyed, without vocabulary, nothing can be conveyed.” An

extensive vocabulary is needed for expression and communication. As learners expand their fluency and expression in English, it is important for them to gain more vocabulary knowledge and develop their own vocabulary learning strategies.

Additionally, Mehring (2010) claims that vocabulary learning is an essential feature of second language learning. It is not enough for learners to interact with the language; they need to be taught vocabulary in context in order for them to retain the new words and use them frequently. It is important for students to provide them with lots of material in appropriate situations for vocabulary learning. Teachers must allow students to use and practice the vocabulary during the lessons for helping them to retain the new words. In this way, students will build up their own repertoire.

Similarly, Williams (2013) suggests that teachers should develop a variety of techniques for vocabulary instruction in order for students to be engaged and reach several learning styles. In addition, using visual techniques is extensively effective for vocabulary learning, modern multimedia technologies provide teachers with lots of options for presentation of new vocabulary. Comprehension and retention process is enhanced by the use of multimedia. In order to promote vocabulary development, teachers should use activities that demand students' use of context and background knowledge. Consequently, teachers must initiate comprehension checks to ensure that learners retain and apply information in a proper way.

According to Nation (2002), a strong and rich vocabulary helps learners to develop language proficiency because it makes easier to perform the four skills: listening, speaking, reading, and writing. Also, the more words a learner knows, the more they will learn. Vocabulary is acquired through a focused and conscious process; but, it is more common to learn indirectly by listening and reading, using clues in order

to discover meanings. However, this kind of learning would be possible only if learners have significant vocabulary to be able to learn new words from context. This might be a disadvantage for learners whose vocabulary is low, but for learners who know more words, they can use these words to learn even more.

Vocabulary Learning Strategies and their classification (VLS)

Vocabulary learning strategies are considered a part of language learning strategies (Nation, 2001). VLS are the actions that learners use in order to comprehend and remember vocabulary (Cameron, 2001). Catalan (2003) defines vocabulary learning strategies as mechanisms used with the purpose of learning vocabulary as well as steps or actions taken by learners to (a) discover the meaning of unknown words, (b) keep them in long-term memory, (c) remind them at will, and (d) use them in oral or written mode.

Vocabulary learning strategies classification has been proposed by different researchers. One of the well-known and well-accepted among these classifications is the one suggested by Schmitt (1997), who divides vocabulary learning strategies into two main groups of strategies: discovery strategies, which are strategies that are used by learners to discover learning of words and consolidation strategies, which state that a word is consolidated once it has been encountered. Besides these two groups, Schmitt also categorized vocabulary learning strategies into five sub-categories determination, social, memory, cognitive, and metacognitive strategies.

The first category is determination strategies. According to Schmitt (1997), these strategies are used when learners try to find the meaning of a new word without recurring to another person's knowledge. Determination Strategies ease the gaining of knowledge of a new word through different ways. Therefore, students try to discover the meaning of a new word by guessing it with the help of structural knowledge of language, context, and reference

materials. First, students should be able to notice the new word's part of speech, which can help in the guessing process. They can also get hints about the meaning of words from its root or affixes; however, it is not always reliable because the analysis of word parts can lead to erroneous meanings. So, this strategy is better used as a confirmation of guesses from context.

Second, guessing the meaning of an unknown word from context has been extensively promoted as it has been seen to fit in more comfortably with the communicative approach than other strategies. Context should be taken to mean more than just textual context; however, since contextual clues can come from a variety of sources, guessing from context most commonly refers to inferring a word's meaning from the surrounding words in a written text. Third, learners can acquire new vocabulary through reference materials, primarily dictionaries. In addition, pictures have been shown to be useful if learners focus on them. Finally, determination strategies demand a certain level of language proficiency in order to use them. Additionally, learners must have appropriate background knowledge of the subject and the strategic knowledge of how to effectively go through the inference process (Schmitt, 1997).

A second way of learning new vocabulary is through the use of social strategies, which are ways to learn a new word by interacting with other people. Teachers are usually the ones in this position. Learners can ask teachers to help them in several ways such as giving the L1 translation of a word, giving a synonym, giving a definition, using the new word in a sentence, or any combination of these. When teacher translates a word, it has the advantage of being fast, comprehensible, and that it makes possible the transfer of knowledge of the L1 word (collocations, associations, etc.) onto the L2 equivalent. However, the disadvantages are that teachers should know students' first

language, and that translations are not exact equivalents; consequently, some erroneous knowledge may be transferred.

In the same way, for the use of synonyms, students need to know collocational, stylistic, and syntactic differences in order to use them effectively. Paraphrasing as well involves similar kinds of complexities. Not just teachers but also classmates or friends can be asked for meaning in all of the ways mentioned before. In addition, learners can be introduced to new words and discover their meanings through group work in order to learn and practice vocabulary. Group work also promotes active processing of information and cross modelling/imitation, the social context enhances motivation of the participants. The major advantage of these strategies is that learners have extra time to use and manipulate language in class (Schmitt, 1997). Krashen (1982) suggests that input is a key element in language acquisition; consequently, the interaction with native-speakers would be an excellent way to acquire vocabulary.

The third category involves Memory strategies, which are strategies where learners connect their learning of new words to mental processing by associating their existing or background knowledge with the new words, using some form of imagery, or grouping. Schmitt (1997) suggests that new vocabulary can be integrated into different kinds of existing knowledge (previous experiences or known words), or images can be custom-made for retrieval. Students can learn new words by studying those using pictures of their meaning instead of definitions. Additionally, learners can produce their own mental images of meanings. Imagery has been shown to be more effective than repetition for reading passages and sentences. New words can also be associated with a particular personal experience of the underlying concept.

Similarly, Aitchison (1987) states that new vocabulary can be linked to L2 words which the student already knows. Usually, this involves some type of sense of relationship, such as coordination, synonymy, or antonymy. An important form to help remember words is through grouping. People seem to organize words into groups naturally without prompting. Usually, words that belong to each meaning category are recalled together. If words are organized in some way before memorization, recall is improved (Schmitt, 1997).

The fourth category regarding Cognitive strategies involves strategies that do not engage learners in mental processing but focus on manipulative mechanical process. These strategies include repetition and using mechanical means such as word lists, flash cards, and vocabulary notebooks to study words (Riankamol, 2008).

Written and verbal repetitions are common strategies that are used in many parts of the world. Many learners who have used these strategies have reached high levels of proficiency (O'Malley and Chamot, 1990). For an initial exposure to a word, word lists and flash cards can be used. Sometimes, most of the learners continue using them to review it subsequently. Using flash cards has the advantage that they can be taken anywhere and studied when one has a free moment. Another advantage is that flash cards can be arranged to create logical groupings of the target vocabulary (Cohen, 1990). Another kind of cognitive strategy is using vocabulary notebooks. This strategy has been recommended by a number of writers who suggest a type of notebook that incorporates the progressive learning of various types of word knowledge for each word (Schmitt, 1997).

The fifth category refers to metacognitive strategies, which are defined as strategies used by learners in order to control and evaluate their own learning by having

an overview of the learning process in general (Schmitt , 1997). These strategies are related to the processes involved in monitoring, decision-making, and evaluation of the best way to study. As a result, these strategies produce a more effective learning. To acquire a second language efficiently, it is important to increase the exposure to it. Regarding English, there are plenty of books, magazines, newspapers, and movies in most parts of the world that serve as an endless resource. Testing oneself provides input into the efficiency of learning strategies choice, which offers positive reinforcement if progress is being made or a signal to change strategies if it is not.

The effectiveness of practicing can be maximized if it is organized and scheduled rather than do it randomly. Taking this into account, the principle of expanding rehearsal proposed by Schmitt (2000) suggests that learners should review new material soon after the initial meeting, and then at progressively increasing ranges. Studies researching the number of exposures necessary to learn a word have results ranging from 5 to 16 or more (Nation, 2001). Finally, the conscious decision to persevere may be one of the most important strategies of all (Schmitt, 1997).

Vocabulary Strategies in Speaking

Vocabulary is a fundamental element of communication. It would not be possible to communicate in speech or writing without using words that convey the ideas that people want to express. Problems with speaking fluency in learners are caused by a poor repertoire of vocabulary. There is usually a gap between what is wanted to convey in terms of content and what can be conveyed with a limited vocabulary. Learners are conscious of the importance of vocabulary and often report that their major problem in expression is the lack of adequate lexis (Laufer, 2013).

Spoken and written words are used every day in order to communicate ideas, thoughts, and emotions to the people around us. Learners' repertoire should be full of synonyms for them to be able to choose the best words for the tasks and to communicate what they want. An important aspect to take into consideration is that vocabulary use will depend on the audience that the task is assigned for (Kurtus, 2012).

Previous studies related to vocabulary learning strategies have been conducted in different countries showing important results related to learners application. It is important to analyze these studies and its results because they serve as a guide for the present study. Additionally, differences between studies provide a better understanding of the factors that influence students' vocabulary learning.

The first study is the one conducted in México by Marín (2006), which purpose was to find how university students learn English vocabulary both inside and outside the classroom. For this study two research questions were stated: (1) what are the most and least frequently reported vocabulary learning strategies? And (2) what are the most and least frequently reported vocabulary learning strategy categories? Regarding the method, the population selected was 185 students from the English Major. Also, he used two instruments for data collection: an open VLS questionnaire with general questions and a 78-item VLS questionnaire, similar to the one proposed by Schmitt (1997) and other authors. In this case there were eight vocabulary learning strategy categories: guessing, skipping, dictionary use, social discovery, note taking, repetition, association, and further consolidation strategies. The results showed that further-consolidation was the most used category, followed by dictionary use and repetition strategies. On the other hand, skipping and association strategies were the least used categories.

In Thailand, Nirattisai and Chiramanee (2014) investigated vocabulary learning strategies employed by university students and explored the relationship between the students' vocabulary learning strategies and their vocabulary size. The participants of this study were 257 Prince of Songkla University students in the 6 fields of study: medicine, dentistry, nursing, engineering, accounting, hospitality and tourism. The methodology of the research included the use of 2 instruments: the Vocabulary Learning Strategy Questionnaire, adapted from that of Schmitt (1997) in order to investigate students' frequency of vocabulary learning strategy use, and the bilingual English-Thai version of vocabulary size test used to measure students' vocabulary size. The study revealed that the subjects slightly use vocabulary learning strategies. The most frequently used strategies were determination strategies, followed by metacognitive strategies, memory strategies, cognitive strategies, and social strategies, respectively. Out of 39 vocabulary learning strategies, the subjects employed 2 strategies at a high level, 18 strategies at a moderate level, and 19 strategies at a low level.

Another study that has been conducted in Thailand is the one carried out by Riankamol (2008). He investigated English vocabulary learning strategies adopted by English students. The purpose of the study was to find most and least frequently used vocabulary learning strategies by students. In order to collect data, he used a survey which consisted in a 25-item questionnaire adapted from Schmitt's taxonomy for vocabulary learning strategies. The results indicated that the use of metacognitive strategies appears as the most frequently used by students who are considered high proficient students in English. And the least frequently used vocabulary strategy was "I learn words by listening to vocabulary CDs" which belongs to cognitive strategies. However, the findings will be advantageous to teachers to develop effective vocabulary teaching and to provide students with successful vocabulary learning strategies.

In Malaysia, Asgari and Mustapha (2010) examined the type of vocabulary learning strategies used by students. Based on the aim of this study, it was decided to adopt the qualitative research design as the best method for this investigation to better understand the use of VLSs by these particular students. Therefore, the method for collecting data was an open-ended interview that was conducted individually with ten students. The participants were selected at the Faculty of Education Studies in University Putra of Malaysia in order to get a deep understanding of participants' backgrounds in vocabulary learning and the strategies that they used to learn new words in English. The results showed that strategies related to memory, determination, and metacognitive categories are popular strategies and the learners are keen in using them.

Finally, Koizumi (2005) studied the relationships between productive vocabulary knowledge and speaking performance of learners. The aim of this study was to examine how size and depth of productive vocabulary knowledge are related to speaking performance. Two studies were conducted; the first one was a pilot for the second one. The first study had a specific focus on size of productive vocabulary knowledge while the second study was modified based on the problems found in the first study. Two tests were used as instruments for the study: the productive vocabulary knowledge test and the speaking test. The results showed that there is a strong tendency in some tasks to produce a better speaking performance related to vocabulary when they produce descriptions and comparisons without pre-task planning time. In addition, the size of productive vocabulary knowledge is related to accuracy in a task, and at least one aspect of depth is related to one element of fluency.

Method

Setting and participants

The present research was held in the city of Loja. The sample selected to carry out this research was students from English Advanced Level of a private high school.

A total of 32 students, between the ages of 15 to 17 years old, were interviewed and surveyed during the investigation. Also, 60% of students were male and 40% female. Most of the students have been learning English for more than 10 years.

Procedures

Prior to the field research, literature review was held. Different sources were reviewed in order to obtain useful information for the investigation. Printed and online materials were analyzed.

The gathering of information included data from students from the private high school, who were in English Advanced Level, regarding vocabulary learning strategies. The approaches used in this study were Qualitative and Quantitative.

For a qualitative analysis, three observations were conducted during English lessons in order to analyze students' use of vocabulary learning strategies and their speaking performance. An observation sheet was used as instrument for this procedure. The observations were used to obtain important information related to students' performance during the lessons. In addition, an interview was applied to each student. This interview was conducted in order to gather information about the use of vocabulary learning strategies for improving speaking skills.

Quantitative analysis was used to gather numeric data about the use of vocabulary learning strategies. This information was compared with the data collected qualitatively. The quantitative data was gathered from all students of English Advanced Level of the high school

and from the teachers. In order to get quantitative information, Vocabulary Learning Strategy Questionnaire proposed by Schmitt (1997), was adapted and used as main instrument. The purpose of this questionnaire was to investigate students' frequency of vocabulary learning strategies use.

The technique used during the research was note taking. Note taking helped the researcher to take meaningful notes to record essential information related to the topic under study.

Finally, for the analysis, the information from questionnaires was tabulated and organized in an excel file. Then, the charts were developed. Additionally, the information from interviews was compared with numeric information from questionnaires for further conclusions and recommendations.

Description, analysis and interpretation of results

In this section, the data collected from students' questionnaire has been analyzed in order to state results for the present research. Also, the information obtained from interviews to students and teachers, and class observations contributed to provide more specific information about the use of vocabulary learning strategies. The strategies have been analyzed within each category. In order to determine the most and least used strategies, the percentages corresponding to the frequency of use have been added. So, frequencies 4 (always use it) and 3 (often use it) are taking into consideration for the most used strategies. On the other hand, frequencies 1 (seldom use it) and 0 (never use it) correspond to the least used strategies. Finally, frequency 2 (sometimes use it) shows a common use among students.

Quantitative and Qualitative Analysis

Use of Vocabulary Learning Strategies

Determination strategies

Table 1. Frequency of use of Determination strategies

No.	Strategy	Frequency										TOTAL	
		4		3		2		1		0		F	%
		F	%	F	%	F	%	F	%	F	%	F	%
1	Look up words in a bilingual or English-English dictionary.	0	00	6	19	18	56	5	16	3	09	32	100
2	Guess the meanings of words from textual context.	7	22	13	41	11	34	0	00	1	03	32	100
3	Analyze parts of speech to guess the meanings of words.	5	16	15	47	11	34	1	03	0	00	32	100
4	Analyze any available pictures or gestures to understand the meanings of words.	5	16	13	41	9	28	3	09	2	06	32	100

Note: F=frequency, %=percentage

Author: Andrés Vélez

Source: Vocabulary Learning Strategies Questionnaire

The table above shows the results obtained from the determination strategies; it was found that the most used strategies by students to learn new vocabulary in this category are “to guess the meanings of words from textual context” and “to analyze parts of speech to guess the meanings of words”; both with 63% of use among students. According to Schmitt (1997), those are strategies that learners use without recurring to other people. From the observations performed, it is confirmed that students mostly guess the meaning from context. For instance, when students were developing reading activities and found new words, the teacher encouraged them to guess the meaning of the word instead of providing them with the Spanish translation.

In addition, teacher mentioned that strategies based on guessing the meanings in context or analyzing information allow students to get the idea or meaning of words and phrases easily. By analyzing the parts of speech to guess the meaning of words, students are aware of the type of words that they have encountered. This means that learners should have knowledge of words and sentences in order to convey meaning (Richards & Schmitt, 2002). Through the use of this strategy, information is more accessible for students when they face speaking assignments; so they know the type of word they should use.

The use of determination strategies helps students to remember new words for a longer period of time and it is more meaningful due to the effort that students make. In class, it is very useful for students to guess meaning from context because they are exposed to the use of language. Students can discuss with classmates the meaning of new words and it creates a good environment for speaking performance. Later, students may use the new utterances for further speaking activities. Freeman and Freeman (2014) refer to the knowledge and understanding of how to speak in a particular context as sociolinguistic competence. It is important for students to learn how to produce and understand language in different

circumstances. Additionally, when speaking, learners should take into consideration the audience, the purpose of interaction, and the norms or conventions of interaction.

On the other hand, the least used strategy in this category is “to look up words in a bilingual or English-English dictionary” with 19% of use among students. It was confirmed in the class observations that the use of dictionary was null; in fact, students did not carry a dictionary with them. This is due to the fact that students are not allowed to use dictionaries in class. According to Schmitt (2002), pronunciation is a crucial factor that has to be taken into account when speaking in order to convey meaning because there are different ways of pronouncing individual sounds for producing an utterance. This makes the use of a dictionary a helpful strategy for improving speaking. When students develop several activities such as speaking, listening, reading, and writing, they should use dictionaries for a quick inquiry; specially for speaking assignments in which learners can find several meanings and the correct pronunciation of words.

In addition, teacher mentioned that students should learn to find other means apart from dictionaries to understand the meaning of words; for instance, context is the most emphasized for this purpose. Students and teachers agreed in the interviews that context is the best way to understand new words. According to Schmitt (1997), guessing the meaning of new words from context is more convenient for the communicative approach than other strategies.

Finally, “analyzing any available pictures or gestures to understand the meanings of words” is a strategy which frequency of use is common among students. From lower to higher levels of English, it is a very useful strategy because it provides instant meaning for words. Students can obtain the meaning by analyzing pictures and use that visual information while speaking. However, Schmitt (1997) suggests that learners must have the appropriate background knowledge of the subject in order to use this strategy effectively. In this regard, it

was observed that students were not provided with a specific picture but with some visual clues in order to identify the meaning of a word.

Social strategies

Table 2. Frequency of use of Social strategies

No.	Strategies	Frequency											
		4		3		2		1		0		TOTAL	
		F	%	F	%	F	%	F	%	F	%	F	%
5	Ask classmates to translate the meanings of words.	6	19	10	31	8	25	6	19	2	06	32	100
6	Discover new meanings through group work activities.	3	09	10	31	5	16	9	28	5	16	32	100
7	Ask teachers to translate the meanings of words.	7	22	15	47	7	22	3	09	0	00	32	100
8	Interact with classmates.	7	22	14	44	7	22	4	13	0	00	32	100
9	Interact with an English teacher.	4	13	15	47	9	28	4	13	0	00	32	100
10	Ask other people to translate the meanings of words.	4	13	9	28	9	28	9	28	1	03	32	100
11	Interact with native English speakers.	3	09	5	16	9	28	11	34	4	13	32	100

Note: F=frequency, %=percentage

Author: Andrés Vélez

Source: Vocabulary Learning Strategies Questionnaire

The table above shows the results obtained in the Social strategies category. It was found that the most used strategies in this category are “to ask teachers to translate the meanings of words” (69%) and “to interact with classmates” (66%). The use of these strategies was observed during class. Students usually asked the teacher for the meaning of words when a classmate could not help. Also, to “ask classmates to translate the meaning of words” (50%) is a common strategy among students, as well as to “ask other people to translate the meaning of words” (41%), which students mentioned they use them outside the class when they develop homework. In the interviews, students mentioned that they use these strategies in order to check meaning of words with classmates and with teacher. The use of

these strategies has the advantage that students have extra time to use and manipulate language in class (Schmitt, 1997). When students ask teachers or classmates to translate a word, it makes possible the transfer of knowledge of the L1 word onto the L2 equivalent. On the other hand, sometimes translations are not exact equivalents; so, teacher and students need to be careful on this fact. Thus, it can be said that the use of translation is a helpful way to help in students' speaking, especially with fluency, due to the fact that it is a fast and comprehensible way of getting the meaning of a word.

Meanwhile, the least used strategies are "to discover new meanings through group work activities" with 42% and "to interact with native English speakers" with 47% of student that do not use it. Group work activities have the advantage for students to improve speaking because it promotes processing of information, cross modelling/imitation and interaction, which motivates learners to be active participants in a social context (Schmitt, 1997). This strategy should be emphasized in class in order to provide students with other ways to discover the meaning of new words. It was observed that while developing a group work activity, which was a role play, students interacted in order to understand and use new words that they had learned before the assignment.

Krashen (1982) affirms that "interacting with native English speakers" would be an excellent way to acquire vocabulary because input is a key element in language acquisition. Through interaction with native speakers, students can acquire elements of speech such as pitch, stress, intonation, and other non-linguistic elements required to convey meaning. Teacher also agrees with this fact since she indicated that by interacting with others, students are exposed to real situations and English. In this case, "interacting with classmates" and "interacting with an English teacher" are strategies that help students in class because it fosters communication. Also, expressions used through communication are important and

useful for the learning process. In class, teacher and students' first language is Spanish, so interaction with native speakers is not present. In students' interviews, they mentioned that they have interaction with native speakers outside the classroom; however, just a few of them are able to use this strategy. According to Richards and Schmitt (2002), students must acquire the knowledge of the way that native speakers use the language in order to speak. Speaking a foreign language demands more than just the knowledge of grammar and semantics.

All of the strategies included in this category are beneficial for students because its main mean to discover meaning of words is interaction. Through interaction, students are able to enhance their speaking performance both inside and outside the classroom. Students receive a meaningful input through communication activities, so they are able to apply this knowledge for further assignments.

Memory strategies

Table 3. Frequency of use of Memory strategies

No.	Strategies	Frequency										TOTAL	
		4		3		2		1		0		F	%
		F	%	F	%	F	%	F	%	F	%		
12	Say words aloud when studying.	2	06	9	28	10	31	5	16	6	19	32	100
13	Make a group of words by topic for reviewing.	0	00	3	09	10	31	8	25	11	34	32	100
14	Study words with pictures.	1	03	3	09	8	25	9	28	11	34	32	100
15	Associate the word with other words you have learned.	6	19	12	38	9	28	4	13	1	03	32	100
16	Connect words to personal experiences.	8	25	5	16	8	25	7	22	4	13	32	100
17	Connect the word to its synonyms and antonyms.	5	16	5	16	11	34	8	25	3	09	32	100
18	Make a group of words by alphabetical order for reviewing.	0	00	3	09	3	09	9	28	17	53	32	100
19	Use words in sentences.	6	19	8	25	12	38	4	13	2	06	32	100
20	Stick the word and its meaning in a place where it can be obviously seen.	1	03	7	22	7	22	3	09	14	44	32	100

Note: F=frequency, %=percentage

Author: Andrés Vélez

Source: Vocabulary Learning Strategies Questionnaire

In the table above, the frequency of strategies use in the Memory Strategies category is shown. As it is observed, the most used strategies are “to associate the word with other words you have learned” (57%) and “to use words in sentences” (44%). According to Aitchison (1987), these strategies show that new vocabulary can be linked to L2 words which students already know.

Additionally, students mentioned that using words in sentences after they encounter them is beneficial because in that way they can apply the new vocabulary and retain new information. This was observed during class; students analyzed and related new words with the ones they already knew. Teacher had a guide role by asking questions to students in order for them to get the meaning of words. This process fosters interaction between students. Furthermore, once they find the meaning of a word they are ready to apply and use it in several writing and speaking activities such as dialogues, conversations, and debates.

Regarding the least used strategies in this category, it was found that “to study words with pictures” (12%) and “to make a group of words by alphabetical order for reviewing” (9%) are the ones that have the lowest degree of frequency. In the interview, teacher mentioned that due to the high level of students, those strategies are not used in the classroom. However, she suggested that using pictures is very effective with lower levels. Schmitt (1997) states that students can learn new words by studying those with pictures instead of definitions.

Regarding speaking, memorization strategies are good for students because they are able to recall and use several words and expressions, for instance verbs and phrasal verbs. Additionally, students remember pronunciation of words and individual sounds. Despite the high percentage of students who do not use the strategy about “Making a group of words by topic for reviewing” (59%); it is a beneficial strategy for improving students’ vocabulary.

According to Schmitt (1997), if words are organized in some way before memorization, recall is improved. It is important that students organize words in ways that make it easier to understand and recall new vocabulary, which can be used in further activities that demand the use of words in several contexts.

The rest of strategies within this category have a common use among students. To “say words aloud when studying” (35%) helps students to practice the pronunciation of words which is important for speaking activities. Based on the interviews, students consider this strategy a helpful way to memorize the pronunciation of words due to the fact that most of the time it is difficult to pronounce a new word which is not familiar to students.

To “connect words to personal experiences” (31%) and “connect the word to its synonyms and antonyms” (32%) are strategies which use helps students to integrate new vocabulary into existing knowledge, for example previous experiences or known words (Schmitt, 1997). In class, it was observed that students use these strategies for a better understanding of a word, using synonyms helped them to relate the new words with previous knowledge. Consequently, these strategies produce a meaningful learning.

Finally, a strategy which percentage of students that do not use it is high is to “stick the word and its meaning in a place where it can be obviously seen” (53%); it would be effective for beginner learners because they can instantly get access to the meaning of a word when they have to develop written or speaking tasks.

In the interview, teacher mentioned that the use of the strategy about “sticking the word and its meaning in a place where it can be obviously seen” is sometimes used in class. The purpose of using this strategy is for students to relate the word with the meaning and use it for writing assignments.

Cognitive strategies

Table 4. Frequency of use of Cognitive strategies

No.	Strategies	Frequency											
		4		3		2		1		0		TOTAL	
		F	%	F	%	F	%	F	%	F	%	F	%
21	Watch English television programs / English films.	13	41	14	44	3	09	2	06	0	00	32	100
22	Learn words through verbal repetition.	6	19	11	34	12	38	2	06	1	03	32	100
23	Learn words through written repetition.	3	09	10	31	6	19	7	22	6	19	32	100
24	Listen to a tape of word lists.	3	09	3	09	11	34	7	22	8	25	32	100
25	Keep a vocabulary notebook wherever you go.	2	06	2	06	3	09	9	28	16	50	32	100
26	Use vocabulary flashcards.	0	00	2	06	7	22	6	19	17	53	32	100

Note: F=frequency, %=percentage

Author: Andrés Vélez

Source: Vocabulary Learning Strategies Questionnaire

The results obtained from the Cognitive strategies are shown in the table above. It was found that strategies that are used the most within this category are “to watch English television programs/English films” (85%) and “to learn words through verbal repetition” (53%).

To “watch English television programs/English films” is a strategy that students use the most because they can learn vocabulary in a better way. In the interview, teacher indicated that if students are interested in any film or TV series, they can learn new vocabulary in a dynamic way. Also, teacher mentioned that television, internet, and many other resources can be used in order to learn vocabulary and improve speaking skills. Based on the observations, these two strategies are not used in class; however, they are mostly used outside the class.

It is important for learners to be exposed to different kinds of English input (films, TV and radio programs, internet podcasts, etc.) in order to learn the features of English. Students

produce sentences in an easier way by listening to various authentic English materials (Shelby, 2013). Through the use of these strategies, students imitate and repeat English patterns that help them to improve speaking.

Another advantage of the use of these strategies is that students improve pronunciation by having a model to follow. In the interviews, some of the students mentioned that when they listen some phrases or words that are new for them, it is important to repeat and use the new vocabulary as soon as possible; in that way, they are able to retain the new information.

According to Riankamol (2008), strategies that include repetition in order to study words do not engage students in mental process, but focus in mechanical process. To “learn words through verbal repetition” (53%) and to “learn words by written repetition” (40%) are common strategies among students. O’Malley and Chamot (1990) state that learners who use these strategies reach a high level of proficiency. In class, it was observed that these strategies are applied for speaking activities. In the first place, students analyzed the new vocabulary, and then, for speaking assignments they repeated the words.

Schmitt (1997) considers that to “keep a vocabulary notebook wherever you go” is a helpful strategy; but, in this case, it is one of the least used strategies with 12% along with the “use of vocabulary flashcards” with 6% and to “listen to a tape of word lists” with 10% of use among students. In this regard, teachers indicated that these strategies are the least used by students because some of them consider that they do not match with their learning style. In addition, some students mentioned that these strategies are not helpful for them because they use more interactive and dynamic strategies. Information collected from observations showed that the use of these two strategies is not present during class. Students’ advanced level is the reason why flashcards is not a suitable strategy for them. The use of these kinds of strategies

might help to improve speaking of students from a low level. On the other hand, students from a higher level might need strategies that demand a complex use of the language.

Metacognitive strategies

Table 5. Frequency of use of Metacognitive strategies

No.	Strategies	Frequency											
		4		3		2		1		0		TOTAL	
		F	%	F	%	F	%	F	%	F	%	F	%
27	Listen to English songs.	29	91	2	06	1	03	0	00	0	00	32	100
28	Use English websites.	18	56	7	22	6	19	1	03	0	00	32	100
29	Translate the meanings of words from English into Spanish.	13	41	8	25	5	16	4	13	2	06	32	100
30	Use English printed materials.	5	16	4	13	11	34	7	22	5	16	32	100
31	Play vocabulary games.	2	06	2	06	5	16	14	44	9	28	32	100
32	Translate the meanings of the words from Spanish into English.	9	28	10	31	7	22	3	09	3	09	32	100
33	Test yourself with word tests.	1	03	5	16	10	31	7	22	9	28	32	100
34	Study words over time.	0	00	9	28	5	16	9	28	9	28	32	100

Note: F=frequency, %=percentage

Author: Andrés Vélez

Source: Vocabulary Learning Strategies Questionnaire

The table above illustrates the Metacognitive Strategies category. In this category, it was found that the most used strategies by students are “to listen to English songs” (97%) and “to use English websites” (78%). Metacognitive strategies produce an effective learning because the exposure to the foreign language is important to acquire it efficiently (Schmitt, 1997). This can be corroborated by the interviews to students, where they mentioned that listening to English songs is the strategy that they use the most due to music is something that they are always related to. It is very interesting for them to learn the lyrics of new songs and to understand what the song is about. Teacher also agrees that listening to English songs is a great strategy and it is widely used among students because it helps them to learn vocabulary that is not Standard English and that is useful for them. However, the use of English songs

was not present in none of the observations performed; but the “use of printed materials” (39%) was a common strategy in class, for example, English books and articles.

Regarding the least used strategies within this category; it was found that “playing vocabulary games” and “studying words over time” are the ones that appear with less frequency of use, 12% and 28% respectively. Despite the fact that these strategies are helpful for improving speaking skills, they are not used in class. The use of vocabulary games brings students the opportunity to use and apply new language. In addition it fosters interaction, which is important for students because they are able to use the language in oral way.

To “translate word from English into Spanish” (66%) and “Translate words from Spanish to English” (59%) are common strategies which are very effective for improving vocabulary size because students get the meaning of a word in a fast way. Based on the observations performed, these two strategies are common when students do not understand the meaning of a word through the use of other strategies, such as guess meaning from context or the use of visual clues. As it was mentioned before, the use of translation is a helpful way to help in students’ speaking; especially with fluency because students are exposed to a quick understanding of the word that they want to use in speaking. Some of the phrases used in class were “what’s the word in English for...?” or “how do you say ... in English?” The use of these strategies show the different ways in which students get instant access to the meaning of a word.

According to the teacher, mass media (printed materials) and technology (English websites) have allowed teachers and students to learn and be exposed to multiple forms for improving speaking skills. In addition, Schmitt (1997) mentions that metacognitive strategies are used by learners in order to control and evaluate their own learning. However, to “test yourself with word tests” (19%) has a low percentage of use. The use of these strategies

demands an understanding and knowledge on how to use them. That is why it is important for learners to have freedom when it comes to choose a specific strategy for vocabulary learning. Monitoring and controlling the learning process make students feel comfortable and safe when they use the language.

Conclusions

The most used strategies are to listen to English songs and to use English websites from metacognitive category; and to watch English television programs/English films from cognitive category.

The least used vocabulary learning strategies by students are to keep a vocabulary notebook wherever you go from Cognitive category, and to make a group of words by alphabetical order for reviewing from Memory category.

The vocabulary learning strategies that show a high frequency of use among students are strategies whose use is more common outside the classroom because students have access to different resources such as Internet, technology, websites, songs, TV programs and films.

The use of vocabulary learning strategies related to the use of media helps students to improve speaking skills due to the fact that students are closely exposed to language features.

Students' English level, and sometimes learning styles, are factors that influence the frequency of use of vocabulary learning strategies because students are aware of the kinds of strategies that best fit them.

Out of all the most used vocabulary learning strategies, the one that is most beneficial for improving speaking skill is interaction, because through this, students learn and practice several English features.

Recommendations

The most used vocabulary learning strategies by students should be incorporated in English lessons in order to help learners to acquire a wide vocabulary repertoire.

Teachers should inform learners and encourage them to find the most helpful strategies that best fit their learning style in order to enhance students' vocabulary development.

The use of media resources such as English songs, TV series and Web pages should be encouraged in order to provide students with English language features.

Students should try to use most of the vocabulary learning strategies in order to decide which ones are better for their vocabulary learning.

For a better understanding of the use of strategies among students, the effects of other factors such as culture, home environment, peer groups, effective teaching methods and classroom atmosphere should be considered.

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Annexes



UNIVERSIDAD TÉCNICA PARTICULAR DE LOJA
La Universidad Católica de Loja

DEPARTAMENTO DE LENGUAS MODERNAS Y LITERATURA

OBSERVATION SHEET

This observation sheet is designed in order to gather information related to vocabulary learning strategies used by students to improve speaking skills during English class.

Part I: General Information

1. Level: _____
2. Number of students : _____
3. Length of Lesson: _____
4. Topic of the Lesson: _____
5. Number of Observation: _____
6. Observation Date: _____

Part II: Checklist

No.	Aspects to be observed (Strategies Use)	Yes	No
DETERMINATION			
1	Students guess meanings from context.		
2	Students use a dictionary to look for meaning of words		
3	Students analyze pictures to understand the meanings of words.		
SOCIAL			
4	Students ask to a partner or teacher for meaning of words		
5	Students ask classmates to translate words.		
6	Students discover meanings through group work.		
7	Students ask the teacher to translate words.		
MEMORY			
8	Students associate the word with other words they have learned.		
9	Students connect words to personal experiences.		
10	Students connect words to synonyms and antonyms.		
11	Students use new words in sentences.		
COGNITIVE			
12	Students learn new words through verbal repetition.		
13	Students learn words through written repetition.		
14	Students keep a vocabulary notebook.		

15	Students use vocabulary flashcards.		
METACOGNITIVE			
16	Students listen to English songs.		
17	Students use English printed materials.		
18	Students play vocabulary games.		

Part III: Additional Observations



DEPARTAMENTO DE LENGUAS MODERNAS Y LITERATURA

QUESTIONNAIRE OF VOCABULARY LEARNING STRATEGIES

Dear student, please answer the following questionnaire, which is focused on vocabulary learning strategies. This is part of a research on the topic “The type of vocabulary learning strategies used by students to improve speaking skills at a private high school in the city of Loja.”

Objective: *to collect information about the vocabulary learning strategies used by students.*

PART I: General Information

1. Gender: Female Male
2. Age: 15-16 years More than 16 years
3. How long have you been studying English?
 3-5 years 5-10 years more than 10 years

PART II: Statements of Vocabulary Learning Strategies

Put (X) in the box (4, 3, 2, 1, or 0) that represents the frequency of use of the strategies you use to learn English vocabulary. Please mark the statement that most describes you.

- 4 = always use it
- 3 = often use it
- 2 = sometimes use it
- 1 = seldom use it
- 0 = never use it

No.	Vocabulary Learning Strategies	Degree of Frequency				
		4	3	2	1	0
DETERMINATION						
1	Look up words in a bilingual or English-English dictionary.					
2	Guess the meanings of words from textual context.					
3	Analyze parts of speech to guess the meanings of words.					
4	Analyze any available pictures or gestures to understand the meanings of words.					
SOCIAL						
5	Ask classmates to translate the meanings of words.					

6	Discover new meanings through group work activities.					
7	Ask teachers to translate the meanings of words.					
8	Interact with classmates.					
9	Interact with an English teacher.					
10	Ask other people to translate the meanings of words.					
11	Interact with native English speakers.					
MEMORY						
12	Say words aloud when studying.					
13	Make a group of words by topic for reviewing.					
14	Study words with pictures.					
15	Associate the word with other words you have learned.					
16	Connect words to personal experiences.					
17	Connect the word to its synonyms and antonyms.					
18	Make a group of words by alphabetical order for reviewing.					
19	Use words in sentences.					
20	Stick the word and its meaning in a place where it can be obviously seen.					
COGNITIVE						
21	Watch English television programs / English films.					
22	Learn words through verbal repetition.					
23	Learn words through written repetition.					
24	Listen to a tape of word lists.					
25	Keep a vocabulary notebook wherever you go.					
26	Use vocabulary flashcards.					
METACOGNITIVE						
27	Listen to English songs.					
28	Use English websites.					
29	Translate the meanings of words from English into Spanish.					
30	Use English printed materials.					
31	Play vocabulary games.					
32	Translate the meanings of the words from Spanish into English.					
33	Test yourself with word tests.					
34	Study words over time.					

THANK YOU FOR YOUR COLLABORATION



DEPARTAMENTO DE LENGUAS MODERNAS Y LITERATURA

QUESTIONNAIRE OF VOCABULARY LEARNING STRATEGIES

Dear teacher, please answer the following questionnaire, which is focused on vocabulary learning strategies. This is part of a research on the topic “The type of vocabulary learning strategies used by students to improve speaking skills at a private high school in the city of Loja.”

Objective: *to collect information about the vocabulary learning strategies used by students.*

PART I: Statements of Vocabulary Learning Strategies

Put (X) in the box (4, 3, 2, 1, or 0) that represents the frequency of use of the strategies you consider that your students use to learn English vocabulary. Please mark the statement that most describes them.

- 4 = always use it
- 3 = often use it
- 2 = sometimes use it
- 1 = seldom use it
- 0 = never use it

Please, at the end of each category provide a comment regarding the use of those strategies.

No.	Vocabulary Learning Strategies	Degree of Frequency				
		4	3	2	1	0
DETERMINATION						
1	Look up words in a bilingual or English-English dictionary.					
2	Guess the meanings of words from textual context.					
3	Analyze parts of speech to guess the meanings of words.					
4	Analyze any available pictures or gestures to understand the meanings of words.					
Comments:						

SOCIAL						
5	Ask classmates to translate the meanings of words.					
6	Discover new meanings through group work activities.					
7	Ask teachers to translate the meanings of words.					
8	Interact with classmates.					
9	Interact with an English teacher.					
10	Ask other people to translate the meanings of words.					
11	Interact with native English speakers.					
Comments:						

MEMORY						
12	Say words aloud when studying.					
13	Make a group of words by topic for reviewing.					
14	Study words with pictures.					
15	Associate the word with other words you have learned.					
16	Connect words to personal experiences.					
17	Connect the word to its synonyms and antonyms.					
18	Make a group of words by alphabetical order for reviewing.					
19	Use words in sentences.					
20	Stick the word and its meaning in a place where it can be obviously seen.					
Comments:						

COGNITIVE						
21	Watch English television programs / English films.					
22	Learn words through verbal repetition.					
23	Learn words through written repetition.					
24	Listen to a tape of word lists.					
25	Keep a vocabulary notebook wherever you go.					
26	Use vocabulary flashcards.					

Comments:

METACOGNITIVE

27	Listen to English songs.					
28	Use English websites.					
29	Translate the meanings of words from English into Spanish.					
30	Use English printed materials.					
31	Play vocabulary games.					
32	Translate the meanings of the words from Spanish into English.					
33	Test yourself with word tests.					
34	Study words over time.					

Comments:

THANK YOU FOR YOUR COLLABORATION



UNIVERSIDAD TÉCNICA PARTICULAR DE LOJA
La Universidad Católica de Loja

DEPARTAMENTO DE LENGUAS MODERNAS Y LITERATURA

INTERVIEW OF VOCABULARY LEARNING STRATEGIES

Objective: to collect information about the vocabulary learning strategies used by students to improve speaking skill.

Vocabulary Learning Strategies used by students to improve speaking skills.

PART I: General Information

1. Gender: Female Male
2. Age: 15-16 years More than 16 years
3. How long have you been studying English?
 3-5 years 5-10 years more than 10 years

PART II: Questions

1. How do you feel when you speak during your English classes?
2. What is most important for you while speaking? (grammar, vocabulary, pronunciation, fluency)
3. Does vocabulary knowledge help you to feel comfortable while speaking? How?
4. What do you do when you don't know a word in English?
5. How do you learn new vocabulary?
6. Do you use Vocabulary Learning strategies?
7. What Vocabulary learning strategies do you use?

Determination strategies

8. Do you use a dictionary? What kind? What do you look up in the dictionary?
9. When you find a new word, do you guess the meaning of that word? What do you consider?

10. Do you use pictures to understand the meaning of a word? How often?
11. Do you analyze words in order to understand them? How?

Social strategies

12. Do you ask other people about the meaning of new words? What kind of information do you ask?
13. Do you ask your teacher for the meaning of words? How often?
14. Do you ask your classmates for the meaning of words? How often?
15. Do you ask people to translate new words? How often?
16. Do you interact with other people to learn new words?

Memory strategies

17. Do you use the new words you learn in sentences? How often?
18. Do you associate new words with words you already know? How?
19. Do you learn words using synonyms and antonyms?

Cognitive strategies

20. Do you write down the new words you learn? How often?
21. Do you watch English programs/films to learn new words? How often?
22. Do you repeat words in order to learn them? How often?
23. Do you use vocabulary flashcards? How often?

Metacognitive strategies

24. Do you use games to learn vocabulary? How often?
25. Do you use English websites for learning new words? What sites? How often?
26. Do you learn new vocabulary by listening English songs?
27. Do you translate words from English to Spanish, or Spanish to English? How often?