UNIVERSITY OF JYVÄSKYLÄ

VOCABULARY LEARNING STRATEGIES USED BY UPPER SECONDARY SCHOOL STUDENTS STUDYING ENGLISH AS A SECOND LANGUAGE

A Pro Gradu Thesis in English

by

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Pro gradu –tutkielma

Sanasto ja sen oppiminen on ollut pitkään yksi tärkeimpiä kielenoppimisen osa-alueita. Sanojen ja sanaston oppimista ja omaksumista voidaan helpottaa käyttämällä sanaston oppimisstrategioita ja –tekniikoita. Tutkielman tavoitteena on selvittää sanaston oppimisstrategioiden ja –tekniikoiden merkitystä ja käyttöä lukiolaisten ensimmäisen vieraan kielen opiskelussa. Tutkimuskysymykset olivat seuraavat: 1) Mitä sanaston oppimisstrategioita ja –tekniikoita opiskelijat käyttävät? 2) Mistä he ovat saaneet tietoa erilaisista sanaston oppimisen strategioista ja tekniikoista? 3) Onko sanaston oppimisstrategioiden ja –tekniikoiden käytössä nähtävissä sukupuolieroja? 4) Onko toisen kielen oppimisen motivaation ja sanaston oppimistekniikoiden käytön välillä nähtävissä yhteys?

Tutkimukseen osallistui 50 länsisuomalaista lukiolaista, 19 naista ja 31 miestä, kahdesta eri koulusta, kahdelta eri vuosikurssilta. He täyttivät avoimista kysymyksistä koostuvan kyselylomakkeen. Aineiston pääasiallinen analysointimetodi oli kvalitatiivinen analyysi, jossa aineistosta nousevia toistuvia teemoja nostettiin analyysin kohteeksi. Kvantitatiivisella analyysillä pyrittiin monipuolistamaan aineiston analyysiä. Kvantitatiiviseen analyysiin kuului muun muassa suosituimpien sanaston oppimisstrategioiden listaaminen ja prosenttiosuuksien laskeminen.

Tulosten mukaan opiskelijat käyttävät pääasiassa muutamia tiettyjä tekniikoita ja vähemmän käytetyissä tekniikoissa on paljon hajontaa. Lukiolaiset ovat saaneet tietoa sanaston oppimisstrategioista ja -tekniikoista pääasiassa opettajiltaan, vanhemmiltaan ja sukulaisiltaan. Noin kolmasosa opiskelijoista ei kuitenkaan ole saanut mitään tietoa opiskelua helpottavista strategioista. Suosituimpien strategioiden suhteen sukupuolieroja ei ole havaittavissa, vaikka joitakin eroja sukupuolten strategioiden käytössä onkin. Motivoituneimmat opiskelijat olivat arvosanojen valossa myös menestyneempiä ja he käyttivät yleensä useampia sanaston oppimisstrategioita kuin huonommin motivoituneet ja heikommin menestyneet opiskelijat.

Asiasanat: second language learning, vocabulary, learning strategies, vocabulary learning strategies, gender, upper secondary school

CONTENTS

1. INTRODUCTION

Vocabulary knowledge is essential when using a foreign language, since one is unable to communicate without words. Learners are usually aware of the importance of words in a language and they also usually realise the fact that learning strategies can help them in their vocabulary learning. Learner autonomy can be enhanced by introducing the learner to different vocabulary learning strategies which can be used in developing the learning process. In addition, learning strategies help students to be more active and take more responsibility on their own learning.

The purpose of my pro gradu thesis was to find out more about the learning strategies L1 Finnish students of upper secondary school use when studying English as their first foreign language. Especially interesting was finding out what kind of different strategies upper secondary school students use in their study of English vocabulary and where they have gotten their information about these different strategies. In addition, I wanted to study the possible gender differences which may have an impact on strategy use. Furthermore, I was interested in the relationship of second language learning motivation and vocabulary learning strategies.

Vocabulary learning has been studied more widely since the 1980s. Learning strategies in general have been studied for a longer period of time but more specific topics in the field, such as learning strategies used especially for vocabulary learning, have not been studied extensively. However, as Meara (2002:393) points out, vocabulary acquisition has moved from being a neglected part of second language acquisition towards a more renowned field of study in theoretical linguistics. He continues that during the last 20 years there has been a great deal of work in the field of vocabulary research. Also Sökmen (1997:237) mentions the shift of emphasis and, according to her, some would argue that vocabulary has in fact assumed even the central role

in learning a second language during the 21ˢᵗ century. This is why teachers are faced with the challenge of how best to help students learn and use new words. In this process vocabulary learning strategies can be used effectively.

This study offers an insight into the use of vocabulary learning strategies used by Finnish upper secondary school students today, concentrating on the situation of two upper secondary schools in Western Finland. I hope that the present study can offer a helpful insight into the world of upper secondary school students' language learning and serve as a tool for the teachers to develop their teaching especially in the field of vocabulary learning and teaching.

The main research question of the thesis is how upper secondary school students use vocabulary learning strategies. It can be broken down to more specific questions such as:

1) What vocabulary learning strategies do the learners use?
2) Where have they gained their information about the different strategies?
3) Are there any gender differences in the use of vocabulary learning strategies?
4) Is there a link between second language learning motivation and vocabulary learning strategy use?

The data of the present study was acquired with the help of a questionnaire which was completed by 50 upper secondary school students of two different schools in Western Finland. The participants consisted of 31 males and 19 females between 16 and 24 years of age. The data was collected in December 2006. The five different sets of open questions of the questionnaire (see appendix) were each analysed based on the themes they deal with. The first set of questions dealt with overall attitude towards vocabulary learning and the second consisted of questions aiming to determine the time and

effort taken to learn second language vocabulary. The third set of questions discussed motivation and the fourth the actual techniques the participants use. The final set of questions handled the sources of vocabulary learning strategy knowledge, e.g. where have they gained information on different vocabulary learning strategies.

The study concentrates on qualitative analysis even though some quantitative methods are also used. As Eskola and Suoranta (1998:175) point out, searching for common themes is often used in analysing qualitative data. This approach is also used in the present study and the most important themes which will be taken into account are the ones associated with the problems and hypotheses (see section 3.1). The open questions were analysed qualitatively in order to find common themes which reoccur in the data. Each set of questions is analysed separately in the analysis-section pointing out the popular themes associated with each set of questions.

Two studies that look at similar issues of vocabulary learning strategy use are those by Schmitt (1997) and Jiménez Catalán (2003). The study by Schmitt (1997) concentrates on describing the vocabulary learning strategy use from the learner's point of view and the study by Jiménez Catalán discusses the gender differences in vocabulary learning strategy use. In the discussion part of the thesis the results are compared with he results of these two studies.

In order to find an answer to the first research question, the vocabulary learning strategies mentioned by the participants were listed according to their popularity and then classified based on the taxonomy of vocabulary learning strategies by Schmitt (1997). Furthermore, quantitative and qualitative methods were used to find out whether male and female students use different strategies.

The structure of the present study is as follows: Chapter 2 lays the foundation for the theoretical background of the study, explaining the key themes and terms in detail and providing information on some previous studies relevant to the present study. Chapter 3 includes the research design including methodology and data description as well as the problems and hypotheses of the present study. The findings are discussed in Chapter 4 and in Chapter 5 they are compared with results of previous study. Finally, Chapter 6 summarises the work, offering an overview of the study, assessing its strengths and weaknesses as well as laying out some suggestions for further study.

2 THEORETICAL BACKGROUND

It is important first to discuss the theoretical background relevant to the present study. In the following sections the field of vocabulary is examined from different perspectives. The first section (2.1) investigates the definitions of a word and what is included in knowing a word. Section 2.2 concentrates on vocabulary learning and teaching and 2.3 on learning strategies. Section 2.4 discusses the aspect of second language learning and motivation. Finally, the last part of the theoretical background (section 2.5) deals with a specific field of learning strategies: vocabulary learning strategies.

2.1 What is a word?

Defining the concept of a word is rather difficult to explain and there are several different views concerning what a word really is. Another essential perspective of language and language learning is the characteristics which are associated with knowing a word. The definition of a word and the characteristics included in knowing a word are discussed in the following

chapters in order to gain a holistic view of the complex linguistic item known as a word. In fact, defining the concept of a word is important since it is one of the key terms of the present study.

2.1.1 Defining a word

Singleton (1999:9) emphasises that words have a rather privileged status in the popular understanding of what a language is since they are vital to linguistic communication. Indeed, without vocabulary there is no tool to communicate and everybody realises it. However, different people see words and vocabulary differently and therefore defining a word has its problems. Singleton (1999:10) states that even though the word is central to understanding a language, one is unable to find a simple definition of the concept of a word since there are several scholars who have worked on finding an accurate definition for describing a word. Singleton (1999:10) clarifies his view by continuing that what is meant by the term word will depend on the level of abstraction at which the speaker/writer is operating, the linguistic levels being discussed and even the semantic content of the situation.

From an orthographic point of view, word is any sequence of letters bounded together as seen in written language (Carter 1998:3). However, Singleton (1999:12) criticises this view since it only applies to languages which operate with writing systems similar to Roman or Cyrillic alphabet. For example, Chinese and Japanese have a different writing system and therefore, based on this evidence, the definition of a word cannot be "a sequence of letters bounded on either side by a blank space" (Singleton 1999:12).

Singleton (1999:12) mentions that phonetic characterisations of the word are difficult since individual words rarely stand out as distinct units in ordinary flow of speech. However, he continues that in phonological terms the characterisation is easier since, for example, in certain languages, such as English, words usually have only one stressed syllable. However, there can also be two types of stress, primary stress and secondary stress (Roach 2000:96). On the other hand, according to Singleton (1999), there can be some logical phenomenon in the language which helps to describe the concept of a word. Singleton (1999:12-13) mentions the vowel harmony in Finno-Ugric languages to be an example of a logical phenomena.

Carter (1998) offers a slightly different view for the definition of a word in comparison to Singleton (1999). Carter (1998:4-5) points out that in some sense, everyone knows what a word is. He argues that the most accurate definition of a word would be to describe it as the minimum meaningful unit in a language. In this sense, a word is a word which can stand on its own as a reply to any question or statement (Carter 1998:5).

According to Carter (1998:3), in spoken language words have additional characteristics, for example, word stress. He continues that sometimes words have been defined to have only one stressed syllable. However, some words (e.g. *because*) do not convey meaning or convey it vaguely and some words do not have a stressed syllable (e.g. *but, by*). In addition, some words even consist of two orthographic units (e.g. *bus conductor*) even though the meaning refers to one meaningful unit which consists of two different parts. Words can also have different forms but the forms are not necessarily seen as different words. Furthermore, words can have similar forms but convey different meanings. In addition, idioms cause more confusion in the definition of a word since they function as separate entities even though they consist of several words. (Carter 1998:6.)

Carter (1998:14) summarises that orthographic, phonological, grammatical and semantic properties of a word are best captured using the term lexical item since it overcomes some problems which the term word encounters. Sometimes the term vocabulary item is used instead of lexical item. Lexemes are the basic contrasting units in a language. For example, when looking up words in a dictionary, one is often looking for lexemes instead of words. For instance, different tenses of a verb are actually lexemes, different word-forms. (Carter 1998:7–8.)

Cook (2001:61) emphasises that a word is more than its meaning. Each word has certain forms of the word; a certain pronunciation and spelling which are linked to the pronunciation and spelling rules of the language. The grammatical properties of a word include the grammatical category of it, possible and impossible structures associated with the word and idiosyncratic grammatical information. Lexical properties of a word include the word combinations and appropriateness. Also the meaning of a word has its problems since it includes both, a general meaning as well as a specific meaning. (Cook 2001:61–62.)

Whereas a grammar of a language describes the principles or rules of the form and meaning of words, phrases, clauses and sentences and interacts with other components of language (e.g. phonology, graphology, semantics and the dictionary or lexicon), the lexicon for a language deals with the vocabulary. It includes the information about pronunciation, spelling, meaning and grammatical properties of the lexical item. (Huddleston & Pullum 2002:3.)

Singleton (1999:38) accentuates that the traditional distinction between lexicon and grammar is proving increasingly difficult to maintain since the two are closely connected due to, for instance, multi-word items and patterns. However, a distinction between grammatical and lexical words can

also be made. Grammatical words work as functional words whereas lexical words (nouns, verbs, adverbs) are seen as content words (Carter 1998:8).

To sum up, there are several different views on how to describe a word and it is impossible to create one, absolutely accurate description of a words. Nevertheless, as Carter (1998) mentions, everyone knows what a word is and it can be seen as the minimum meaningful unit in a language and it can operate on its own. This approach is adopted also in the present study and the different approaches are not discussed in more detail. The data and analysis of the thesis concentrates on describing how learners learn vocabulary and the concept of the word is not the focal point of the study.

2.1.2 Knowing a word

There are numerous definitions for knowing a word. Nation (1990:30–33) distinguishes two different answers to the question 'what does a learner need to know in order to know a word'. According to Nation, there is a difference between receptive and productive knowledge of a word, also referred as passive and active vocabulary (see Table 1). Receptive knowledge means that one understands the word when listening or reading it. Productive knowledge of a word includes the receptive knowledge and it even extends it since it also involves the pronunciation, writing and spelling of the word, how to use it in a grammatically correct way and knowing its meaning, collocations and synonyms (Nation 1990:32–33). Receptive vocabulary consists of words which are well-known and used frequently. In general, receptive vocabulary is larger than productive vocabulary. (Kamill & Hiebert 2005:3.)

Table 1, adapted from Nation (1990:31), offers a comprehensive view of what knowing a word includes. In the table "R" stands for receptive knowledge whereas "P" means the productive knowledge of a word.

Table 1. Knowing a word (Nation 1990:31)

Form		
Spoken from	R	What does the word sound like?
	P	How is the word pronounced?
Written form	R	What does the word look like?
	P	How is the word written and spelled?
Position		
Grammatical patterns	R	In what pattern does the word occur?
	P	In what patterns must we use the word?
Collocation	R	What words or types of words can be expected before or after the words?
	P	What word types or types of words must we use with this word?
Function		
Frequency	R	How common is this word?
	P	How often should this word be used?
Appropriateness	R	Where should we expect to meet this word?
	P	Where can this word be used?
Meaning		
Concept	R	What does the word mean?
	P	What word should be used to express this meaning?
Associations	R	What other words does this word make us think of?
	P	What other words could we use instead of this one?

However, Mondria and Wiersma (2004:85) remark that productive and receptive knowledge of a word tend to overlap since certain productive learning leads to certain amount of receptive knowledge as well as receptive knowledge leads to a certain amount of productive knowledge, too. Mondria and Wiersma (2004:86) continue by pointing out that studies (see, e.g., Waring, 1997 and Schneider at al., 2002) prove that productive learning is more difficult than receptive learning and it also takes more time. In

addition, productive knowledge decays faster than receptive knowledge of a word (see, e.g., Waring, 1997 and Schneider at al., 2002).

2.2 Vocabulary learning and teaching

Vocabulary learning and teaching are important factors in second language learning. Achieving communicative competence in second language can be enhanced by developing vocabulary learning and teaching. Similarly, problems in vocabulary learning and teaching can have serious negative effects on learner's success in second language learning. The aspects of vocabulary learning and vocabulary teaching will be discussed in the following sections.

2.2.1 Vocabulary learning

There are four language skills: listening, reading, speaking and writing (Oxford 1990:5). The main objective of language learning has usually been seen as achieving communicative competence. Vocabulary is a part of every language skill and therefore improving vocabulary learning and teaching will contribute reaching the goal of communicative competence. Even though some people think vocabulary learning is easy and some people disagree with the fact it is obvious that language learners often have serious problem remembering the large amounts of vocabulary necessary to achieve fluency in a foreign language. In fact, Kristiansen (1998:47) points out that the understanding of a language diminishes significantly if one fourth of content words (nouns, verbs, adjectives and adverbs) are unfamiliar to the reader.

Vocabulary can never be mastered fully, the expansion and elaboration of it extends across a lifetime since words represent complex and often multiple meanings (Kamil & Hiebert 2005:2). For example, the Collins Cobuild English Dictionary for Advanced Learners (2001) contains over 110 000 words, phrases and definitions. In fact, not even native speakers know all the words of their mother tongue or can use them appropriately. Besides, individuals have different sets of vocabulary and they use them for different purposes. For example, oral and printed languages often use different vocabulary and a failure in distinguishing the proper vocabulary for the occasion can lead to misunderstandings (Kamil & Hiebert 2005:3).

According to Nation (1990:2), it is useful to make a distinction between direct and indirect vocabulary learning. He characterises direct vocabulary learning being a situation in which learners do exercises and activities, such as word-building exercises and vocabulary games, focused on the vocabulary. However, in indirect vocabulary learning the learner's attention is focused on some other feature which usually is the message conveyed. Nation (1990:2) continues that if the amount of unknown words remains low in messages, considerable vocabulary learning can occur even though the learner's attention is not fully directed toward vocabulary learning.

There are several features which have an affect on vocabulary learning and can make learning a word difficult. Carter and McCarthy (1988:13) point out that learning vocabulary effectively is closely bound up with a teacher's understanding and learner's perception of the difficulties of words and therefore the role of the teacher must be taken into account also in vocabulary learning. Carter and McCarthy (1988:13) continue that the difficulty of a word may result from several reasons and due to the vast number of possible reasons and the complexity of the learning process these reasons have been hard to classify appropriately.

Nation (1990:33-50) mentions three different factors which have influence on making a word difficult to learn. The first is the learner's previous experience of English and their mother tongue since one's first language affects the second language vocabulary acquisition and usually borrowing and interference between first and second language vocabulary occurs. For example, learning the function and meaning of a word can be difficult since words rarely correspond exactly to a word of another language.

The second factor which causes difficulties in of learning the words of a second language is the way a word is learned or taught. In fact, bad organsation in the learning situation can cause problems in learning a word. According to Nation (1990:43) this "unteaching" is rather common. Consequently, teaching can have three effects; positive, neutral and negative. When the effect is positive, the learners move closer to mastering the language. When the effect is neutral, nothing is learned. When the effect is negative, learning occurs but the learning will have a negative impact on what has been taught before or on what will be taught in the future. (Nation 1990:49.)

Nation (1990:45) continues that the relationship with other words can also cause problems in the learning of a new word. Nation (1990:47) summarises that the more similar items are, the more likely they are to be closely associated with each other. For example, words which in some sense are close to each other, such as *long* and *short*, which are both adjectives and are antonyms, having the opposite meaning, can easily become hard to learn if they are presented together for the first time. This can cause problems since learner may mix the meanings of these two words due to the fact that they are closely related.

The third aspect is the intrinsic difficulty of the word which basically means that some words are harder to learn than others. According to Nation (1990:48), nouns and adjectives are usually easier to learn than verbs and adverbs. In addition, it is easier to learn to recognise a word for and recall its meaning than to produce the word at suitable time. A teacher cannot have a great impact on reducing the intrinsic difficulty but he or she can be aware of it and try to recognise it when it occurs (Nation 1990:49).

Laufer (1997:154) has also studied the intralexical factors affecting vocabulary learning and she mentions several factors which can make learning a word difficult. For example, phonological factors, length, semantic features, abstractness and multiple meaning may have an impact on how easily the word can be learned.

2.2.2 Vocabulary teaching

According to Nation (1990:1), some teachers think that there is no need to teach vocabulary since it can take care of itself. However, vocabulary work can be directed toward useful words and useful skills and therefore it can enhance the second language learning process. Aalto (1994:93) points out that vocabulary is often neglected in language learning and teaching even though it is agreed that without words there is no communication. However, the teaching of vocabulary has not evolved and learning new words still consists of behaviouristic studying of word lists.

Nation (2006:498) emphasises encouraging learner autonomy since like most learning, also vocabulary learning will be most effective if learners take control of their learning and are responsible for it. In principle, this means knowing what to learn how to learn it being simultaneously motivated to do this and eventually putting the knowledge to use. Therefore language

teaching and the actions made by the teacher can have an impact on the learners' approach towards their learning.

Principles of vocabulary learning and teaching by Nation (2006:498) include the following:

1) The sequence of vocabulary learning should move from high frequency vocabulary and special purposes vocabulary to low frequency vocabulary.

2) High frequency vocabulary and special purposes vocabulary should get attention across all the fields of teaching and learning vocabulary: meaning-focused input, meaning-focused output, language-focused learning, and fluency development.

3) With low frequency vocabulary, teachers should focus on the strategies of guessing words from context, learning word cards, using word parts, and using dictionary.

4) Learning activities should be designed to encourage thoughtful processing of vocabulary through retrieval, generative use, and the use of mnemonic devices where needed.

5) Learners should be helped to take responsibility for their own vocabulary learning.

Similarly to Nation's (2006) views on vocabulary learning and teaching also Cook (2001:58) points out that much of vocabulary teaching is based on the idea that the most commonly used words of the target language should be taught first.

Nation (1990:3) argues that opportunities for indirect vocabulary learning (see page 15) should have more time in language education in comparison with direct vocabulary learning activities. In order to indirect vocabulary learning to happen, learners must be interested in the message conveyed through the language. In addition, the message should include some items that are just outside the learner's present language proficiency and

vocabulary knowledge. Nevertheless, these items should be understandable from the context in order to indirect vocabulary learning to take place.

Nation (1990:178) also points out that indirect vocabulary can be encouraged by exposure to large amounts of reading and listening material. Through this exposure the learners have an opportunity to practise vocabulary learning strategies.

The Finnish National Board of has compiled the National Core Curriculum for Upper Secondary Schools in Finland. It specifies the objectives and core contents of upper secondary education. Vocabulary learning and teaching is not discussed in detail in the National Core Curriculum, but it suggests the following: "All courses will pay attention to expansion of the knowledge of the structures and vocabulary of the language being studied and to the diversification and accuracy of its use in accordance with the objectives of each syllabus."

2.3 Language learning strategies

Learning strategies have been defined in various ways in literature and they are connected to several areas of language learning. In this section some of the different definitions of learning strategies are introduced. Furthermore, some other important aspects related to learning strategies are discussed in detail. These include, for example, classification of learning strategies and the role of learning strategies in successful language learning and especially with individual learners. Also second language learning strategy research will be addressed in the following sections.

2.3.1 Defining language learning strategies

There are different definitions for language learning strategies. For example, Takala (1996, as cited in Kristiansen 1998:44) determines the word 'strategy': "Strategies are taken to be the behaviours that the learners engage in during learning that are intended to influence cognitive and affective processing." In addition, as O'Malley and Chamot (1990:1) put it, learning strategies are thoughts or behaviour the learners use to comprehend, learn or retain new information. Cook (2001:126) describes learning strategy to be "a choice that the learner makes while learning or using the second language that affects learning". Ellis (1985:165) points out that native language speakers use the same strategy types as learners of second language. However, there are differences in the frequency of strategy use between native speakers and non-native speakers.

Even though some scholars agree that language learning strategies can be unconscious, Cohen (1998:4) states that consciousness distinguishes strategies from the processes that are not strategic. Cohen (1998:4) continues that the element of choice is an important factor in language learning strategies and therefore there cannot be strategies which are unconscious. However, Oxford (1990:12) points out that learning strategies are usually seen as intentional and conscious actions made by the learner in order to take control of their own learner. However, in contrast to Cohen's (1998) view, Oxford (1990:12) states that some strategies can become automatic and unconscious when used for long period of time.

Learning strategies are not always easy to notice. They can also be taught and, in addition, language learning strategies are flexible and influenced by a variety of factors (see page 26). Oxford (1990:7) defines language learning strategies as "steps taken by students to enhance their own learning". According to her, language learning strategies are important since they

create active and self-directed involvement and help to develop communicative competence. Table 2, which is compiled by Oxford (1990:9), clarifies the features of language learning strategies.

Table 2. Features of language learning strategies (Oxford, 1990:9)

1. Contribute to the main goal, communicative competence.
2. Allow learners to become more self-directed.
3. Expand the role of teachers.
4. Are problem-oriented.
5. Are specific actions taken by the learner.
6. Involve many aspects of the learner, not just the cognitive.
7. Support learning both directly and indirectly.
8. Are not always observable.
9. Are often conscious.
10. Can be taught.
11. Are flexible.
12. Are influenced by variety of factors.

According to Oxford (1990:8), language learning strategies also allow the learners to become more self-directed, expand the role of teachers, are problem-oriented and are specific actions taken by the learner. Oxford (1990:8–12) continues that they also involve many aspects of the learner; they are not just the cognitive aspects. This means that language learning strategies support learning both directly and indirectly. The strategies which involve direct learning and use of subject matter, which in this case is a new language, are direct strategies whereas strategies which contribute to learning indirectly are called indirect strategies (see page 23).

The processes involved when using second language knowledge consist of production strategies, reception strategies and communication strategies. Production strategies and reception strategies are used when trying to use existing knowledge of the second language efficiently with minimal effort. On the other hand, communication strategies are used when the first attempt to use language in getting the message though fails. Communication strategies are likely to involve greater effort and therefore they are more conscious than production and reception strategies. (Ellis 1985:165.)

According to Ellis (1985:103), learning strategies and techniques can be divided into two groups: those involved in studying the second language and those involved in obtaining second language input. In this study the former group is the main interest.

Oxford (1990:1) points out that even though learning strategies have been studied only for the past few decades, they have actually been used for thousands of years. O'Malley and Chamot (1990:3) also point out that in the early stages of learning strategy research attention was mainly paid to differences between successful and unsuccessful language learners and the characteristics of good language learners. In addition, also factors influencing strategy choice were taken into consideration.

Many recent studies on L2 vocabulary concentrate on individual strategies or a small number of them (Fan, 2003:225). According to Jiménez Catalán (2003:56), during the last two decades studies of language learning strategies have aimed at determining the characteristics of good and poor language learners and the difference between language learning and communication learning strategies.

2.3.2 Classification of language learning strategies

Language learning strategies have been classified in various ways. Oxford (1990:15–22) identifies six major groups of second language learning strategies:

1. *Cognitive strategies* (direct) enable the learner to use the language material in direct ways, e.g. through reasoning, analysis, note-taking and synthesizing.

2. *Metacognitive strategies* (indirect) are used to manage the learning process. They include identifying one's preferences and needs, planning, monitoring and evaluating the learning process.

3. *Memory-related strategies* (direct) include acronyms, images, key words and they help link one L2 item or concept with another but they do not necessarily involve deep understanding.

4. *Compensatory strategies* (direct), e.g. guessing from context and gestures, help make up for lack of knowledge in some fields of the language.

5. *Affective strategies* (indirect) help the learners manage their emotions and motivation. Affective strategies include, for instance, identifying one's mood and anxiety level, talking about feelings and rewarding oneself.

6. *Social strategies* (indirect) enable learning through interaction and understand target culture since they include asking questions, asking for clarifications, talking with native speakers and exploring culture.

In comparison with the classification by Oxford (1990), some scholars, such as Cohen (1998), identify only four language learning strategy types: cognitive, metacognitive, affective and social strategies.

Cohen (1998:7) describes cognitive strategies as strategies used in identification, grouping, retention and storage of language material. Furthermore, they include also the "language use strategies of retrieval, rehearsal and comprehension or production of words, phrases and other elements of language" (Cohen 1998:7).

According to Oxford (1990:8), metacognitive strategies help learners to regulate their own cognition and focus in addition to planning and evaluating their progress. Cohen (1998:7) states that metacognitive strategies deal with pre-assessment, pre-planning on-line planning and evaluation and post-evaluation of language learning activities and of language use events. These strategies allow the learners to control their own learning and using of the language. In fact, Cohen (1998:8) points out that higher-proficiency students are more likely to use metacognitive strategies and they use them more effectively than the lower-proficiency students.

Affective strategies develop their self-confidence and perseverance to involve students themselves in language learning (Oxford 1990:8–9). Cohen (1998:8) describes affective strategies to be used to regulate emotions, motivation and attitudes such as reducing anxiety and self-encouragement.

Social strategies provide interaction and more empathetic understanding which also are two important factors in reaching communicative competence (Oxford 1998:8). Social strategies include the actions the learner chooses to take in order to interact with other learners or native speakers of the language (Cohen 1998:8). Eventually the strategies can act in specific ways to foster certain aspects of that competence, such as grammatical, sociolinguistic, discourse and strategic elements (Oxford 1990:8–9).

2.3.3 Learning strategies and good language learners

Kristiansen (1998:11) states that according to studies of learning strategies, the amount of training, the time used in training and the degree of difficulty of the task as such are not conclusive factors in learning. That is why it is important to study what kind of training would be most beneficial to learning. The aim is to create a permanent engram and learn how to apply the acquired knowledge in order to successfully learn the language.

The studies of language learning strategies often refer to the concept of good language learner strategies. As Cook (2001:126) puts it, good language learner strategies are the strategies employed by people who are known to be good at second language learning. Cook (2001:127–128) summarises the study of Naiman et al. (1995) about the six broad strategies shared by good language learners the following way:

1. Good language learners find a learning style that suits them best by adapting or modifying the strategies they encounter.
2. Good language learners include themselves in the language learning process by participating actively in learning situations.
3. Good language learners develop an awareness of language both as a system and as communication.
4. Good language learners pay constant attention to expanding their language knowledge.
5. Good language learners develop the second language as a separate system, not relating everything to their first language.
6. Good language learners pay attention to the demands that second language learning imposes.

Different learning strategies can be combined during practice. Some strategies are easier to use if one has good knowledge of some other strategies (Kristiansen, 1990:44). Wenden (1991, as cited by Kristiansen, 1998:13) stresses the fact that learner should become aware which strategies are effective in learning a language. This means that learner needs to be aware of his metacognitive skills which include, in addition to learning strategies, reflecting his/her own learning and realising his/her limitations (Kristiansen 1998:44). Cook (2001:132) guides the teachers to develop the students' independence and make them aware of the range of strategies they can adopt. In addition, Cook advices that providing specific training in particular strategies and remembering the similarities and differences between learning a second language and other school subjects can prove to be useful.

Many factors have an effect on the choice of different learning strategies. These factors include degree of awareness, stage of learning, teacher expectations, age, sex, nationality or ethnicity, general learning style, personality traits, motivation and purpose for learning the language (Oxford 1990:13). Also Jiménez Catalán (2003:57), summarising previous research, points out that language learning strategies may be associated with other individual factors (e.g. type of memory, learning style, motivation and culture). Even though gender affects the choice of strategies, it has not been studied widely (Jiménez Catalán 2003:56).

More highly motivated learners use a greater range of learning strategies than less motivated learners. Different language tasks also require different strategies; one cannot use the same language learning strategies with working on a matriculation examination and talking with a friend in a café. In addition, the main goal in language learning, for example, whether one wants to learn to communicate fluently using another language or just learn basic greetings, can have an impact on strategy choice. (Oxford 1990:13.)

2.3.4 L2 learning strategies and individual differences

There are individual differences between second language learners. Factors which have an impact on the learning include personality, motivation and abilities, to mention a few. According to Dörnyei (2005:3–4), individual differences are defined as anything which marks a person as a distinct and unique human being. The definition is then focused to include stability so that the personal differences have continuity over time.

Dörnyei (2005:162) points out that learning strategies have been traditionally included in the taxonomy of individual differences. However, he continues that language learning strategies constitute an aspect of the language learning process rather than being only learner attributes. According to Dörnyei (2005:162), actions and thoughts, which are present in using language learning strategies, are not individual differences. Ehrman et al. (2003:313) mention several factors which are included in learner differences. These factors consist of, for instance, learning styles, learning strategies, affective variables, learning aptitude, gender, culture and age.

Learning styles and learning strategies are often seen as interrelated. In literature terms such as learning style, cognitive style and even personality type are used rather loosely and interchangeably (Ehrman et al. 2003:315). The term learning style refers to a way of learning modulated by personality being broad preferences of learning. Ehrman et al. (2003:315) continue that the relationship between learning styles and learning strategies is close since the strategies used usually fit the learner's learning style, at least if they are used effectively. (However, according Snow et al. (1996, as cited in Dörnyei, 2005:122), learning style is described as strategy used consistently across several tasks. In addition, Sternberg and Grigorenko (2001, as cited in Dörnyei, 2005:122) continue that styles operate without individual awareness whereas strategies include a conscious choice.

2.3.5 Studying learning strategies

Various methods have been used in studying the learners' use of learning strategies. Possible ways to gather information about the use of language learning strategies by asking are diaries, questionnaires and interviews. Macaro (2001:44–70) simplifies the main points by stating that it is possible to observe them or ask them about their strategy use. Macaro (ibid.) continues that advantages in asking the learners are that the researchers are not emphasising their expertise in the field. In addition, asking takes much less time than observing. Macaro (2001:56–58) emphasises that one advantage of interviews is that you get a lot of interaction since the participants are likely to react on other's ideas.

However, Macaro (2001) has pointed out some disadvantages, too. For example, some learners are unable to articulate the strategies they use since they might be using them unconsciously and their answers might even be affected by the fact that they have been asked about their strategy use. He mentions one disadvantage being that particularly with adolescent learners may feel pressurised by their peers into not telling the truth. Therefore a questionnaire was chosen to be used as a data gathering method in this study instead of an interview.

If the view of Cohen (1998) is adopted, all language learning strategies are conscious and therefore language learners should be aware of them and what they use. Cohen (1998:30) points out that one problem of written questionnaires is that much of the data consists of self-report or generalised statements of their strategy use so the answers may become less accurate and over-estimations and underestimations are common. Cohen (1998:30) also suggests that concentrating on recent strategy use and specific learning events can produce more accurate answers than trying to remember what they have done over the years.

As mentioned before, vocabulary learning strategies are hard to be separated from general language learning strategies and therefore the study of vocabulary learning strategies has encountered some difficulties. For example, identifying the strategies especially as vocabulary learning strategies can prove to be a hard task. Furthermore, language learners rarely see their vocabulary learning as a separate task and that is why they are unable to articulate the specific actions made in order to enhance the vocabulary learning process.

2.4 Second language learning and motivation

Language learning motivation deals with several processes and it is hard to be measured. This section will investigate the role of motivation in second language learning and introduce the main theories relevant to the present study. These theories concentrate on second language learning motivation. Also demotivating factors will be dealt with briefly in order to introduce both sides of motivation.

Garner and Lambert (1972:11–12) point out that measuring motivational variables is difficult and due to the complexity and meaning of motivation in human operations studying motivation accurately is proved to be a challenging task. Motivation has also been seen as a part of individual differences which vary depending on the learner and this has caused even more problems in creating universal theories of motivation in second language learning.

One of the best-known theories of motivation is intrinsic versus extrinsic motivation (Dörnyei 2001:27). Intrinsic motivation deals with behaviour performed its own sake in order to experience pleasure and satisfaction whereas extrinsic motivation involves performing behaviour as means to an

end. Example of the former can be enjoying doing something whereas an example of the latter can be to receive a reward, for instance, good grades. (Dörnyei 2001:27-28.)

Garner's (1985:153) socio-educational model of L2 learning consists of five interrelated components: integrativeness, attitudes towards the learning situation, motivation, integrative orientation and instrumental orientation. However, Gardner also (1985:153) points out that these components are a part of individual differences of the language learner.

Furthermore, Gardner and Lambert (1972:3) have identified that there are two different motivational types; instrumental orientation and integrative orientation. Instrumental orientation deals with seeing the language as an instrument in, for example, getting ahead in working life. In contrast, if the student wishes to learn more about the other cultural community, perhaps aiming to become a member of that group, the orientation is integrative.

Dörnyei (2005:67–68) mentions that due to the social dimension of language learning can be in some sense separated from other school subjects and also the motivational factors behind the learning process can differ from those of other school subjects. Dörnyei (2001:35-36) mentions that the teacher's role in student motivation is complex but the teacher can have an impact on the learners' motivation. The teacher's motivational influence, as well as parental influences and group motivation, is a part of social motivation. The factors affecting the learner are the personal characteristics of the teacher, teacher immediacy (the closeness between people), active motivational socialising behaviour which consists of modelling, task presentation and feedback/reward system. Furthermore, classroom management is also an important factor and it consists of setting and maintaining group norms and the teacher's authority. (Dörnyei 2001:35-37.)

Also a study by Muhonen (2004:70) suggests that the teacher can be a demotivational factor in language learning due to the important role he or she has in the learning situation. Accoding to Muhonen's (2004) data, the demotivating aspects of the teacher were related to personality, teaching methods and lack of competence. However, some aspects (for example, group work) were seen as motivating factors by some students whereas other students regarded the same factors as demotivating and due to the complexity of the field, analysing the demotivational factors can be somewhat challenging.

2.5 Vocabulary learning strategies

Vocabulary knowledge is essential in reading in a foreign language. Learners know the importance of words in a language and are aware of the fact that learning strategies can help them to learn vocabulary successfully. In this section the concept of vocabulary learning strategy is introduced and studied in more detail in the following sub-chapters. Schmitt's (1997) study of vocabulary learning strategies is discussed since the results of the present study are compared with the results of the study by Schmitt. Furthermore, since the relationship of gender and vocabulary learning language use is under investigation, the previous research on gender differences is discussed.

2.5.1 Defining vocabulary learning strategy

Learner autonomy can be enhanced by introducing learner to different vocabulary learning strategies which can be used in developing the learning process. Schmitt (1997:200–201) states, summarising previous research, that

many learners use vocabulary learning strategies and many learners agree that vocabulary is an essential part of language.

Sökmen (1997:237) summarises that vocabulary learning strategies are basically actions made by the learner in order to help them to understand the meaning of a word, learning them and to remember them later. Jiménez Catalán (2003:57) accentuates that there is the line separating language learning strategies from vocabulary learning strategies is by no mean clearly defined. The main goal of studies on vocabulary learning strategies is to discover how words are learnt and what parts is played by different processes.

According to O'Malley and Chamot (1990:7), training second language learners to use learning strategies concentrates mainly on learning vocabulary. They also point out that vocabulary learning strategies are used most frequently and are probably the most well-known type of language learning strategies. Ellis (1985:103–104) mentions that, in comparison with other aspects of language, such as grammar and pronunciation, vocabulary is the area of language that learners seem most conscious of.

Grammar has often been seen as the core of language and that is why Sökmen (1997:237) points out that the role of vocabulary in language learning has been neglected. According to Sökmen (1997:237) vocabulary acquisition has a more important role in learning a second language today than it had before. This means that the awareness of vocabulary learning strategies and the need for them are growing. In addition, Juurakko and Airola (2002) also state that the study of vocabulary learning is already one of the central topics studying language learning. However, no general theory has been found concentrating on the meaning of lexical competence or how words really are learned. Sökmen (1997:237–239) continues that previously the emphasis was on implicit, incidental learning of vocabulary. However,

current research suggests that it is worthwhile to add explicit vocabulary learning into the vocabulary learning activities used in classrooms.

Jiménez Catalán (2003:57) points out that the line between language learning strategies and vocabulary learning strategies is by no means clearly defined and studies on vocabulary learning overlap with studies on communication strategies. Schmitt (1997:200) notes that even though many studies have been made about language learning strategies and vocabulary learning, only a few of them have discussed vocabulary learning strategies. According to Schmitt (1997:199), the research done on the field of vocabulary learning strategies typically concentrates only on individual or small number of strategies.

According to Schmitt (1997:223), research has shown that patterns of strategy use can change over time when the learner gets older or becomes more proficient in the language he or she is studying. Therefore some strategies are more popular in certain age groups.

2.5.2 Classification of vocabulary learning strategies

There are several different ways to classify L2 vocabulary learning strategies. Sökmen (1997:237–257) summarises that the main categories of vocabulary learning strategies are implicit and explicit teaching of words. Implicit teaching includes only word inferring from context. Explicit teaching is consists of several elements such as building a large sight of vocabulary, integrating new words with the old ones, providing adequate amount of encounters with a word, promoting deep level processing, facilitating imaging and concreteness, using different techniques and encouraging independent learner strategies.

In recent years these explicit methods have attained sustainable position in vocabulary teaching. In addition, Sökmen (1997:237) also points out that in the 1970s and 1980s vocabulary learning was seen as an implicit and incidental and it was not seen as important as, for instance, grammar. However, currently the use of explicit vocabulary teaching is growing.

Vocabulary learning strategies can also be divided into two groups the first being the group concentrating on understanding the meaning of words and the other including the strategies for acquiring words (Cook 2001:66–68).

Strategies for understanding the meaning of words (by Cook 2001:66–67)

1. Guessing from the situation or context
2. Using a dictionary
3. Making deductions from the word from
4. Linking to cognates (finding similarities in words of two different languages)

Strategies for acquiring words (by Cook 2001:69–70)

1. Repetition and rote learning
2. Organizing words in the mind
3. Linking to existing knowledge

Another classification of vocabulary learning strategies has been proposed by Nation (1990:159–176). In his earlier work he identifies three different vocabulary learning strategies: guessing word from context, using mnemonic techniques and using prefixes, roots and suffixes and word parts in general. However, in a later study, Nation (2005:589–593) includes learning words from cards as a fourth major vocabulary learning strategy and mentions also using dictionary being one of the most important vocabulary learning strategies.

According to Nation (1990:160), once learners have gained a vocabulary total of about two or three thousand words, they can use their reading skills in guessing the meanings of unfamiliar words based on the context they are represented. Nation (1990:160–161) continues that clues, such as grammar, punctuation and the learner's experience and common sense are used to infer the meanings of unknown words.

Even though inferring meanings from the context is used often as a vocabulary learning strategy it has also been criticised. For example, Sökmen (1997:237–255) emphasises that inferring word meaning from texts was considered to be the primary vocabulary skill, even though it is very slow process. It is prone to errors and individuals even have different styles in learning. In addition, guessing words from context is not necessarily an effective way to learn words. Besides, learners' comprehension of the language may not be high enough to learn words efficiently merely by inferring them from context.

Another vocabulary learning strategy mentioned by Nation (1990:166) is using memory strategies which are also known as mnemonic techniques. Basically they consist of the process of making an effort to remember the word later made by the learner. The learners create associations between the word form and its meaning. According to Nation (1990:167), finding a keyword from one's first language and associate it with the new word and its meaning is a very useful method. Nation (1990:167) sums up that studies have proved the keyword technique to be very effective and in addition, it is not restricted to adults or children and it can be used with all words.

Also knowledge of prefixes, roots and suffixes can help to learn words and their meanings. Nation (1990:169) points out that it is useful for the learners to study lists of prefixes and roots. With the knowledge of prefixes and roots

one can check whether an unfamiliar word has been successfully guessed from the context.

In addition to Nation's classifications (1990:159–176), other well-known and studied vocabulary learning techniques are key words, making notes of the words, identifying words into groups, making own vocabulary exercises and using the new word in one's communication. (see, e.g., Juurakko & Airola 2002 and Kristiansen, 1998).

2.5.3 Schmitt's taxonomy of vocabulary learning strategies

Schmitt's (1997:206-208) taxonomy of vocabulary learning strategies is based on Oxford's (1990) taxonomy of learning strategies (see page 22). However, it has been revised in order to function as a useful tool especially when categorizing vocabulary learning strategies since initially Oxford (1990) has created it for describing learning strategies in general.

According to Schmitt's (1997) taxonomy, there are two main groups of strategies: discovery strategies and consolidation strategies. Discovery strategies are the strategies which are used in discovering the meaning of a new word whereas consolidating strategies deal with the consolidation a word once it has been encountered. The former consists of determination strategies and social strategies whereas the latter includes social strategies, memory strategies, cognitive strategies and metacognitive strategies.

Schmitt's taxonomy includes vocabulary learning strategies divided into five sub-groups; determination strategies, social strategies, memory strategies, cognitive strategies and metacognitive strategies. However, Schmitt (1990:204) notes that it is extremely difficult to draw the line between different strategies and their variations. For example, some strategies, such as

interacting with native speakers, can be identified as a social strategy as well as metacognitive strategy if it is seen as a part of overall language learning.

When encountering an unfamiliar word, learners must discover the meaning of the new word. According to Schmitt (1997:208), determination strategies which are a part of discovery strategies, consist of strategies such as guessing the meaning based on structural knowledge, guessing from L1 cognate, guessing from context or using reference material. Also social strategies can function as discovery strategies since the learner can ask help from someone in finding out the meaning of a new word (Schmitt 1997:209).

Consolidating strategies include several different strategy types. In Schmitt's (1997) taxonomy they include social strategies, which are essential in learning the language since input can be seen as a key element in language acquisition. For example, group learning promotes active processing as well as team working abilities and since there is less instructor intervention, the learners have more time for use the language in the classroom (Schmitt 1997:211).

Schmitt (1997:211–13) mentions also that memory strategies, traditionally known as mnemonics, are one type of consolidation strategies. Usually they involve relating the word to some previous knowledge, for example, using pictures of the meaning of it instead of definitions or linking it to some L2 words already familiar to the learner. Besides, using unrelated words or grouping the words according to some categories such as synonyms or common themes are examples of memory strategies.

In addition, word's orthographical of phonological form can used as a mnemonic strategy. One can study the spelling or pronunciation of the word in order to produce a lasting imprint of it into memory. Furthermore, using

word's affixes, roots and word classes can prove to be useful in consolidating it meaning. (Schmitt 1997:214.)

According to Schmitt (1997:215), cognitive strategies of his taxonomy are similar to memory strategies but they do not concentrate on manipulative mental processing but rather on repetition and mechanical means to study vocabulary. The traditional and popular examples of these are written and verbal repetition; writing or saying a word over and over again. Word lists, flash cards and taking notes as well as using study aids such as language textbooks are also classified as cognitive strategies.

As mentioned before, metacognitive strategies are strategies used by the learners to control and evaluate their learning and this applies also to Schmitt's (1997) taxonomy. Schmitt (1997:216) mentions that effective metacognitive strategies are getting maximum exposure to L2, for example, by reading books, watching movies and interacting with native speakers. Also efficient use of time and knowing when to actively study a new word are useful metacognitive strategies.

2.5.4 Schmitt's study on vocabulary learning strategies

Schmitt (1997) conducted a study of vocabulary learning strategies concentrating on which strategies they used and which of them they found the most helpful and the least helpful. Schmitt collected the data for his study using questionnaires and used his taxonomy in the analysis. The participants were provided with a list of 58 strategies and they were to write down which strategies they use and which of them they found the most helpful.

The participants of Schmitt's (1997) study consisted of 600 Japanese learners of English. Since a broad cross-section of learners was needed to participate

in the study, the surveys were handed out to four different groups: junior high school students (between 7 to 9 years of age), high school students (between 10 to 12 years of age), university students and adult learners.

The ten most used vocabulary learning strategies found by Schmitt (1997) were the following (per cent of participants using the strategy):

1. Bilingual dictionary   85%
2. Verbal repetition   76%
3. Written repetition   76%
4. Study the spelling   74%
5. Guess from textual context   74%
6. Ask classmates for meaning   73%
7. Say new word aloud   69%
8. Take notes in class   64%
9. Study the sound of a word   60%
10. Word lists   54%

According to Schmitt (1997), six of the most used strategies are in common with the ten most helpful strategies. The most helpful strategies according to Schmitt's study are the following:

1. Bilingual dictionary
2. Say new word aloud
3. Written repetition
4. Connect word with synonyms/antonyms
5. Continue over time
6. Study spelling
7. Ask teacher for paraphrase/synonym
8. Take notes in class
9. Analyse pictures/gestures

10. Verbal repetition

Schmitt (1997) comments that the it is difficult to draw conclusions about strategies which were in the middle of the range, being not the most popular but not the least popular either. The study suggests that using a bilingual dictionary is especially popular among Japanese learners of English.

Furthermore, guessing from context was rather popular. In addition, the participants used social strategies, such as asking a classmate or a teacher, rather often. The study also conveyed that the patterns of the strategy use can change over time and therefore some strategies were more popular in certain age groups than in others. The results of Schmitt's (1997) study also implied that the learner may be willing to try new strategies if they are introduced to and instructed in them.

2.5.4 Gender differences and vocabulary learning strategies

Hardly any research has examined sex or gender as a predictor of variation in the knowledge and use of language learning strategies. Nevertheless, Jiménez Catalán (2003:56) points out that some differences in the use of language learning strategies between male and female learners have been identified. However, research has also provided evidence that language learning strategies may be associated with other individual factors such as types of memory, learning styles, motivation or even culture. More research is needed in order to accurately describe the sex differences in vocabulary learning strategy use.

According to a study by Jiménez Catalán (2003), male and female students normally use the same strategies and are more alike than different. Yet, studies have shown that females often use a wider range of language

learning strategies than males. Moreover, females usually employ social strategies which promote communicative competence whereas males do not use social strategies as actively. A summary of studies on sex differences also shows that male students use translation strategies more often than female students. (Jiménez Catalán 2003:56–57.)

Furthermore, Jiménez Catalan (2003:64) has identified that according to her study, males and females differ significantly with regard to the number of vocabulary strategies used females being the ones using more different strategies than males. In addition, female learners use vocabulary learning strategies more often to promote their language learning in comparison with male learners (Jiménez Catalán 2003:64). Besides, female learners use more formal rule strategies, input elicitation strategies, rehearsal strategies and planning strategies whereas male learners use more image vocabulary strategies. The ten most frequently used vocabulary learning strategies (by Jiménez Catalán, 2003) can be seen in table 3.

Table 3. Ten most frequently used vocabulary learning strategies (Jiménez Catalán 2003)

Males	Females
1. Bilingual dictionary	1. Bilingual dictionary
2. Taking notes in class	2. Taking notes in class
3. Guess from context	3. Guess from context
4. Ask teacher for L1 translation	4. Ask classmates for meaning
5. Ask classmates for meaning	5. Ask teacher for L1 translation
6. Analyse part of speech	6. Say word aloud
7. Connect the word to cognates	7. Connect words to cognates
8. Use English-language media	8. Analyse part of speech
9. Say word aloud	9. Use English-language media
10. Form image of word's meaning	10. Use vocabulary section in textbook

To sum up, gender differences in the vocabulary learning strategy use is an interesting topic but it has not been studied widely. Despite the fact that males and females are more alike in vocabulary learning strategy use than expected, some differences can be seen and the need for further study is evident.

3. RESEARCH DESIGN

The aim of the present study is to describe the vocabulary learning strategy use of upper secondary school students. The students' use of vocabulary learning strategies in second language is examined from four perspectives: what strategies they use, where have they gotten information about the strategies, can any gender differences be identified in strategy use and is there a link between vocabulary learning strategy use and second language learning motivation. Only a few studies concentrates on the aspects of vocabulary learning in second language learning have been published in Finland. Since the field of study is relatively new, the present study will offer an insight into the field on vocabulary learning strategies used Finnish students.

The following sections describe the research design of the present study. The problems and hypotheses are discussed first and then the analysis methods will be introduced in detail. The data was analysed using quantitative and qualitative methods in order to find answers to the research questions. The following sections also include a description of the questionnaire design, data collection and provide information on the students participating in the study.

3.1 Problems and hypotheses

The present study examines the vocabulary learning strategy use of Finnish upper secondary school students. Since teachers and learners of second language are becoming more aware of the meaning of vocabulary knowledge it is interesting to study how vocabulary learning strategies are used and how vocabulary learning and teaching could be developed in the future. The theme is approached with the help of four research questions which are discussed in detail in the following paragraphs.

The research questions of this study are the following:
1) What vocabulary learning strategies do the learners use?
2) Where have they gained their information about the different strategies?
3) Are there any gender differences in the use of vocabulary learning strategies?
4) Is there a link between second language learning motivation and vocabulary learning strategy use?

My initial hypotheses for the findings of this thesis consist of four elements. Firstly, I expect that the data convey that the upper secondary school students use a relatively fixed range of vocabulary learning strategies and know only a small number of them. This hypothesis is based on the fact that according to the findings of my small scale study produced in 2005 as a candidate's thesis, Finnish upper secondary school students are not familiar with all the possibilities regarding vocabulary learning strategies and therefore they are unable to mention a wide range of strategies which they know and use when learning a second language.

Secondly, I anticipate that the students have mostly gained information on vocabulary learning strategies from their friends or family instead of their teachers and school environment. Based on the findings of my previous research, students have had only little instructions on vocabulary learning from their teachers or school environment in general. In contrast, the topic of vocabulary learning has been introduced outside the classroom, often in home with siblings or parents and sometimes with peers, too.

Thirdly, I suggest that gender differences will also emerge from the data. According to a study by Jiménez Catalán (2003), females show greater use of formal rule strategies, input elicitation strategies, rehearsal strategies and planning strategies whereas males use more image vocabulary learning strategies. In addition, Jiménez Catalán (2003) mentions that females' total strategy usage percentages are higher than males'. I am interested in seeing whether any gender differences arise from the data and will they be similar with the ones Jiménez Catalán (2003) has found.

Finally, I expect to see a link between motivation and the use of vocabulary learning strategies. As Oxford (1990) points out, highly motivated language learners usually employ a wider range of different learning strategies. In addition, motivated students may have a deeper knowledge on which strategies are the most beneficial to them due to the fact that they have probably tested many of them aiming at finding the right tools for them. I am interested in seeing whether this applies also in the present study.

3.2 Methodology

The study consists of several elements and the nature of the study is distinctively qualitative since, as Hirsjärvi et al. (2005:155) point out, qualitative study includs a comprehensive acquisition of information and the

data is collected in natural and real environment. The data collection method suggests that in some sense the study can also be seen as a case study with a narrative approach since the data is collected with open questions and the number of participants is rather small. Even though the main method of analysis is qualitative, also some quantitative methods were used in order to provide a holistic view of the vocabulary learning strategy use of upper secondary school students. A more detailed description of the data analysis can be found in section 4.

The data was collected by using a questionnaire. When planning the implementation of data collection of the study two different methods, a questionnaire and interviewing, were considered to be used. However, in the end questionnaires were chosen for this study since interviews would have been more complex to implement since they need more time and planning in order to succeed in providing enough data. As Macaro (2001:56) puts it, interviewing can prove to be very productive when studying learning strategy use. However, one of the disadvantages is that it consumes time and therefore the number of participants is affected. Furthermore, in group discussions the participants can be pressurised by their peers into not telling what they really do. Macaro (2001:46–56) also mentions that questionnaires have been widely used by researchers and teachers throughout the world.

The participants were also chosen keeping the nature and the objective of the study in mind and therefore the participants were not chosen totally randomly. Upper secondary school students were chosen as the participants since they can reflect their learning relatively well.

The vocabulary learning strategies mentioned in the participants' answers were listed from the most popular method to the least popular. In addition, the strategies were classified by the vocabulary learning strategy taxonomy by Schmitt (1997) and also compared with the results of Schmitt's (1997)

study of vocabulary learning strategies (see section 5.2). The results concentrating on gender differences were also compared with the study of Jiménez Catalán (2003). The comparison can be found in section 5.3.

Even though motivation is an important factor in language learning, studying the role of motivation in vocabulary learning strategy use is dealt in rather general terms. The study offers an insight into the motivation and vocabulary learning strategy use from the students' perspective through the comments made by the students about their language learning. A comparison was made between the successful and less successful students' views regarding their motivation and vocabulary learning strategy use.

3.3 Designing the questionnaire

The data was collected with the help of a questionnaire (see appendix) in December 2006. The questionnaire consisted of five sets of open questions.

Open questions were chosen to be used in the questionnaire since, based on my experiences of my candidate's thesis which also concentrated on vocabulary learning strategies and functioned as a pilot study for the present study, it has proved to be an effective method for data collection. In my opinion, students often consider answering to open questions easier than, for example, multiple choice-questions. Multiple choice-questions can also cause confusion and the students are not able to express themselves freely and less time and effort is taken completing them. Furthermore, I was worried that offering a list of examples of vocabulary learning strategies would affect their answers.

As Hirsjärvi et al. (2005:183) summarise, open questions are somewhat in between of formal and unstructured research design. Furthermore, the participants are not totally objects of the research as in experimental research and the researcher is not participating as much as in, for instance, participant observation. Moreover, a non-structured opportunity to answer might enhance interest in answering the questions and to think learning strategies and their use in a more personal level. I think that the open questions provide a better opportunity to reflect their own learning and, in addition, based on the positive experiences found in working on the candidate's thesis, I chose the open questions to be used in data acquisition of the present study, too. However, open questions can provide answers to matters which are not studied at all.

The questionnaire was in some parts similar to the questionnaire I used acquiring the data for my candidate's thesis which in a way functioned as a pilot study for my thesis. In addition to some background questions (such as age, gender, school, latest grade in English), the questionnaire of the present study included open questions about their usage of different strategies and their motivation in second language vocabulary learning. The questionnaire was tested beforehand with the help of two people of the same age group and similar educational background as the students participating in the study and then revised according to their suggestions.

The questionnaire was printed in paper but it was also published in the Web. The electronic form was used in the data collection in addition to the traditional paper version. Due to differences in resources, a part of the participants used the paper version and the other part used the electronic version. The version in the Web was created since some students might find answering easier when they can type their answers instead of writing them on a paper. Moreover, the data will automatically be in electronic form when

the questionnaire is used in the Web and therefore using it is practical and easy.

The first question of the questionnaire (see appendix) deals with the meaning of vocabulary in language proficiency. In addition to its introductory role on introducing the topic to the participants this question was chosen to describe the participants' attitudes towards vocabulary and vocabulary learning in general.

The second set of questions (see appendix) discusses the actual time and effort used in the participants' vocabulary learning. Motivational factors are emphasised on the third set of questions (see appendix). Since this study concentrates also on the participants' motivation towards vocabulary learning, the third part deals with the concrete issues which have an impact on the participants' motivation.

The fourth part of the questionnaire (see appendix) consisted of questions about the actual use of learning strategies. In this part the participants will deal with the concrete techniques and strategies they use to make their learning easier and more effective. The fifth part (see appendix) offers an insight into where the participants have gained their information on the different vocabulary learning strategies.

3.4 Participants

I was interested in upper secondary school students as my participants since they have more developed meta-cognitive skills than younger students. In my previous research I also had upper secondary school students as the participants of my study. According to the results of my previous study, their knowledge about themselves as learners will benefit my efforts to find

more about Finnish students' vocabulary learning strategy use since upper secondary school students can reflect their own learning relatively well. Furthermore, they are more likely to answer the questions truthfully and take the research seriously than younger learners of English.

The data of my previous study was collected from the students of one upper secondary school and there were 30 participants. In this study the data was acquired from two upper secondary schools in Western Finland in December 2006. The two schools contributing to the present study were rather similar but there were also some differences. These differences may have had an impact on the data and the results of the present study. Both schools were chosen randomly and they were contacted in order to find out whether they would co-operate with the study. After negotiations I visited both schools personally and acquired the data by using questionnaires.

Both of the schools were relatively small upper secondary schools and they were also situated outside large cities. Both schools participating in the study were located in the Western Finland and they both were close to each other in size, each school consisting of about 150 students and they were operating in the same building with comprehensive school of each municipality. Furthermore, there were also less than 5 000 inhabitants in both municipalities where the schools are situated.

However, as mentioned before, there were some differences. School A has an active co-operation with the local vocational school and there are students who are studying in both facilities; in upper secondary school and in the vocational school. In school B there are also mature students and therefore the age range of the participants in school B was from 16 to 24 years.

There were 50 students (31 males, 19 females) participating in the present study. Due to the differences of resources in schools and time available for conducting the data collection, 30 participants used the paper version of the questionnaire (see appendix) and 20 completed the questionnaire in the Web environment. The time used for completing the questionnaire was limited to 45 minutes but all participants completed the questionnaire in less than 30 minutes.

The participants were between 16 and 24 years of age and they all were in the middle of their first or second year of studies in upper secondary school. One student was an exchange student and answered in English but all the others were Finnish L2-learners whose first language was Finnish and they used it in their answers, too. All of them had English as their second language and they had studied it for nine years or more in the school setting.

In school A, 30 participants, 15 males and 15 females, were randomly chosen by their teachers to participate in the study. See Table 4 for gender distribution of all participants. Tables 5 and 6 show the gender distribution of each school.

Table 4. Participants by gender
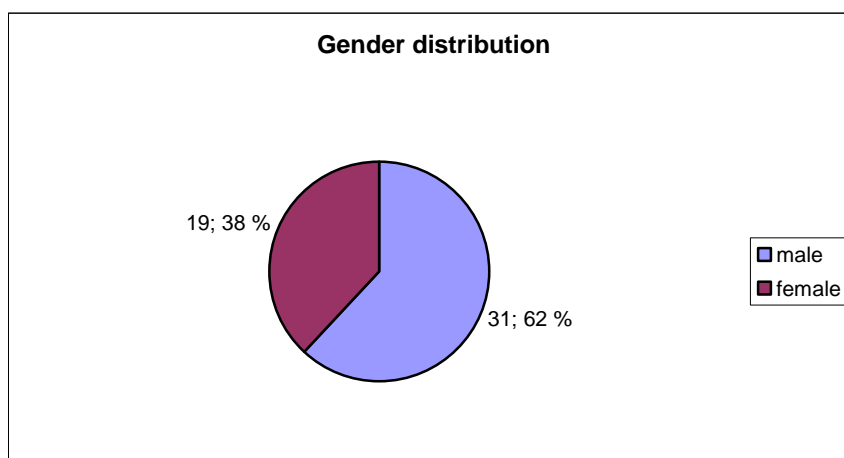
Table 5. Participants by gender, school A

School A -gender distribution

15; 50 %   15; 50 %

□ male
■ female
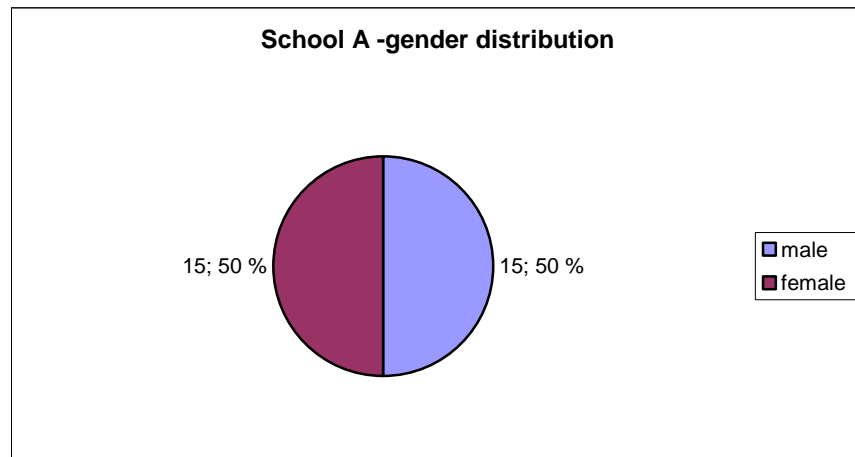
Table 6. Participants by gender, school B

School B -gender distribution

4; 20 %

□ male
■ female

16; 80 %
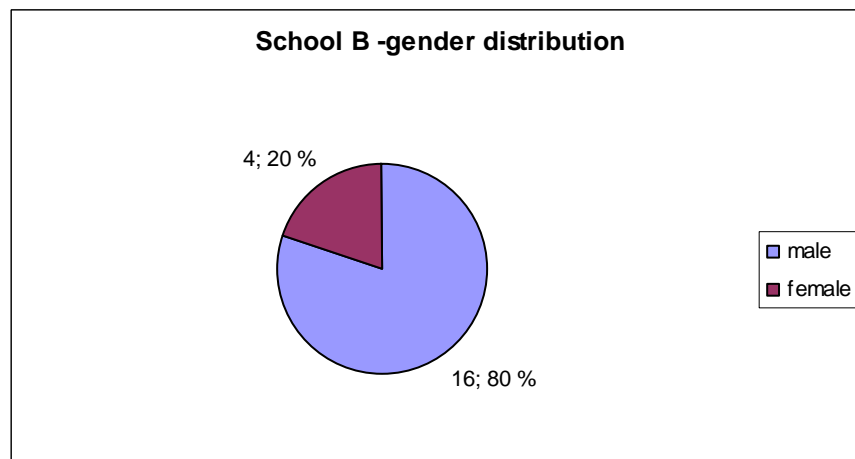
The teaching groups and their schedules were the main cause on deciding who were to participate. In school A the teachers were present when their students completed their questionnaires whereas in school B the students were able to complete the questionnaire on their own pace individually in a computer room. In school B, 20 students, 16 males and 4 females, volunteered in participating. The fact that in school A the students were obligated to complete the questionnaire may have an impact on the results of the study. This can be caused by the fact that since in school B the students participating may have consisted of, for example, the outspoken or more motivated individuals who are interested in activities outside the classroom.

Also the mean grades of the students of each school were analysed in order to point out the similarities and differences of the schools and the participants. The questionnaire contained a background question of students' last grade in English and these answers were analysed. The mean grade of students of each school was calculated as well as the mean grades of each gender in each school (see Table 7).

Table 7. The mean grade of English in the most recent report cards of the participants (on the scale from 4 to 10, 4 being the lowest)

	School A	School B
All students	7,60	7,40
Female students	8,90	8,00
Male students	6,30	7,25

The participants' background in language learning can be analysed, for example, on the basis of their recent grades in English courses. In Finland the grading system in upper secondary schools is on scale from 4 to 10, 4 being the lowest and 10 being the highest possible grade. As shown in Table 7, in school A, the mean grade achieved in English was 7,6 whereas in school B it was 7,4 (see Table 7). However, the female students of school A seemed to be more successful in their studies in comparison to the male students since their mean grade was significantly higher. Nevertheless, in school B the differences between male and female students were less prominent. Furthermore, since the information about the grades was gathered directly from the students it is important to bear in mind that they might not have been sincere in their answers.

4. DATA ANALYSIS

The present study concentrates on qualitative analysis even though some quantitative methods have been used in order to produce a more accurate description on the vocabulary learning strategy use of upper secondary school students.

The data collection took place in 2006 and the data consisted of students' answers to a questionnaire. The open questions of the questionnaire were first analysed question by question concentrating on reoccurring themes which arose from the data. The voice of the participants can be heard from the data as well as in the analysis and direct quotations of the data are presented in the thesis in order to point out the common themes. The quantitative analysis includes, for example, tables of the mean grades achieved by the students and lists of the most used strategies mentioned by the participants.

In the following section each set of questions is analysed individually. Several different themes are discussed in each of the following sections. The first questions deal with the participants' attitudes and the second question set concentrates on the time and effort taken to learn vocabulary. The main theme of the third part is motivation and the fourth set of questions describes the actual strategy use. Finally, the last set of questions discusses the sources of vocabulary learning strategy knowledge.

4.1 Questions sets of the questionnaire

In this section each set of questions of the questionnaire (see appendix) is analysed individually pointing out the themes which occur frequently in the data. The discussion is illustrated with examples from the data to emphasise

the main points and interesting topics which have been brought up by the participants in the data. The first section deals with the participants' attitudes towards vocabulary learning and the second section describes the time and the effort used in vocabulary learning. In each of these sets the themes are portrayed with the help of direct quotations from the data. Furthermore, the third section discusses vocabulary learning and motivation and some interesting, reoccurring themes have been investigated in detail. The fourth section concentrates on the actual vocabulary learning strategy use and the last part describes the sources of vocabulary learning strategy knowledge. These two themes are also analysed quantitatively.

4.1.1 Question 1- Attitudes towards vocabulary learning

The first section in the questionnaire was created to introduce the participants to the topic of vocabulary learning in second language and find out about their attitudes towards second language vocabulary learning in general. Even though the attitude towards vocabulary learning is not one of the main themes of the present study, the results can offer a link between motivation and vocabulary learning. The first section only consisted one question: "What is your view on the importance of the role of vocabulary knowledge in language proficiency?".

All participants stated that vocabulary knowledge is at least somewhat or very important part of language proficiency. An interesting aspect of the answers was that nearly half of the participants mentioned grammar in this context. They all mentioned that it is impossible to use a language if you know only the grammar and therefore the vocabulary has an essential role. For instance, M8 (male, 16 years old) summarised that it is easier to talk and write if you know some vocabulary so the vocabulary must be important. Furthermore, M2 (male, 17 years old) answered the first question simply

with one word: "Elintärkeänä." ('Vital'). In addition, M23 (male, 17 years old) commented that: "Mielestäni sanaston osaaminen on yksi tärkeimmistä taidoista, opettelen yleensä sanat hyvin" ('I think that knowing vocabulary is one of the most important skills, I usually study words very well'). An interesting point of view was also expressed by one male. M27 (male, 16 years old) pointed out that vocabulary is extremely important since without knowing the word one is unable to understand spoken English.

Some students stated that one does not have to know that much grammar if one knows at least some words. For example, F16 (female, 17 years old) stated that words are more important than grammar since without words no one can understand you. M26 (male, 17 years old) sees vocabulary knowledge the most important part of language proficiency. Furthermore, M19 (male, 1 years old) answered that "[Pidän sanaston osaamista] Tärkeänä, sillä englantia puhuvat ymmärtävät melko varmasti, vaikkei kielioppi olisikaan täydellistä." ('I think that knowing the vocabulary is important because English speaking people are likely to understand even though the grammar is not perfect'). Another example of the role of vocabulary and grammar was pointed out by F3 (female, 16 years old): "Tärkeänä, sillä vaikka osaisi kieliopin ulkoa, siitä ei ole hyötyä, jos sanavarasto on suppea." ('Important since knowing the grammar by heart is useless if your vocabulary is narrow.'). M21 (male, 16 years old) has similar thoughts as F3 but he takes them even further by mentioning that grammatical weaknesses can be compensated by using versatile and broad vocabulary.

It is interesting that the topic of grammar and grammatically correct language use rose as a theme in the participants' answers. The shift of focus in the students' comments is intriguing since traditionally Finnish language learning and teaching has been seen concentrating more on the form than the function. However, the participants of the present study see the ability to use

the language more important than using the absolute correct forms of the language.

To sum up, it is clear that the upper secondary school students realise the meaning of vocabulary and the opportunities vocabulary knowledge holds. Many of the participants commented that vocabulary is extremely important part of a language and grammatical shortcomings can be compensated with adequate knowledge of words and vocabulary. Based on the findings of the study it can be argued that upper secondary school students do understand the meaning of vocabulary even though their efforts in vocabulary learning may imply otherwise, as can be seen in the later sections when analysing the actual vocabulary learning strategy use.

4.1.2 Question 2 –Time and effort taken to learn vocabulary

The second section of the questionnaire focused on determining how much time and effort the students take in order to learn English vocabulary. Some themes reoccurred in the participants' answers and they are studied in more detail.

A common characteristic in the participants' vocabulary learning habits was that many of them study words actively only in order to pass the tests in school and they usually study vocabulary as little as possible. For example, F2 (female, 17 years old) said that if she does not have an English course she will not open her books. She continues that she studies vocabulary mainly to succeed in word tests and exams and since English is not her favourite subject she is not interested in anything related to that outside the school environment. F15 (female, 17 years old) also mentions that words are studied only to do well in tests but they are not studied voluntarily or for fun. F12 (female, 17 years old) has similar thoughts:

Sanoja ei tule luettua päivittäin, mutta väistämättä niihin törmää joka päivä. Opiskelen niitä vain niissä jaksoissa, joissa on englannin kurssi. Opettelen ne sanakokeeseen jos se pidetään ja aikaa yhden kpl:n sanoihin menee n, 45 minuuttia määrästä riippuen. Sitten tietenkin ennen koetta pänttään niitä paljon ja aikaa kuluu enemmän.

('I do not study words every day but I come across them every day. I only study them during the periods when I have an English course. I study words for word tests and it takes about 45 minutes to study the words of one chapter, depending on the amount of the words. Then, of course, before a test I study them really hard and it takes more time.')

Only small number of participants offered their insights on how much they actually study words. Some mentioned that they study them weekly or daily whereas some stated that they do not study words at all. Only a few students actually described how much they study words. The time used differed from a half hour a week to one hour a day. Nevertheless, usually the comments were rather vague, for example F8 (female, 16 years old) mentions that "Sanojen opiskeluun kuluu aikaa." ('Studying words tends to take time.'). It is challenging to draw conclusions based on somewhat similar statements by the participants. However, due to the fact that vocabulary learning is integrated into several other language learning tasks (reading, writing, doing homework etc.) the exact time used to study vocabulary can, in fact, be hard to estimate. Furthermore, vocabulary learning tasks can be integrated into other language learning tasks and therefore vocabulary learning can also be unconscious and therefore hard to see.

Several students mention that they find the meaning of unknown words when it is absolutely necessary, but if the word and knowing its meaning is not crucial in order to conveying the meaning, usually they do not take the initiative to find out what the word means. F1 (female, 16 years old) summarises: "Uudet sanat otan selville, mutta yksittäiset sana jäävät usein opiskelematta". ('I find out the meaning of new words but often I do not study the single words I encounter.'). F15 (female, 17 years old) states that she finds out the meaning of new, unknown words as soon as possible.

Some students mentioned learning words from movies, television and other popular culture items in particular related to the second set of questions even though they could have mentioned them later on when the questionnaire deals with the actual vocabulary learning strategies. However, bringing out the popular culture inspired vocabulary learning in this part of the questionnaire may suggest that the students distinguish the vocabulary learning and vocabulary acquisition in separate processes which do not have much in common since the former happens in classroom and the latter also outside the classroom. Nevertheless, it was rather interesting that there were some students who had realised that they learn vocabulary all the time. For example, M9 (male, 16 years old) described his vocabulary learning: "Sairaalloinen nipo tenttaus jäi pois ja opin kieltä joka päivä lisää pelkästään televisiota katsomalla ja pelaamalla. Luen myös esim. englanninkielisiä piirustus- ja taidekirjoja ja sanastoni laajenee jo sillä." ('I stopped the heavy studying and I learn the language every day just by watching television and playing. I also read art books in English and learn vocabulary already through it.'). F16 (female, 17 years old) had similar thoughts; "Sanavarasto karttuu myös televisiota katsellessa ja musiikkia kuunnellessa." ('Vocabulary grows by watching TV and listening to music.').

Summarising the main points of time and effort taken in order to learn vocabulary, it can be said that there are major differences in the actual time used in studying vocabulary. Some students mentioned not studying them at all, some studied them daily and some decided not even to estimate their time consumption at all. Nevertheless, despite the fact that some students felt that they learn words only in the school setting, several students saw vocabulary acquisition as a phenomenon which also occurs outside the classroom.

4.1.3 Question 3 –Vocabulary learning and motivation

The third set of questions deals with the motivational factors affecting the learner's vocabulary learning. One of the hypotheses of the study suggests that vocabulary learning strategy use and motivational aspect of language learning have a distinct link. As mentioned before, highly motivated language learners usually employ a wider range of different learning strategies. Furthermore, it is interesting to find out whether getting to know new vocabulary learning strategies can have an influence on their motivation to study English.

In the present study the motivation of the participants is described mainly by their success in language studies and this success is determined by their grades of English language in their report cards. Since motivation and demotivation are highly complex phenomena, it is hard to measure whether an individual is motivated to learn the language or not. However, in this study it is assumed that there is a link between the motivation and success in language learning and the grades achieved can function as indicators of motivation towards English language learning.

Some participants answered the questionnaire extremely vaguely and ignored some parts of the questionnaire altogether and therefore their contribution to the study was rather insignificant. Nevertheless, these students had one common characteristic: All students who had rather low grades in English mentioned that they have low motivation or no motivation at all to study English vocabulary. For example, M18 (male, 16 years old) answers question 4: "Vähäinen kiinnostus heikentää [motivaatiota]." ('Scarce interest diminishes [motivation].'). His grade in English was 4 (the lowest possible). Furthermore, M28 (male, 16 years old) describes his motivation: "Opiskeluun motivoi se että huomaa heti että pärjää paremmi kielessä koska osaa sanoa edes jotakin. Motivaatiota vähentää pää nuppini koska sinne ei

oikee helpolla niitä sanoja saa." ('The motivational factor is that you immediately notice when you are making progress because you can say something in that language. My motivation is not very good and the reason is my head because it is hard to get the word to stick in there.'). His grade in English was 5 (poor).

On the other hand, the successful language learners talk about their motivation and language learning gladly. For example, F3 (female, 16 years old, grade in English 10 which is the highest possible) mentions that her motivation is good because she likes languages and is considering to make a career out of them. Another interesting example is M27 (male, 16 years old, grade in English 9): "Motivaationi englannin opiskeluun on suuri ja sitä ei ole heikentänyt mikään. Minua motivoi se, että englannin osaaminen on tarpeen työelämässä ja ulkomaalaisten kanssa keskustellessa." ('I'm very motivated to study English and there's nothing that could diminish my motivation. I'm motivated by the fact that English is needed in working life and communicating with foreigners.').

The previous examples from the data fit the profile of good language learners by Cook (2001, see section 2.3.3). Good language learners, such as the successful and highly motivated individuals of the present study, actively participate in the learning situations and actively try to find the learning style which suits them best. Furthermore, they aim to expand their language knowledge and paid attention to the demand of second language learning. In addition, they are aware of the both dimensions of language; language as a system and means of communication.

Highly motivated learners of English also report using a wider range of vocabulary learning strategies than their less motivated peers. For example, F18 (female, 16 years old, grade in English 9) describes her vocabulary learning efforts:

> Yleensä sanoja lukiessani luen aluksi niitä yleisesti, sitten alan muistelemaan sanojen suomennoksia, sen jälkeen suomesta englanniksi. Teen itselleni myös omia "sanakokeita" ja muodostan joskus myös opeteltavista sanoista lauseita. Lisäksi teen paljon harjoitustehtäviä netistä ja kirjasta yms.
>
> ('Usually I study words first in general, then I try to remember their translations from English to Finnish and then from Finnish to English. I make word tests to myself and sometimes I produce sentences using the words I'm studying. In addition, I do exercises from the book and in the Internet.')

For example, M7 (male, 16 years old, grade in English 4) summarises his motivation: "Minulla ei ole yhtään motivaatiota sanojen opiskelua kohtaan. Motivaatiotani heikentää se, että en opi sanoja nopeasti, joten ne jää sitten lukematta." ('I do not have any motivation towards vocabulary learning. Motivation is diminished by the fact that I do not learn words quickly so I decided not to study them at all.'). When answering to question two of the questionnaire, M7 stated that he takes virtually no effort to learn words, he only studies some word when a word test or the final exam of the course is approaching.

However, there can be exceptions to the rule that highly motivated students are also successful language learners. The data of the present study included one interesting example of this. F2 (female, 17 years old) stated that the only motivating factor were the tests. Furthermore, she said that English is not her favourite subject and she does not study it voluntarily. However, her grade of English was 9 which is rather high. Nevertheless, she mentioned using several different vocabulary learning strategies. She mentions using mnemonics, word lists, translation, a vocabulary notebook and dictionaries. This is rather interesting controversy since it is not likely that a student with low motivation succeeds well and uses a wide range of different vocabulary learning strategies.

Motivational factors mentioned by the participants were success in studies and doing well in tests. These are extrinsic factors (Dörnyei 2001) since vocabulary learning is only used as a tool to achieve a certain goal. The

answer of F2 (see previous paragraph) is an excellent example of extrinsic motivation. Furthermore, for instance, F11 (female, 17 years old) mentions that vocabulary and word tests are a part of the course and in order to succeed one needs to study the vocabulary. Moreover, participants mentioned studying in order to get ahead in life and use the language in work and being able to communicate with people from other cultures. In addition, students pointed out that they want to understand films and computer games better and therefore they take the effort to study the language, too. For example, M19 (male, 16 years old) describes his motivation to be good since he needs English vocabulary nearly every day. Also F15 (female, 17 years old) emphasises that English is an important language and almost everyone needs it and therefore she is motivated to study it.

Traditionally intrinsic factors of motivation include performing action for its own sake and gaining pleasure from it (Dörnyei 2001). However, the participants' answers did not convey this kind of motivation. Nevertheless, the participants may have intrinsic motivational factors but they may have chosen not to report them since language is usually seen as a tool for communication instead of being the meaningful content of study by itself.

Furthermore, the motivation of the students participating in the present study can also be analysed from the point of view of instrumental and integrative orientation to language learning. The instrumental orientation to language can be seen in the data, for example on the answer by M23 (male, 17 years old): "Motivaatiotani vahvistaa tv ohjelmat olisi mukava ymmärtää ohjelmat, elokuvat ilman suomennoksia." ('I'm motivated by the fact that I want to understand TV-programmes and movies without using the subtitles.'). The student wants to learn the language in order to use it as an instrument, in this example, of understanding what is spoken in television or movies.

As mentioned before, integrative orientation means that the learner wants to learn the language in order to learn more about the community speaking the language and maybe even become a member of it. Also integrative motivation is present in the data. For example, some students, including F9 (female, 16 years old) mentioned travelling as a motivational factor: "Motivaatiotani vahvistavat unelmani joskus päästä matkalle Amerikkaan." ('My dream to travel to America motivates me.').

Even though demotivation was not the core themes of the study it must be taken into account since the participants felt that it affects their language learning a great deal. Demotivational factors mentioned by the students were heavy work load in upper secondary school, stress and expectations. In addition, if the vocabulary is seen hard to grasp, uninteresting or useless, motivation to study the vocabulary reduces significantly. For example, F10 (female, 16 years old) mentions being tired and stressed out because of the heavy work load. In addition, M2 (male, 17 years old) points out that words associated with a boring topic are not motivating. M4 (male, 16 years old) mentions that he likes to learn words but studying a large amount difficult words at once has a negative impact on his motivation.

A few students also mentioned that the teacher can be a demotivational factor if he or she cannot offer the students enough information they need. Also Dörnyei (2001) mentions that teacher's role in student motivation is important even though it as also a complex phenomenon. The results of the present study emphasising the role of the teacher are rather similar to Muhonen's (2004) study of demotivational factors in second language learning. According to her, one of the main factors causing demotivation among Finnish secondary school students is teacher's lack of competence.

To sum up, even though motivation is hard to measure and it was not the main theme of the study, the data suggests that there is a link between vocabulary learning strategy use and second language learning motivation. Students who have been successful in their language studies describe their motivation being high and they also employ a wider range of vocabulary strategies than their less motivated and less successful peers even though there can be some exceptions and individual differences. The motivation of the upper secondary school students varies a great deal but a common motivational factor is the goal to success, either in language studies or communication with other people as well as working life in the future so the motivation is either extrinsic or instrumental. Furthermore, some student had integrative motivation even though it was not a popular trend.

Demotivational factors in second language vocabulary learning were the heavy work load and stress caused by studies. In addition, the words itself can cause demotivation. As Nation (1990) pointed out, some words can be more difficult to learn than others. Moreover, the teacher has an important role in motivation and demotivation. According to the present study the students can identify their motivation rather accurately and acknowledge that certain reasons can motivate or demotivate them to learn second language vocabulary. Usually the most motivated are more interested in describing their motivation and second language learning task and the less motivated are often also less successful and less enthusiastic to discuss their learning.

4.1.4 Question 4 –Vocabulary learning strategy use

The fourth part of the questionnaire aims to describe what strategies the upper secondary school students use in learning English vocabulary and

how they use them. In this section the common themes are analysed with the help of examples from the data.

Most students had rather similar stories to tell about their vocabulary learning strategy use. For example, F1 (female, 16 years old) describes her vocabulary learning accurately and in fact, mentions to use the most popular vocabulary learning strategies mentioned by the participants of the present study (see section 4.2):

> Aloitan lukemalla sanat kerran/kahdesti läpi, jonka jälkeen opettelen suomentamaan ne ja sitten kääntämään englanniksi. Ulkoaopettelu on kyllä lähinnä se tapa, jolla ne opiskelen. Peitän siis "toisen puolen" ja muistelen toisen. Ennen opettelin vain suomentamaan, mutta huomasin, ettei se riitä.
>
> ('First I read the words through once or twice then I study the translations to Finnish. After that I translate them back o English. The main technique is to learn the words by heart. Usually I cover either the English translation or the Finnish translation of the word and try to remember the other based on the meaning. Earlier I only studied translating the words from English to Finnish but I realised that it is not enough.')

The most common vocabulary learning strategies were using written repetition; reading and writing and using translations. Reading and writing occurred usually together but interestingly oral repetition was scarcely used. Repetition and learning by heart can be in some sense seen similar even though learning by heart was not mentioned as often as repetition. Some students mentioned that they used to employ written repetition but in upper secondary school the heavy workload has caused that they do not have the time for writing the words down. This is how M5 (male, 16 years old) describes his learning: "Luen sanoja. Joskus peitän toisen puolen ja koitan että osaanko. Aikaisemmin kirjoitin sanoja vihkoon mutta en enää nykyään kun sanoja on niin paljon, liikaa!" ('I read words. Sometimes I hide the translation and test myself if I know the word. I used to write the words down in a notebook but I do not do that anymore because there are so many words, too much!').

However, in addition to the most common strategies, some students use rather unconventional yet innovative strategies and it shows that individual differences are a common factor in vocabulary learning strategy use, too. One example of an interesting strategy is described in the following excerpt of the data:

> Vaikeisiin sanoihin mietin monesti muistisääntöjä: ne voivat esim. muistuttaa jotain suomenkielistä sanaa, jonka avulla muistan englanninkielisen. Isossa-Britanniassa matkustellessani kerään uudet ja ihmeelliset sanat vihkoon, katson ne sanakirjasta ja opettelen ne. Näin matkoilla sanaston uusiminen on paljon mieluisampaa. kuin koulussa, sillä läksyjä riittää avian tarpeeksi muutenkin. (F2, female, 17 years old)

> ('When I am faced with words which are hard to learn I try to come up with mnemonics: Words can, for example, resemble a Finnish word which helps me to remember the English word. When I travel in the UK I write the new and exotic words into a notebook, check them from a dictionary and learn them. It is much more interesting to learn vocabulary when you are travelling than doing it in school because you have enough homework to do anayway.')

Another interesting, yet scarcely used strategy was introduced by one female. F7 (female, 17 years old) mentions that when she was in elementary school she used to draw pictures based on the words she was studying. However, according to her description of her vocabulary learning strategy use she does not do that anymore. This is an example of the trends in strategy use since, as mentioned before, vocabulary learning strategy use changes over time (Schmitt 1997). The data of the present study showed rather little about the participants' previous strategy use since almost all of them concentrated on the strategies they use today and did not mention the strategies they used to employ in vocabulary learning.

Only a handful of students described studying word with the help of other people (see section 4.2 for more detailed list of strategies). M4 (male, 16 years old) mentioned that he participates in quizzes which test the knowing of words. M20 (male, 16 years old) tells that he studies the words with her

sister. Social strategies are rarely mentioned in this data even though some studies have shown that they are somewhat popular (see, e.g., Schmitt 1997).

The rise of the new learning environments and technological development is evident in the data of the present study. Learning words from songs, movies, television, games and advertisements was one of the most popular strategies mentioned. It is interesting that some students participating in the study decided to took them into account since it clearly suggests that they do see second language vocabulary learning or acquisition as a part of their everyday lives instead of being something that happens only in classroom instructed by the teacher. For example, using English discussion forums in Web and playing computer games which operate in English were rather popular examples mentioned by the students. For instance, M29 (male, 17 years old) describes his learning: "Kuulen joka päivä englantia esim. kun katselen televisiota tai pelaan. Jos tulee joku uusi sana mitä en tunnista, niin teen kaikkeni saadakseni sen selville." ('I hear English every day when I watch television or play. If I come across a word I do not know, I bend over backwards to find what it means.'). Furthermore, F10 (female, 16 years old) says that "Opin myös TV-mainoksista, leffoista ja biisien lyriikoista." ('I learn words from TV-commercials, movies and song lyrics.').

In conclusion, the students use mainly the same strategies, but there are some interesting exceptions. Some students mention using several different strategies but most use only a few of the most popular strategies and have not altered the strategies when they have matured or advanced with their language studies. The advanced technology is becoming a meaningful part of vocabulary learning and second language learners have taken the initiative to use the possibilities provided by the technological innovations in order to develop their language skills.

4.1.5 Question 5 –Sources of knowledge

The final part of the questionnaire concentrates on determining the sources of vocabulary learning strategy knowledge, i.e. where the students have gained information about different strategies. Furthermore, the section also contained a question about their opinions about where the information about vocabulary learning strategies should be distributed.

Table 8. Sources of vocabulary learning strategy knowledge

Source of vocabulary learning strategy knowledge	% of participants mentioned the source
Teachers and school	38
Family and relatives	32
No source at all	28
Friends and peers	10

As seen in the Table 8, the three most common sources of vocabulary knowledge of the present study were teachers (mentioned by 38% of the participants), students' families and relatives (mentioned by 32% of the participants). Furthermore, 10% of the participants mentioned having discussed vocabulary learning with their friends or peers and gotten valuable information on vocabulary learning strategies. However, 28% of the participants mentioned that they have not gotten any help in developing their vocabulary learning and they have found the methods themselves.

Based on the findings, vocabulary learning seems to be a somewhat lonely part of language learning since the learners study words individually. Only a few students mention social strategies as one of the vocabulary learning

strategies they use (see section 4.2). The trend can also be seen when studying the sources of knowledge considering vocabulary learning strategies.

Initial hypothesis of the present study was that students gain information about vocabulary learning mainly from their friends and family instead of teachers. However, this hypothesis proved to be inaccurate since, according to the data, teachers were the main source of knowledge. Nevertheless, the role of the individual student in the vocabulary learning strategy use is still significant. This means that the individual effort to study words is still notable and second language learners do not employ all the possible sources of knowledge extensively.

The questionnaire included also a question regarding the spreading of vocabulary learning strategy knowledge. The participants were encouraged to give suggestions on how the vocabulary learning strategies should be "marketed". All participants did not have any suggestions but the most popular one was that vocabulary learning strategies should be taught in schools and discussed in classrooms with the teacher. The Internet was also mentioned as a possible tool in offering more information about vocabulary learning strategies. Course books and books in general were also brought up as possible sources of vocabulary learning strategy knowledge as well as guidance counsellor and peers.

Most students also mentioned that they are interested in learning more about the vocabulary learning strategies in order to make their second language learning easier. For example, F3 (female, 16 years old), mentions that "Jos hyvät opiskelutekniikat oppii jo nuorena, opiskelu on myöhemmin helpompaa." ('When you learn useful learning techniques already in a young age, studying is easier later on.'). F14 (female, 17 years old) has similar thoughts: "Sanojen luku on ollut aina kauhean työlästä ja uudet tavat olen

vain ottanut jostain käyttöön. Helpottavia tekniikoita olis kiva saada tietoon, koska sanat todella tuottavat niin paljon vaivaa ja työtä." ('Studying words has always been hard work and I have acquired the new techniques randomly from somewhere. It would be nice to know techniques which would make it easier because words are so hard to learn.').

It is interesting that some students felt strongly that they do not need more information on vocabulary learning strategies even though this could contribute to their motivation or success in language learning. For example, F1 (female, 16 years old) tells that she has not learned any vocabulary learning strategies from anyone and she has developed the techniques she uses by herself. She also feels that she does not need more information and everybody should invent the best techniques for their learning by themselves. M11 (male, 16 years old) has similar thoughts: "Olen oppinut ne [sanaston oppimistekniikat] itsenäisesti kokemuksen kautta. En tunne tarvitsevani uusia tekniikkoja, sillä nykyiset tekniikat täyttävät tarpeeni." ('"I have learned the techniques independently through my own experiences. I feel that I do not need new techniques since the current ones cover my needs.'). These examples support the assumption that vocabulary learning is regarded as an individual task and people are responsible only for their own learning and collaboration with other people is a rare phenomenon.

To sum up, according to the data of the present study, students gain information about vocabulary learning strategies most often from their teachers. Also family members and relatives are an important source of information. On the other hand, a rather large proportion of participants mentioned dealing with vocabulary learning on their own, not having any help from outside. Furthermore, most students wanted to get more information on vocabulary learning strategies whereas a some student were rather strict with their opinion that they do not need any more information.

4.2 Strategy use

This section contains a quantitative analysis of the strategy use. In section 4.1. the analysis concentrated on the strategy use describing the situation with the help of examples from the data. In this section the strategies mentioned by the participants are listed according to their popularity and later compared with the taxonomy of vocabulary learning strategies by Schmitt (1997).

The data conveys that the upper secondary school students use a rather fixed range of vocabulary learning strategies when studying English as a second language. Some strategies were mentioned almost in every set of answers and the most popular strategies were easy to detect. The strategies mentioned by the students are following, starting from the most popular.

Vocabulary learning strategies mentioned by participants of present study (per cent of all participants using or having used the strategy)

1. Written repetition (reading)   56%
2. Written repetition (writing)   38%
3. Translation   38%
4. Learning new words from songs/movies/television/games/advertisements 26%
5. Reading English (books, the Web)   10%
6. Guessing from context   8%
7. Oral repetition   8%
8. Using word lists   8%
9. Learning by heart   6%
10. Mnemonics   6%
11. Using dictionaries   6%
12. Using new words in sentences   4%
13. Using CD-ROMs of course books   4%

14. Using oral English	4%
15. Studying with the help of a sibling/friend	4%
16. Keeping a vocabulary notebook	4%
17. Grouping words	2%
18. Associating words with images	2%
19. Flash cards	2%
20. Taking notes according to teacher's suggestion	2%

Reading and writing the words were mentioned almost by every participant. In addition, using translation was clearly a popular strategy even though there were some different methods of using it. For example, a widely used method is to hide either the English version or the Finnish version of the word and then trying to remember it when seeing or hearing the translation of the particular word. The participants also mentioned reading the words and their translations in order to learn them. Repetition in general is a popular method to learn vocabulary and also the data of the present study suggests that it is widely used in second language learning.

The listing of the strategies conveys that the most popular methods for vocabulary learning were easy to notice since they were mentioned in almost every set of answers. On the other hand, the least popular strategies were mentioned so rarely that it is impossible to draw conclusions based on them since no group trend can be seen. Therefore it is possible that the strategies which were used only by some students describe only the individual differences instead of how most of the upper secondary school students usually learn vocabulary.

4.3 Strategies of the present study and Schmitt's taxonomy

The taxonomy of vocabulary learning strategies by Schmitt (1997) is used in classifying the vocabulary learning strategies provided by the data of the present study. In this section the strategies mentioned are listed according to their category and in the following sections these categories are discussed in detail. The comparison of the study and the study by Schmitt (1997) can be found in the discussion part of the thesis (see section 5.1.1).

Even though Schmitt's taxonomy is used in classifying the vocabulary learning strategies used by the participants of this study, one has to point out that drawing the line between different strategies, their variations and classifications is extremely difficult. For instance, some strategies can have the characteristics of several different strategy groups and therefore they can be identified as a part of various different groups. Furthermore, some participants described their vocabulary learning activities rather vaguely and therefore determining the strategies and placing them into correct categories proved to be difficult.

The analysis of the data of the present study shows that the participants mention only a few discovery strategies but several different consolidation strategies (see section 2.5.3). However, some strategies can be identified to be a part of both groups, depending on how the strategies are used. Furthermore, there are some strategies which cannot directly be placed in a certain group due to the fact that the participants have described them rather vaguely and their true actions cannot be effectively detected based on their answers, only assumptions can be made. For example, mentioning using reading or writing can mean that the strategy is used together with translation making it totally different strategy altogether. In addition, it is important to bear in mind that there is some overlap in the taxonomy by

Schmitt, for example social strategies can be a part of discovery strategies as well as consolidation strategies (see section 2.5.3).

The findings of the data of the present study are classified on the basis of Schmitt's (1997) taxonomy of vocabulary learning strategies. The percentage after each strategy identifies how many of the participants of the present study mentioned using the strategy.

Discovery strategies

1. Translation   38%
2. Guessing from context   8%
3. Using dictionaries   6%

Consolidation strategies

1. Written repetition (reading)   56%
2. Written repetition (writing)   38%
3. Learning new words from
   songs/movies/television/games/advertisements   26%
4. Reading English texts (books, the Web)   10%
5. Oral repetition   8%
6. Using word lists   8%
7. Learning by heart   6%
8. Mnemonics   6%
9. Using new words in sentences   4%
10. Studying with the help of a sibling   4%
11. Using CD-ROMs of course books (listening)   4%
12. Keeping a vocabulary notebook   4%
13. Using oral English   4%
14. Grouping words   2%
15. Associating words with images   2%
16. Flash cards   2%

17. Taking notes according to teacher's suggestion   2%

As the listing of strategies points out, the participants brought up several consolidation strategies but only a few discovery strategies. In the following sections the discovery strategies mentioned, as well as the consolidation strategies, are discussed in more detail.

4.3.1 Discovery strategies

According to Schmitt's taxonomy, discovery strategies have two sub-groups; determination strategies and social strategies (see section 2.5.3). The three discovery strategies, translation, guessing from context and using dictionaries, mentioned by the participants of this study can all be identified as determination strategies. As mentioned before, discovery strategies, which include determination strategies and social strategies, deal with discovering the meaning of a word (Schmitt 1997). Classifying the discovery strategies mentioned by the participants of the present study as determination strategies is justified due to the fact that none of the participants mentioned using them in social contexts, for instance asking translations from their friends or guessing the meaning from contexts together with a peer.

Using translations as a vocabulary learning strategy is clearly the most popular of the discovery strategies mentioned by the participants of the present study. The benefits of the method are easy to detect since using a translation offers the needed information rapidly and there is much less room for error than, for instance, in guessing the meaning from context. Using dictionaries is clearly a strategy closely related to translation but it is treated as a separate strategy since it is more accurately described by the participants. However, it is again useful to keep in mind that making distinctions between the strategies van be extremely hard. Furthermore, due

to the small number of participants of the present study it is impossible to say whether the results of the present study apply to all Finnish upper secondary school students.

4.3.2 Consolidation strategies

Consolidation strategies are techniques which can be used to learn or practice vocabulary (Schmitt 1997:211). Schmitt's taxonomy (1997) includes four sub-groups of consolidation strategies; social strategies, memory strategies, cognitive strategies and metacognitive strategies. The 11 consolidation strategies mentioned by the participants of the present study can be categorised as following:

Consolidation strategies; 4 sub-groups (per cent of participants using the vocabulary learning strategy)

Social strategies

1. Studying with the help of a sibling/friend   4%
2. Using oral English   4%
3. Taking notes according to teacher's suggestion   2%

Memory strategies

1. Learning by heart   6%
2. Mnemonics   6%
3. Using new words in sentences   4%
4. Using CD-ROMs of course books (listening)   4%
5. Associating words with images   2%
6. Grouping words   2%
7. Flash cards   2%

Cognitive strategies

    1. Written repetition (reading)   56%

    2. Written repetition (writing)   38%

    3. Oral repetition   8%

    4. Using word lists   8%

    5. Keeping a vocabulary notebook   4%

Metacognitive strategies

    1. Learning new words from
        songs/movies/television/games/advertisements 26%

    2. Reading English texts (books, the Web)   10%

Cognitive and metacognitive vocabulary learning strategies were the most used sub-groups of consolidation strategies. Repetition and new learning environments and technological innovations proved to be extensively used among the upper secondary school students. The meaning of technology in vocabulary learning strategy use is discussed section 4.1.4 with the help of excerpts from the data.

Memory strategies and social strategies were not as popular as cognitive and metacognitive strategies but they consisted of several different strategies. The absence of social strategies is significant since one could assume that language being a tool for communication language learning would also have a direct link with social activities. However, the disfavour of social strategies may be caused by the fact hat vocabulary learning has traditionally be seen as an individual task instead of group work.

To sum up, students use a rather comprehensive range of different consolidation strategies but the variation between the popularity of the strategies is quite high. The most popular strategies were used extensively

whereas the least popular were used so rarely that is impossible to draw conclusions based on the data since it can be only caused by individual differences of the learners.

4.4 Gender differences

As the hypotheses of the study suggest, I anticipated that there are gender differences in vocabulary learning strategy use. The gender differences of vocabulary learning strategy use of the study are discussed in this section and the findings presented here are compared with results by Jiménez Catalán (2003) in section 5.3.

Table 9. Gender differences in using the most popular vocabulary learning strategies mentioned in the present study

Vocabulary learning strategy	% of males using the strategy	% of females using the strategy
Written repetition (reading)	55	58
Written repetition (writing)	26	58
Translation	29	53
Learning new words from songs/movies/television/games/advertisements	30	16
Reading English (books, the Web)	10	0
Guessing from context	6	10
Oral repetition	10	5
Using word lists	6	10
Learning by heart	3	10
Mnemonics	0	16

As seen in Table 9, females of the present study used discovery strategies (see section 4.4) more often than males. Two discovery strategies, translation and guessing from context, were used by females almost twice as often than by males of the present study.

Consolidation strategies and especially their sub-group cognitive strategies were the most popular vocabulary learning strategies in both gender groups, mainly caused by the popularity of written repetition, reading and writing. As seen in Table 9, both genders used written repetition, more specifically, reading as their primary vocabulary learning strategy (see Table 9). However, it is interesting that males use oral repetition more often than females. On the other hand, females employ word lists more often than males.

It is interesting that male students mention learning vocabulary from songs, movies, television or games twice as often as female students even though both groups probably use them in their everyday lives. According to Schmitt's (1997) taxonomy of vocabulary learning strategies, these strategies are called metacognitive strategies and they are a part of consolidation strategies (see section 4.4.). However, the fact that male students use more English language media may be caused by the fact that male students use, for example, computer games or other technological innovations more regularly than their female peers. Another rather interesting piece of information provided by the data is the fact that none of the female participants mentioned reading English texts as a vocabulary learning strategies whereas 10 per cent of the male participants described it as one of the strategies they use. Traditionally females have been seen more interested in reading than males but based on these findings, males read more or mention reading more often than females.

Female students used memory strategies, which are a part of consolidation strategies, more often than males. For example, using mnemonics was mentioned as a strategy only by females of the present study.

The gender differences of vocabulary learning strategy use in the most used strategies outside the top five were rather insignificant. In addition, the differences were rather challenging to detect since the participants consisted of 31 male students and only 19 female students making the male/female-ratio rather distorted. However, based on the analysis of the data, females use discovery strategies more often than males. Nevertheless, males use metacognitive strategies, such as learning vocabulary from song or movies and reading English texts significantly more than females of the present study.

5. DISCUSSION

The purpose of the present study was to offer an insight into the role of vocabulary learning strategy use in second language learning of Finnish upper secondary school students. The study was conducted from the learners' point of view and the data consisted of upper secondary school students' answers to a questionnaire consisting of open questions.

The main findings are summarised in the following section. Firstly, the main findings are discussed briefly. They include the summary of the most common vocabulary learning strategies, the sources of vocabulary learning strategy knowledge and main points of gender differences and the role of motivation in vocabulary learning. Secondly, the results of the study are compared with two other studies. In section 5.2 the results are compared with Schmitt's (1997) study and in section 5.3 with the study by Jiménez

Catalán (2003). Finally, the implications of the study are discussed in section 5.4.

5.1 Overview of findings

1) Vocabulary learning strategy use

The data implies that the upper secondary school students acknowledge the meaning of vocabulary in language proficiency even though they may not take the initiative to enhance their vocabulary learning abilities by using different vocabulary learning strategies or even actively take issues regarding vocabulary learning into consideration. The distinction between vocabulary learning and vocabulary acquisition is hard to make and also the participants of the present study seemed to be somewhat confused whether vocabulary acquisition outside the classroom is vocabulary learning. This was rather intriguing since they do not employ the most common strategies they use for vocabulary learning in the classroom when learning new words outside the school environment.

Altogether twenty different strategies were mentioned by the participants of the present study. The findings show that the most common strategies are used widely and almost all students use at least one of the most popular strategies. The three most common strategies were written repetition (reading), written repetition (writing) and translation. Reading was used by 56% of participants, writing by 38% and translation 38%. English language media, divided into two groups, was also popular strategy. The group of learning new words from songs, movies, television, games and advertisements employed by 26% of the participants and reading English (books, the Web) was used by 10%.

The remaining 15 strategies were mentioned so rarely that it is impossible to make assumptions based on the findings since the differences may even be caused by the learners' individual differences. Nevertheless, it is interesting to see what vocabulary learning strategies the students know and use even if the significance of the less used strategies is low. The initial hypothesis, which was presented in section 3.1, was proven to be true. As expected, the participants of the present study use a relatively fixed range of vocabulary learning strategies.

2) Sources of knowledge

The findings of the present study showed that main sources for vocabulary learning strategies were teachers, family members and relatives. However, a rather large proportion of the participants stated that they have not gotten any help with vocabulary learning strategies from anywhere and they have had to manage on their own. The findings of quantitative analysis showed that main sources for vocabulary learning strategies were teachers in the school (38%) and family and relatives (32%). A significant proportion (28%) mentioned that they have not gotten any help with vocabulary learning strategies from anywhere.

The initial hypothesis that the participants would have gained most of the information on vocabulary learning strategies from their friends or family proved to be inaccurate since the main source of knowledge was teachers.

When the students were asked to give suggestions on how the information on vocabulary learning strategies should be distributed, the students suggested that the best way would be telling about them in schools with the help of a teacher. Also the Web and course books were often mentioned in this part of the questionnaire as useful tools for letting people know about learning strategies.

3) Gender differences

As mentioned my Jiménez Catalán (2003), males and females are more alike than different in vocabulary learning strategy use. The initial hypothesis (presented in section 3.1) proved to be somewhat correct. I expected to see gender differences but all the differences suggested by Jiménez Catalán (2003) did not apply to this data.

The present study supports this view since the use of the most popular strategies (written repetition; reading and writing) was similar in both groups. Nevertheless, there were signs that males and females do employ some different strategies. For example, females showed signs of using memory strategies more often than males. On the other hand, males showed using metacognitive strategies more often than females. However, there are factors which may have had an impact on the results. The limitations of the study are discussed in section 6.

4) Vocabulary learning and motivation

According to the findings of the present study the motivated students are usually more successful in their language studies than their less motivated peers and they also employ a wider range of vocabulary learning strategies. Moreover, they describe their language learning more accurately and in greater detail than the less motivated and less successful learners of English.

The motivation of the upper secondary school students varies a great deal but a common motivational factor is the goal to success. This means that the students aim to success, either in language studies or communicating with people now or in the future. According to the findings of the presents study the motivation is either extrinsic or instrumental. However, some students had integrative motivation even though it was not a popular trend.

An interesting, reoccurring theme was present in the data. According to the participants' statements, demotivational factors have a great impact on their language learning. For example, an unprofessional teacher and heavy work load of upper secondary school can cause demotivation in second language vocabulary learning.

The hypothesis proposed in section 3.1 proved to be true since a link between motivation and vocabulary learning strategy use was detected. Motivated students employed a wider range of strategies and there were more tuned in with their learning and how to develop it.

5.2 Comparison with Schmitt's study

The findings of the present study are compared with the findings by Schmitt (1997) in the following section. In fact, the findings differ from the ones of Schmitt's (1997) study. The ten most popular vocabulary learning strategies of the present study and Schmitt's (1997) study are presented in a table in order to make the comparison easier.

Table 10. 10 most popular strategies of the present study compared with the study by Schmitt (1997).

10 most popular strategies in Schmitt's (1997) study	10 most popular strategies of the present study
1. Bilingual dictionary	1. Written repetition (reading)
2. Verbal repetition	2. Written repetition (writing)
3. Written repetition	3. Translation
4. Study the spelling	4. Learning new words from songs/movies/television/games/advertisements
5. Guess from textual context	5. Reading English (books, the Web)
6. Ask classmates for meaning	6. Guessing from context
7. Say new word aloud	7. Oral repetition
8. Take notes in class	8. Using word lists
9. Study the sound of a word	9. Learning by heart
10. Word lists	10. Mnemonics

As seen in Table 10, the results of the study differ from the results of the study by Schmitt (1997) especially in the use of bilingual dictionaries. The participants of the present study did not mention using bilingual dictionary being one of the most commonly used vocabulary learning strategy even though Schmitt's study (1997) suggest that it is one of the primary vocabulary learning strategies used by second language learners.

Furthermore, the participants of the study use social strategies significantly less than the participants of Schmitt's (1997) study. This may be derived from cultural differences since Finns may consider language learning and

especially second language vocabulary learning being rather individual tasks.

However, it is useful to bear in mind that the data collection method of this study differs from the one used by Schmitt (see section 2.5.4) since in contrast to his study, no list of strategies was offered to the participants and this may have an impact on the students' answers. In Schmitt's study the participants were to mark the strategies they used and which strategies they found most useful. Since no list of strategies was used in this study, the answers of the students reflect their perception of the strategies more accurately since the participants had to write down the strategies they use instead of marking them down in a list of tens of different strategies. As a result this causes the fact that the range of vocabulary learning strategies mentioned in the data of the present study is relatively smaller in comparison to Schmitt's study.

5.3 Comparison with Jiménez Catalán's study

In order to offer a comprehensive view of the gender differences in vocabulary learning strategy use the results can be compared with the study by Jiménez Catalán (2003). According to Jiménez Catalán (2003), males do not usually us social strategies as actively as females and they also employ a more narrow range of strategies than females. In addition, males use translation more often than females.

However, some of the conclusions by Jiménez Catalán (2003) do not apply to the results of the present study. In Table 11, the most popular strategies mentioned by male participants are compared with the results of the study by Jiménez Catalán (2003).

Table 11. Comparing most popular strategies used by males in the study by Jiménez Catalán (2003) and the present study.

Most popular strategies used by males in Jiménez Catalán 2003	Most popular strategies used by males in the present study
1. Bilingual dictionary	1. Written repetition (reading)
2. Taking notes in class	2. Written repetition (writing)
3. Guess from context	3. Translation
4. Ask teacher for L1 translation	4. Learning new words from songs/movies/television/games/advertisements
5. Ask classmates for meaning	5. Reading English (books, the Web)
6. Analyse part of speech	6. Guessing from context
7. Connect the word to cognates	7. Oral repetition
8. Use English-language media	8. Using word lists

The table shows that according to the findings, the use of dictionary is totally absent. On the other hand, translation is a rather popular strategy of vocabulary learning according to the data of present study whereas Jiménez Catalán's study suggests that it is not one of the popular vocabulary learning strategies. Furthermore, the participants do not use social strategies, such as asking the teacher or classmates for help, as extensively as suggested by Jiménez Catalán (2003).

However, there are also similarities in the vocabulary learning strategy use when comparing the males of the study with the males of the study by Jiménez Catalán (2003). To sum up, English language media is a popular strategy in both groups as well as guessing from context.

In addition to comparing the males, also the most popular strategies mentioned by the females are compared with the results by Jiménez Catalán (2003). The comparison can be seen in Table 12.

Table 12. Comparing most popular strategies used by females in the study by Jiménez Catalán (2003) and the present study

Most popular strategies used by females in Jiménez Catalán 2003	Most popular strategies used by females in the present study
1. Bilingual dictionary	1. Written repetition (reading)
2. Taking notes in class	2. Written repetition (writing)
3. Guess from context	3. Translation
4. Ask classmates for meaning	4. Learning new words from songs/movies/television/games/advertisements
5. Ask teacher for L1 translation	5. Mnemonics
6. Say word aloud	6. Learning by heart
7. Connect words to cognates	7. Using word lists
8. Analyse part of speech	8. Guessing from context

Similarly to the comparison of males of the present study and the study by Jiménez Catalán (2003), translation is again more popular strategy among the females in the present study than in the study by Jiménez Catalán. Furthermore, social strategies are totally absent which means that females do not use them or mention using them at all.

To sum up, when investigating the findings of the gender differences in vocabulary learning strategy use it is important to pay attention to the role of social strategies. The participants of the present study employ significantly less social strategies in comparison with Jiménez Catalán's (2003) study. This may have been caused by, for example, cultural differences.

Furthermore, it is important to bear in mind that the data collection method of the study by Jiménez Catalán (2003) differs significantly from the method used and this may have had an impact on the results. Jiménez Catalán (2003) used the questionnaire compiled by Schmitt (1997) with small alterations. In the questionnaire a comprehensive list of vocabulary learning strategies were offered to be viewed by the participants and they were to identify which of the strategies they use. Moreover, it must be pointed out that the classification of vocabulary learning strategies differs from the one used in Jiménez Catalán's (2003) study and therefore some of the strategies cannot immediately be linked to similar strategies in the study by Jiménez Catalán.

5.4 Implications

The aim of the present study was to describe the current situation of vocabulary learning strategy use among students of upper secondary schools in Finland. Based on the findings some implications can be made.

Firstly, the present study can raise the awareness of vocabulary learning and learning strategies in second language in general since, as mentioned in Chapter 2, vocabulary learning and teaching has been a neglected area of language for some time. The results can make teachers of second language more aware of the need for vocabulary learning strategy awareness and apply their teaching so that they can introduce vocabulary learning strategies and techniques to their students. Teachers who are interested in knowing how Finnish upper secondary school students work with vocabulary can gain more information about how their students approach vocabulary learning and maybe design their teaching based on my findings. This can open up a possibility for their students to use more tools in dealing with vocabulary learning and the problems it may include.

Secondly, as Oxford (1990) points out, learning strategies can help the learner to become more self-directed and contribute to the learning process. However, the students may not have the appropriate tools for doing that even though they may acknowledge the meaning of vocabulary in language proficiency. Mastering the use of learning strategies the learner can more easily achieve his goal, successful learning. Therefore teachers should enhance the meaning of learning strategies and offer the opportunity to get to know and try out the different strategies in school so that each learner can find the best strategies for them. Furthermore, as the results of the present study imply, students feel that school is the place for providing information on learning strategies so that everyone could have access to that information. Naturally, teachers would be the ones to offer that information.

Finally, in addition to helping teachers to modify their teaching and helping the learners in their learning process, the present study can also contribute to teacher training programmes. Since, according to the results of the previous study, students feel that skilled teachers are important factors in successful language learning. Therefore it could be useful to take into account the role of vocabulary learning and teaching when training future second language teachers.

6. CONCLUSION

Since the topic of vocabulary learning strategies has not been studied widely, my study offers a possibility for students of English, teachers of English and future second language teachers to get acquainted with the topic of learning strategies from the students' point of view. I hope that my study offers a useful view about the situation of upper secondary school students' vocabulary learning today and can therefore serve as a helpful material for teachers in order to contribute to second language learning and teaching. In

this section the main findings will be summarised briefly, then the strengths and weaknesses of the study are evaluated. Finally, some suggestions for further study are presented.

The main findings suggest that upper secondary school students see the importance of words and vocabulary as a part of language proficiency. However, they were not familiar with the concepts of learning strategy and vocabulary learning and acquisition. Furthermore, some of them see vocabulary learning as a task which takes place only in classroom whereas some students realised that they learn words in their everyday lives.

According to the findings, upper secondary school students use the most common strategies widely and almost all students use at least one of them. They mentioned twenty different strategies and the three most commonly used strategies were written repetition (reading), written repetition (writing) and translation. As expected, the participants of the present study use a relatively fixed range of vocabulary learning strategies.

The main sources for vocabulary learning strategies were teachers, family members and relatives. However, significant proportion of the participants mentioned that they have not gotten any help with vocabulary learning strategies from anywhere and they have had to manage on their own. According to the participants, possible tools for distributing vocabulary learning strategies were schools and teachers. Also the Web and course books were mentioned.

The findings show that females and males use different vocabulary learning strategies. Females used memory strategies more often than males and males used metacognitive strategies more often than females. The results differ slightly from those by Jiménez Catalán (2003).

The motivation of upper secondary school students varies a great deal. More motivated students are usually more successful and use a wider range of vocabulary learning strategies than their less successful peers. Extinsic and instrumental motivations are popular. Integrative motivation was also present even though it was not common. The students mentioned several demotivational factors, for instance, teachers and heavy work load.

Nevertheless, the study has its limitations. It is important to bear in mind that due to the small number of participants, the present study cannot offer a concise description of the vocabulary learning strategy use by Finnish upper secondary school students. Moreover, the participants of the present study were students of two different schools in the Western Finland and therefore the sample does not accurately represent the situation of all upper secondary schools in Finland. In addition, cultural differences may have an impact on the results. Furthermore, some of the differences in the vocabulary learning strategy groups are so small that it is hard to interpret whether there is significance or not.

In addition to the difficulty of making generalisations based on the findings of the study due to the limited number of participants, it must be pointed out that the gender distribution of the participants was not balanced. The participants consisted of 19 females and 31 males and due to the ratio the results may have been affected some way.

It is also useful to keep in mind that some of the basic concepts in the questions may have affected data acquisition and therefore the analysis. The participants of the present study were not familiar with the terms 'learning strategy' and 'vocabulary learning strategy' and this may have had an impact on their answers. Furthermore, vocabulary learning and vocabulary acquisition overlap and they can also cause confusion, for example, whether vocabulary learning in school environment is learning and outside school the

same phenomenon is called acquisition. The confusion and misinterpretations could be avoided, for example, by showing a list of strategies to the participants. However, these are choices which have to be made individually with every study.

When investigating the comparisons of the present study with studies by Schmitt (1997) and Jiménez Catalán (2003) one must bear in mind that the present study differs from the other both on data acquisition and data analysis method. However, the comparisons can offer an interesting insight to the situations and hopefully they can help to understand the field of vocabulary learning strategies in a wider perspective.

The present study also concentrated on the current situation of vocabulary learning and did not take into account the fact that learning strategy use changes over time when the learner's skills develop and he or she mature. For example, conducting a longitudinal study could be a useful tool in order to develop the study further and investigate how the vocabulary learning strategy use changes over time.

When planning further study in the field of vocabulary learning strategy use it would be useful to take some suggestions into account. A larger number of participants and equal number of females and males could offer more accurate data and results. In addition, participants from different cultures could help to understand the cultural issues affecting strategy use. In addition, interviews or observations could serve as useful tools for data acquisition instead of or together with a questionnaire which was used in the present study. There is still room for research in vocabulary learning strategies and hopefully the present research has offered more information on the field.

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Appendix 1. The questionnaire

Lukiolaisten englannin opiskelussaan   Kyselylomake
käyttämät sanaston oppimisstrategiat

Pro gradu -työ, Jyväskylän yliopisto, Kielten laitos
Marika Marttinen, 2006

Kysymykset on ryhmitelty teemoittain, toivon sinun vastaavan jokaiseen kunkin teeman yhteydessä esitettyyn kysymykseen. Kysymyksiin ei ole olemassa oikeita tai vääriä vastauksia, vastaa kysymyksiin vain omien kokemuksesi pohjalta. Vastaukset käsitellään nimettöminä eikä kenenkään henkilöllisyyttä voida jäljittää aineiston perusteella.

Otathan vastauksissasi huomioon, että sanaston opiskelu ja oppiminen ei ole ainoastaan sanankokeisiin pänttäämistä, vaan myös kohdallesi osuvien uusien sanojen merkityksen selvittämistä sekä sanojen ja niiden merkityksen muistamista myöhemminkin.

Kiitos avustasi!

Ikäsi: _____   koulusi:_____

sukupuolesi:_____

viimeisimmän englannin kurssin arvosana:_____

1. Miten tärkeänä osana kielitaitoa näet sanaston osaamisen?
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2. Kerro omasta panoksestasi englannin sanojen opiskelemisessa, esim. miten paljon käytät aikaa sanojen opiskeluun, opiskeletko sanoja päivittäin ym.
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3. Miten kuvailisit motivaatiotasi sanojen opiskelun suhteen? Mitkä asiat motivoivat opiskelemaan sanoja, mitkä puolestaan heikentävät motivaatiotasi?

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4. Pohdi uraasi englannin oppijana aina ala-asteelta tähän päivän saakka. Millaisia tapoja/keinoja/tekniikoita käytät sanojen opiskelun helpottamiseksi? Mitä olet käyttänyt joskus, mutta et käytä enää? Miksi ne jäivät pois käytöstä? Mitä omista keinoistasi poikkeavia tapoja tiedät, esimerkiksi kavereittesi käyttämiä tekniikoita?

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5. Mistä/keneltä olet oppinut mainitsemiasi tapoja sanojen opiskelun helpottamiseksi? Haluaisitko saada lisää tietoa sanojen opiskelua helpottavista tekniikoista? Mitä kautta tietoa eri tekniikoista olisi hyvä levittää ja miksi? Ideoi vapaasti!

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