ENGLISH LANGUAGE VOCABULARY LEARNING STRATEGIES EMPLOYED BY YOUNG ESL LEARNERS

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KUALA LUMPUR

2019

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DISSERTATION SUBMITTED IN PARTIAL FULFILMENT OF THE REQUIREMENTS FOR THE DEGREE OF MASTERS IN ENGLISH AS SECOND LANGUAGE

FACULTY OF LANGUAGES AND LINGUISTICS
UNIVERSITY OF MALAYA
KUALA LUMPUR

2019

UNIVERSITY OF MALAYA
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Name of Degree: Masters in English as Second Language

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ENGLISH LANGUAGE VOCABULARY LEARNING STRATEGIES

EMPLOYED BY YOUNG ESL LEARNERS

ABSTRACT

This study investigates the effectiveness of vocabulary learning strategies employed by Year Two students learning English in an international school in the city of Shah Alam. The study employed a mixed methods design in two phases: an experiment to compare the vocabulary learning strategies used by participants and data collection via questionnaire and interview. The participants were 40 mixed-nationality students from higher-income families, comprising twenty students each from two Year Two classes. In the experiment phase, one class was categorised as the treatment group whereas the other class was the control group. Both groups were given a pre-test to identify the level of their vocabulary knowledge. The participants from the treatment group then received an intervention. However, the participants from the control group did not receive any treatment and their lessons were conducted as usual. After the treatment group received the intervention, both groups were required to answer the post-test questions. The theoretical framework applied in this research was Schmitt's (1997) classification of vocabulary learning strategies. In the second phase, the researcher utilised a pictorial representation questionnaire and an interview to obtain the findings for this research. A key finding is that although the participants were young, they displayed an indirect approach to learning as they employed all the other strategies which were taught to them after the intervention. Nevertheless, this research also indicates that young learners can be taught strategies which are appropriate for their age and needs. Results of this study also indicate that the choice of vocabulary strategies differs based on the participants' proficiency level. Most participants from the highest proficiency group preferred cognitive strategies over memory strategies while the participants from the low proficiency group tended to prefer the method of segmenting words and social strategies.

Lastly, the findings suggest that vocabulary learning strategies help to aid learners' vocabulary learning. The researcher hopes that this research will bring about a better understanding of vocabulary learning strategies, and that those who are involved in educating students, whether at international or national schools, will recognise that there is much to be gained from the employment of these strategies.

STRATEGI PEMBELAJARAN PERBENDAHARAAN KATA BAHASA INGGERIS OLEH PELAJAR MUDA BAHASA INGGERIS SEBAGAI BAHASA KEDUA

ABSTRAK

Kajian ini menyiasat keberkesanan strategi pembelajaran perbendaharaan kata yang digunakan oleh pelajar Tahun Dua dalam pembelajaran Bahasa Inggeris di sebuah sekolah antarabangsa di bandar Shah Alam. Kajian ini menggunakan reka bentuk kaedah gabungan dalam dua fasa: sebuah eksperimen untuk membandingkan strategi pembelajaran perbendaharaan kata yang digunakan oleh peserta dan pengumpulan data mengguna soal selidik dan temubual. Para peserta terdiri daripada 40 pelajar dari keluarga berpendapatan tinggi dengan kewarganegaraan yang berlainan, dengan 20 peserta masing-masing dari dua kelas Tahun Dua. Dalam fasa eksperimen, satu kelas dikategorikan sebagai kumpulan eksperimen dan satu kelas sebagai kumpulan kawalan. Kedua-dua kumpulan diberi pra-ujian untuk mengenal pasti tahap pengetahuan perbendaharaan kata mereka. Selepas itu, peserta dari kumpulan rawatan menerima latihan strategi (intervention). Sebaliknya, peserta dari kumpulan kawalan tidak menerima apa-apa rawatan dan pengajaran mereka dijalankan seperti biasa. Seepas kumpulan rawatan menerima latihan strategi, kedua-dua kumpulan dikehendaki menjawab soalan ujian pasca. Rangka teoretikal yang digunakan dalam kajian ini adalah klasifikasi strategi pembelajaran perbendaharaan kata Schmitt (1997). Dalam fasa kedua, penyelidik menggunakan satu set soal selidik perwakilan bergambar dan temubual untuk mendapatkan hasil kajian ini. Sebuah penemuan penting dari kajian ini adalah walaupun para perserta terdiri daripada pelajar-pelajar yang masih muda, mereka menunjukkan cara yang lebih tersirat untuk belajar kerana mereka menggunakan semua strategi lain yang diajar kepada mereka selepas latihan strategi. Walau bagaimanapun, kajian ini menunjukkan bahawa pelajar muda boleh diajar strategi yang sesuai untuk umur dan

keperluan mereka. Hasil kajian ini juga menunjukkan bahawa pilihan strategi perbendaharaan berbeza berdasarkan kepada kemahiran para peserta. Kebanyakan peserta dari kumpulan kemahiran tinggi memilih strategi kognitif berbanding strategi ingatan, dan peserta kumpulan kemahiran rendah lebih suka kaedah membahagikan kata-kata dan strategi sosial. Akhir sekali, penemuan menunjukkan bahawa strategi pembelajaran perbendaharaan membantu pembelajaran perbendaharaan kata pelajar. Penyelidik berharap kajian ini akan membawa kepada pemahaman yang lebih baik mengenai strategi pembelajaran perbendaharaan kata, dan mereka yang terlibat dalam mendidik pelajar, sama ada di sekolah antarabangsa atau kebangsaan, akan menyedari bahawa banyak manfaat dapat diperolehi daripada penggunaan strategi-strategi ini.

Keywords: Strategi Pembelajaran Perbendaharaan Kata, Bahasa Inggeris sebagai Bahasa Kedua, pelajar muda.

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

This journey would not have been possible without the support of my family, supervisor, and friends. I must express my very profound gratitude to my parents, to my husband and my siblings, for providing me with unfailing support and continuous encouragement throughout my years of study and through the process of researching and writing this thesis. I always knew that you believed in me and wanted the best for me.

I would like to thank my supervisor, Dr Azlin Zaiti, for the patient guidance, encouragement and advice she has provided throughout my time as her student. I have been extremely lucky to have a supervisor who cared so much about my work, and who responded to my questions and queries so promptly. I would also like to thank all the members of staff at the postgraduate office of the Faculty of Languages and Linguistics at University Malaya who helped me with administrative work.

I am extremely grateful to my former supervisor, Dr Rachel Tan for her guidance and support throughout this study, and especially for her confidence in me. She really has been a significant mentor to me. I would like to thank her for encouraging my research and for allowing me to grow as a research scholar. Her important suggestions and advice are priceless. Thank you Dr Rachel, for your valuable time, co-operation, and generosity, which made this work possible. Your support has been the most beneficial experience for me.

Besides my supervisor, I would like to thank the rest of my thesis committee: Puan Ainun Rozana and Cik Norafidah Tajuddin for their insightful comments and encouragement, as well as for the hard questions which prompted me to broaden my research from various perspectives.

My sincere thanks also goes to Mr Ross Howard, who provided me an opportunity to conduct my research in the classrooms. Without his precious support it would not have been possible to conduct this research.

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LIST OF SYMBOLS AND ABBREVIATIONS

ESL : English as Second Language

EFL : English as Foreign Language

VLS : Vocabulary Learning Strategies

SLA : Second Language Acquisition

LIST OF APPENDICES

CHAPTER 1: INTRODUCTION

1.1   Introduction

This chapter is a prelude to the present study. It gives both foundation and a context for the study. The following sections comprise the background of the study and the problem statement of this study. This is followed by research objectives, research questions, scope and limitations, participants and instruments. The last part of the chapter of the chapter is the significance of the study.

1.2   Background of the study

"Without grammar very little can be conveyed, without vocabulary nothing can be conveyed."

Wilkins, 1972 p.111

(As quoted in Herbertson, 2010)

If the question "from which aspect does a language begin?" is asked, the answer will most likely be "words". People use thousands of words daily without acknowledging their importance for the process of communication. There are times when even native speakers of a language feel frustrated when they cannot think of a word they need to use. Clearly, vocabulary is the core aspect of any language.

Words are often labelled as the building blocks to success in language learning. These building blocks constitute people's vocabularies. The Cambridge dictionary defines

"vocabulary" as "all the words that exist in a particular language or subject." The importance of vocabulary has long been recognised. More than a century ago, vocabulary tests became popular in schools. Moreover, vocabulary size was found to be a reliable indicator of mental age, and vocabulary development was considered as "one of the best single measures of intelligence" (Langer, 1967, p.157). It is a known fact that rich vocabulary puts students in an advantageous position in school. It will help them to understand a lesson better and therefore they will learn more. Even though students with similar vocabulary size may differ in their understanding and knowledge, the size of a student's vocabulary is often found to be a good predictor of general competence (Duncan et al., 2007; Kaplan & Sacuzzo, 2013).

Many language teachers, along with language learners, agree that vocabulary is a vital component in both first and second language competence. Learners should have a good command of language as it allows them to be successful communicators. Hence, without an adequate vocabulary, no successful communication will take place as effective communication depends immensely on a speakers' vocabulary knowledge. Fauziati (2005) noted that inadequacy of vocabulary hinders learner's verbal and written communication because one will not be able to transfer the intended message effectively or present one's views in oral or written form. Therefore, the significant part of any language is shaped by a good knowledge of vocabulary (McCarthy, 1988).

Decarrico (2001, p. 285) stated that learning vocabulary is important for acquiring a language, whether a first or second language. Vocabulary is commonly known as the "heart in learning a second language" and it is essential to acquire it; however, to acquire a huge quantity of lexicon items might be one of the most challenging aspects of learning a language (Stiffer, 1995, p. 2). The statement above shows that researchers have

acknowledged that vocabulary learning is a vital factor in learning a language and have identified it as one of the challenges in learning a language (Read, 2000).

Vocabulary plays a major role in language acquisition, especially for primary school students. The time in primary school is an essential period as this is the period when students' build their vocabulary, and learn new words in order to be proficient in verbal or written communication. It is important not only to recognise the meaning of particular words, but also to understand the different nuances and meanings of specific words during the process of vocabulary learning. Taylor (1990) has described what it means to know a word and listed the seven degrees of knowing a word as follows:

- Knowledge of frequency of the word in language

- Knowledge of register of the word

- Knowledge of collocation

- Knowledge of morphology

- Knowledge of semantics

- Knowledge of polysemy

- Knowledge of the equivalent word in the mother tongue

(Taylor, 1990, pp.1-3)

When a child is in the process of learning some words, there might be situations in which he or she finds it difficult to select and use suitable words for their task. Does this mean that words are stored separately in our mind? Aitchison (2003, p.235) stated that "words are organised into an intricate, interlocking system whose underlying principles can be discovered." Hence, for language learners to acquire vocabulary more successfully, it is crucial for them to know the organisation of the mental lexicon. In order for one to transform his or her thoughts into words, these words must be mentally

represented and organised in a systematic and accessible way. This organisation is called the organisation of mental lexicon which caters to vocabulary learning (Farahian, 2011).

Even though vocabulary has dependably been viewed as a vital element of language learning and teaching, it is expressed that the teaching of vocabulary isn't widely acknowledged and as important and many language teachers have not entirely aware of the significant communication benefit of developing an extensive vocabulary (McCarthy, 1990, p.45). The vocabulary teaching appears to be less structured and less accommodating during the four communication skills' teaching, which are, listening, speaking, reading and writing. Hedge (2000, p.111) has agreed that there is an absence of consideration given to lexicon. Moreover, Hedge (2000, p.110-111) also asserted that the neglect of vocabulary could possibly be since students themselves don't put extensive criticalness on vocabulary. However, the focus on vocabulary learning is not dying, as there seem to be rising awareness of its importance. Researchers such as Allen (1983), Long and Richards (1997), Nation (1990), Richards (1985), Schmitt (1997), and Thornbury (2002) have emphasised recently that there is a renewed attention to the role of vocabulary learning in English as a second language (ESL). Moreover, vocabulary learning has been the focus of many new studies, including those which have centred on the strategies learners use to learn vocabulary.

Siriwan (2007, p.31) noted that vocabulary learning strategies must be a central part of vocabulary learning and teaching. To learn items of vocabulary, it is beneficial for students to be introduced to strategies of vocabulary learning so they can figure out how to distinguish the definition of newly discovered words, ways to keep the words and how to practise using them. Hong-Nam and Leavell (2006) also specified that language learners who use more strategies in learning vocabulary will have faster and more successful development than those who use fewer strategies. This shows that strategies

for learning vocabulary can affect students' language acquisition. Therefore, vocabulary learning strategies should be employed by language learners.

1.3   Problem Statement

Vocabulary knowledge is often viewed as a crucial tool for second language learners because a limited vocabulary in a second language impedes successful communication. Underscoring the importance of vocabulary acquisition, Schmitt (2000, p.55) emphasized that "lexical knowledge is a central to communicative competence and to the acquisition of a second language".

Nation (2001) further described the relationship between vocabulary knowledge and language use as complementary: knowledge of vocabulary enables language use and, conversely, language use leads to an increase in vocabulary knowledge. The importance of vocabulary is demonstrated daily in and out the school. In classroom, the achieving students possess the most sufficient vocabulary.

Researchers such as Laufer and Nation (1999), Maximo (2000), Read (2000), Gu (2003), Marion (2008) and Nation (2011) and others have realised that the acquisition of vocabulary is essential for successful second language use and plays an important role in the formation of complete spoken and written texts. In English as a second language (ESL), learning vocabulary items plays a vital role in all language skills (listening, speaking, reading and writing) (Nation, 2011). Rivers and Nunan (1991), furthermore, argued that the acquisition of an adequate vocabulary is essential for successful second language use because without an extensive vocabulary, learners will be unable to use the structures and functions that are needed for comprehensible communication.

According to Kulikova (2015), language is often compared with a building: the structure of a building is grammar, and words are the bricks of the structure. Both are necessary and crucial, but the number of bricks exceeds the number of structural elements, which is why "no linguist today would seriously contest the fact that, vocabulary dominates in the language field and that vocabulary acquisition is the main obstacle to language learning" (Ma, 2009, p.21). Lack of vocabulary often hinders learners from being proficient second language learner, which is why it is the most frequently reported problem for second language learners; moreover, students in academic programmes often express a desire of more vocabulary learning (Folse, 2004). The process of language learning begins from the very first meeting with the language and lasts long after all the aspects of the language have been covered.

Low (2004, cited in Zakaria, 2005:2) stated that ESL learners in Malaysia face challenges in coping with four language skills mainly because they lack vocabulary. Various studies conducted at secondary schools as well as at institutions of higher learning show that lexical paralysis is a major contributor to learners' incapacity to cope with the language skills of listening, speaking, writing and reading (Naginder & Kabilan, 2007; Zakaria, 2005; Baftim S., 2005). Furthermore, Hassan and Fauzee (2002) found that vocabulary exercises ranked fourth, out of the nine language activities investigated on the frequency of use in an ESL lesson. Likewise, in the students' preference list, vocabulary learning is one of the lowest ranked language activities (Teh, 2004).

Vocabulary has been acknowledged as second language learners' greatest single source of problems (Meara, 1980 as cited in Alqahtani, 2015). This remark may possibly reflect that the open-endedness of a vocabulary system is perceived to be a cause of difficulty by learners. In other words, it is not clear in second language vocabulary learning what rules apply or which vocabulary items should be learned first in classroom.

Oxford (1990) also claimed that vocabulary is "by far the most sizeable and unmanageable component in the learning of any language, whether a foreign or one's mother tongue, because of tens of thousands of different meanings". Despite these difficulties that language learners face in second language vocabulary, they still have to deal with it in their examinations as "vocabulary has traditionally been one of the language components measured in language tests" (Schmitt, 1999). Furthermore, many learners see second language acquisition (SLA) as essentially a matter of learning vocabulary and therefore they spend a great deal of time on memorizing lists of second language words and rely on their bilingual dictionary as a basic communicative resource. As a result, language teachers and applied linguist now generally recognize the importance of vocabulary learning and are exploring ways of promoting it more effectively (Alqahtani, 2015). Some of this research takes the form of investigation of strategies learners use specifically for vocabulary, which is the focus of this research.

It is worth stating that strategies should to be a central part of learning vocabulary, since the learning of vocabulary is a language learning section. It is vital that strategies are taught to students, in order to learn vocabulary items so that they can employ the strategies to learn new words, and store the words in memory before practising and using them to expand their vocabulary knowledge. Researchers, like Tarone (1983); Rubin (1987); O'Malley and Chamot (1990); Oxford (1990); Williams and Burden (1997), and Gusti (2015), have emphasised that approaches or strategies are important tools to develop learners' communicational skills. Therefore, language learners should be taught appropriate strategies when learning vocabulary to help them in vocabulary learning.

Gomez and Llanch (2007) conducted a study on vocabulary learning by primary school children. Seventy-nine learners between nine and ten years of age (49 males and 30 females), from three different intact classes of a primary school in Lograno, Spain were

studied, focusing on the features of their vocabulary use and lexical error production in written form (Glomez & Llanch, 2007). The instrument used in the research were written compositions, in which participants had 30 minutes to complete a composition task on a letter to a host family. The data were analysed based on semantic fields used by the participants and the frequency of lexical errors (Glomez & Llanch, 2007). It was observed that the participants used vocabulary known to name objects used at home and school rather than using vocabulary associated with their familiar environment, vocabulary associated to concrete objects, and to physical activities and topics they liked. Also, three main types of lexical errors were found, namely, misspellings, omissions, and borrowing and substitutions (Glomez & Llanch, 2007). Upon analysing the research findings, it was suggested by the scholars that language learners should take the effort to use strategies in order to increase their vocabulary. They realised that students' vocabulary knowledge can be improved by motivating students to use strategies (Glomez & Llanch, 2007).

As can be seen, more research on vocabulary learning can be done. There have been very few studies investigating the vocabulary learning strategies of Malaysian students learning English language in Malaysia (Tuluhong, 2016). Although, some studies may have been conducted on vocabulary learning strategies in Malaysia, many of them tend to be qualitative in nature (Chu, 2009).

To the researcher's knowledge, one of the few studies on vocabulary learning strategies in Malaysia was piloted by Asgari (2010). She studied the types of vocabulary learning strategies used by Malaysian ESL students (Asgari, 2010), performing a pilot study on ten students from Universiti Putra Malaysia (UPM). The research aimed to obtain an understanding of the participants' diverse backgrounds in learning vocabulary, and the strategies which the participants employed to study new English words (Asgari, 2010). The results obtained from the study showed a low and medium frequency of

strategies employed by the students However, the results of this research should not be generalised as the results only apply to ten students from TESL course (Asgari, 2010). Thus, a more in-depth study should be conducted.

1.4   Research Aims and Objectives

The current research was conducted to examine the vocabulary learning strategies employed by primary school students at an international school. The participants of this research were mostly second language learners of English, with their first language differing according to nationality and ethnicity. The researcher intends to identify how second language learners from an international school learn English vocabulary by using the strategies. This research was also conducted to investigate the relationship of the students' proficiency level and their choice of vocabulary learning strategies.

The participants for this research were from an international school in Malaysia. International schools in Malaysia are funded by the private sector and the medium of instruction is English. International schools in Malaysia are not administered under the Education Act 1996. However, they are subject to observation by the Ministry of Education through its Private Education Division. Even though international schools mainly cater to the needs of the expatriate community, such as the children of employees at foreign businesses, international organisations, foreign embassies and missions, up to 40% of the students are Malaysian. International schools generally have classes that are half the size of those in public schools and extra-curricular activities are an integral part of the syllabus. The main types of international curriculum approved by the Ministry of Education are the British curriculum, the Australian curriculum, the American curriculum and the Canadian curriculum. Many of these schools offer education from pre-school right

up to preparatory programmes for external international examinations (Ministry of Education Malaysia, 2012).

Therefore, the main aim of this research is to explore the types of vocabulary learning strategies utilised by primary international school students, taking into account the individual learner variable, which is the proficiency level of the participants. The researcher selected the participants due to information accessibility, as the researcher works in the same school. Therefore, it is easier for researcher to obtain information and collect the data required for this research. The students in international school are all placed in one class according to mixed ability grouping. Each class encompasses students from low, middle and high ability level. Hence, it is makes it easier for the researcher to conduct the research based on the variable which is on the learners' proficiency level. The regularity of students' usage of different strategies of vocabulary learning is the main focus of this research. The research findings are intended to help provide a better understanding of how international school students learn English in school by using strategies to learn vocabulary. This research is also intended to underscore the significance of vocabulary in language learning and to promote awareness among learners and teachers about vocabulary learning strategies.

1.4.1   Research Objectives

This research is driven by the following objectives:

1. To discover the types of vocabulary learning strategies employed by international primary school students.

2. To identify how students' level of proficiency affects vocabulary learning strategies employed by students.

3. To identify how the knowledge of vocabulary learning strategies aids students in comprehending the meaning of words.

1.4.2   Research Questions

In order to fulfil objectives described in the previous section, the following research questions were formulated to guide the study:

1. What are the vocabulary learning strategies employed by international primary school students?

2. To what extent does the level of students' proficiency affect the vocabulary learning strategies employed by students?

3. To what extent does knowledge of vocabulary learning strategies aid students in comprehending the meaning of words?

1.5   Scope and Limitations

This study examines international primary school students' use of strategies in learning English words. This research is basically exploratory in nature in that it attempts to gain an insight into learners' awareness of vocabulary learning strategy after they were taught learning strategies by the instructor, if learners use those listed in the proposed framework and what other strategies they currently utilise. It is hoped that the findings of the research will shed some light on the process of how these students actually learn vocabulary.

In conducting this research, certain limitations was taken into consideration. Firstly, the participants of this study comprised of two groups from two intact classes. The researcher intended to conduct the study on young learners who were able to read and

write; therefore, the most appropriate year group was Year 2. The researcher selected two classes from the Year 2 classes at the school. Each class only comprised about 20 students. Secondly, the time lapse between the pre-test and post-test was only 10 weeks, due to time constraints. The researcher was only allowed to conduct the research within a period of two months as the students in Year 2 were required to rehearse and perform their annual play once the research was conducted. The researcher did not seek to ascertain how much the strategies affect the success of language learning because aptitude, learning styles and motivation level, among other factors, all contribute significantly to each individual's success.

1.6   Significance of the Study

This study is significant for several reasons. Firstly, the findings of this study will help teachers to adjust their teaching style to cater to students' vocabulary learning. Even though the participants of this research are international school students, which means they communicate in English at school, the students do lack opportunity to speak English when they are at home. For effective learning to take place, a teacher has to be aware of not only how learning takes place but also the processes of their learning.

Secondly, classroom instruction time for English lessons is limited as students have to attend different specialist lessons. Specialist lessons in international schools refer to subjects such as Physical Education, Art, Design and Technology, and Information and Communication Technology (ICT) lessons. Based on the researcher's own teaching experience of seven years, it was found that students who converse in English at home could cope very comfortably during lessons because they had the advantage of exposure in the language. Unfortunately, weaker students could not perform well in the four communicative skills if their vocabulary was lacking. Furthermore, research findings

have shown that for second language learners, planned classroom vocabulary strategy teaching is more effective than informal, unplanned vocabulary development.

Thirdly, through the experimental research into the strategies used by international primary students, the researcher opens up the possibility of further research to ascertain whether it is possible to teach younger primary students the vocabulary learning strategies. This is because vocabulary learning strategies consist of many strands. Hence, teaching selected strategies would help a student to learn progressively at school, depending on the curriculum.

Lastly, this research will help to shed some light on the inseparable relationship between students' proficiency level and vocabulary learning. A student's proficiency level not only changes his or her attitude towards learning, but also affects his or her language and vocabulary learning (Chuah, 2008). Therefore, more in-depth research is crucial to identify how students' proficiency level affects their vocabulary learning.

1.7 Summary

In Chapter 1, the researcher described the background of this research in an attempt to context the study followed by the problem statement of this research. A discussion on research objectives and research questions is also followed. This chapter also provides an overview of the scope and limitations used for this research. Finally, the chapter sums up with the significance of this study.

CHAPTER 2: LITERATURE REVIEW

2.1 Introduction

This chapter presents the related literature and studies after the thorough and in-depth search done by the researcher. The researcher begins by explaining on language acquisition as well as word and vocabulary. Then, the researcher describes vocabulary learning in detail. Next, several theories of learning strategies and vocabulary learning strategies are examined. The second part of the chapter reviews the difference between national and international schools, clash of cultures, learning environment and teacher belief and traditions.

2.2 Language Acquisition

The question of how children acquire a language has prompted lively debates between scholars and prompted a vast amount of research. Skinner (1957) provided one of the earliest scientific explanations of language acquisition. As a proponent of behaviourism, Skinner proposed that development of language skills is influenced by the environment. Children are believed to acquire a language based on reinforcement, by relating words with definitions. For an example, when an adolescent says "milk", the mother will smile and give the child some milk. As a result, the child will discover this outcome pleasing; thus, it will boost the child's language development (Ambridge & Lieven, 2011).

However, Skinner's theory of behaviourism was critiqued by Noam Chomsky. Chomsky (1965) argued that "children will never acquire the tools needed for processing an infinite number of sentences if the language acquisition mechanism was dependent on language input alone" (Lemetyinen H., 2012). He then, proposed the theory of Universal

Grammar (UG) (Chomsky 1965, 1981b). UG is considered to comprise all the grammatical information needed to combine categories like nouns and adjectives into phrases (Ambridge & Lieven, 2011). Chomsky's theoretical conceptualisation of language acquisition and his approach towards studying how language is structured have encouraged hundreds of scholars to explore the nature of these grammatical categories.

After a few decades, some psycholinguistics researchers began to doubt the existence of UG. They started to believe that categories like verbs and nouns are not learnt biologically and evolutionarily. Researchers then suggested that children learn a language by generalising across the adult speech that they hear. The researchers believed that children might use general cognitive and learning properties to learn a language (Tomasello, 2005). Scholars who investigated language acquisition also began to argue about various aspect of UG, such as early adult-like knowledge. In contrast with researchers of the Structuralist school of thought, such as Chomsky, constructivists believe that children need a more gradual developmental process to learn a language as they are sensitive to patterns in language. When a child listens to an adequate number of linguistic constructions, the child will notice forms in the utterances and draw a conclusion about the linguistic rules of a particular language. For an example, when a child hears the repeated pattern of –s- in verb form in English, the child will obtain the understanding that English verbs for the third singular form must be marked with –s (Theakson & Lieven, 2005). The perspective of general cognitive processing is that a child can learn his or her first language without a bio-linguistic mechanism. Bio-linguistics is the discipline that studies human languages from the viewpoint of natural science.

To summarise, various explanations have been given to account for the process of language acquisition by children. Behaviourism theory might not be applicable to

language learning by children as it does not explain how children are able to improvise their grammar or vocabulary use and create new structures which they have never heard before. On the other hand, UG provides an explanation of how children can quickly grasp a first language, but many counter arguments have shown evidence that language acquisition might be tied to generally cognitive skills development and not to a unique language faculty as proposed by Chomsky. Moreover, it may not be possible for children to acquire adult-like knowledge as proposed by Chomsky. All in all, acquisition of a language is similar to playing a game as the children must to know the procedures of language such as how to articulate words, spell them and how to put the words together. Without following the rules of a language, it will be challenging for a child to acquire a second language (L2) successfully. With regards to child language acquisition, it is important to note two important things, which are that children do not use language like adults and children will learn to speak the dialect and language used around them.

2.3   Words and Vocabulary

Every language has words, lexicon or vocabulary (Foley & Thompson, 2003, p.10). Prior to furthering the discussion into vocabulary, a strong difference concerning *word* and *vocabulary* must be shown. It was indicated by some researchers (e.g. Bowen et al., 1985; Jackson & Amvela, 2000; Read, 2000; Trask, 1995) that "word" may possibly be easy to distinguish, but it is tough to describe. Trask (1995) mentioned that "there are the difficulties in the definition of the word because words do not have meanings in isolation, but they are related to the meanings of other words in ways that may be simple or complex". Furthermore, Jackson and Amvela (2000) stated that "a word, at least, relates to the field of morphology, semantics or lexicology."

As the phrase "word" is challenging to describe, and the central purpose of this research is to explore the strategies of vocabulary learning employed by international primary students; hence, the researcher did not focus towards the history of words or any features of words except for describing the terms "word" as well as "vocabulary" in this segment. The researcher attempted to differentiate predominantly the terms "word" and "vocabulary" which is appropriate to this context hoping that it might result in an enhanced understanding of phrase "vocabulary learning".

Other researches like Jackson and Amvela (2000); Richards et al. (1992); and Hornby et al. (1984), have regarded *word* as well as *vocabulary* in a comparative manner. The term "word" was defined as "the smallest of the linguistic units which can occur on its own in speech or writing" by Richards et al. (1992, p. 406), but he the proceeds to define "vocabulary" as "a set of lexemes which includes single words, compound words and idioms" (p.400). On the other hand, Hornby et al. (1984) described "word" as "sound or combination of sounds forming a unit of the grammar or vocabulary of a language', and "vocabulary" as "the total number of words which make up a language; and a range of words known to, or used by a person". Besides that, Sheeler and Markley (2000) defined the term "word" as "a unit formed of sounds and letters that have a meaning", whereas "vocabulary" is described as "total number of words we know and are able to use" (Nandy 1994; Sesnan 2001)

Based on the various perspectives found in the literature, this study defines "word" as the miniscule meaningful unit of a language which is utilised for building sentences and also phrases and "vocabulary" as seen as "a set of lexemes which includes single words, compound words and idioms." In other words, a word is a pattern that can happen in isolation and have definition, or a sound or mixture of sounds composing a unit of the grammar or vocabulary of a language, and thus act as 'a part of vocabulary' in a language.

Consequently, vocabulary contains of more than a sole word (Read, 2000) and more than this, vocabulary does not only concern uncomplicated words in all the word categories, but also complex and compound words, along with the significant units of language such as morphemes, phonemes and syllables. (Jackson & Amvela, 2000). With regards to vocabulary learning which the focus of this research is, it is refereed as "a collection or the total stock of words in a language that are used in particular contexts." To be specific, vocabulary learning brings the meaning of learning a package of sub-sets of words as well as learning how to use strategies in order to cope with the unfamiliar or unknown words.

2.4   Vocabulary Learning

Children begin to learn the meaning of words as they acquire language and this usually occurs at home with the family. Children hear the speech of adults around them, store it in their memory and then use the words in their speech. Exposure to quality, language –rich interactions in a natural setting allows children to build their vocabulary. Children will usually pick and use the words utilised by adults. This indicates that when children are young, their vocabulary knowledge is not sufficient because they only use words which they hear. Hence, when children first enter school, their vocabulary size will tend to vary greatly as they learn more words to broaden their vocabulary knowledge (Carpenter, 2010).

In English language learning, it is generally recognised that vocabulary plays a crucial part. Bowen (1985, p. 322) and McCarthy (1990, p. 12) indicated that vocabulary is the largest section of all linguistic courses. Nation (1990) then added that learners also view vocabulary as the most important element in language learning.

Learners use words as a tool to reflect, exhibit thoughts and moods, in addition to discover and examine the world around them. However, they encounter difficulty in using appropriate words due to a lack of vocabulary knowledge (Hedge, 2000). Limited knowledge of vocabulary prevents learners from fully expressing their thoughts and feelings. On the contrary, if learners have rich vocabulary knowledge, it allows them to use the appropriate words according to the situation. Kitajima (2001, p. 470) stated that with words that can be used to label objects, actions and also context, a learner can express his intended meaning.

To be proficient in a language, equally grammar and vocabulary are vital, however vocabulary is seen to be more essential than grammar (Siriwan, 2007). According to Flower (2000, p.5) "Words are the most important things students must learn. Grammar is important, but vocabulary is much more important". According to Lewis (1993), vocabulary is crucial as it is the focal point with regards to teaching and learning of language as language comprises of "grammaticalised lexis" and "grammar as structure, is subordinate to lexis". This means researchers see that words take precedence to grammar. Hence, it seems that vocabulary is the most important part of learning a language and it is believed to be more vital than grammar.

Beck and McKeown (2007) reported the lack of attention given to vocabulary instruction for lower primary students. Despite the researchers suggesting the importance of fostering vocabulary growth in primary school, evidence indicates that little vocabulary instruction occurs during the critical period (Siriwan, 2007). The critical period refers to the first few years of life which is considered the crucial time in which an individual can acquire a native language if presented with adequate stimuli (He, 2010). Due to lack of vocabulary instruction given during the critical period, the lower primary students from the research mentioned above did not manage to improve their vocabulary.

Children acquire vocabulary through interactions with adults and peers before they join school. When adults provide opportunity for children to engage in rich conversations, they create an important context for learning vocabulary. Even though oral context helps to build children's vocabulary knowledge, it is not sufficient for children's vocabulary growth when they join school. Cunningham (2005) stated that conversations contain a low amount of unfamiliar vocabulary, and are therefore insufficient to aid children's vocabulary development. Thus, the written language becomes an important source for learning vocabulary. However, it is important to note that children may not be able to grasp abstract vocabulary via the written form during the critical period (Kuhl, 2005)

Learning vocabulary in a second language (L2) is unlike learning vocabulary in one's first language. Folse (2004) asserted that it is compulsory for L2 learners to improve the form, the meaning, or the usage of the word, which can be facilitated by doing various classroom activities. On the other hand, Wilkins (1972) as cited in Herbertson (2010, p.111) said that "Without grammar very little can be conveyed, without vocabulary nothing can be conveyed." This quote shows that one may have a problem to read or listen without enough knowledge of vocabulary (Herbertson, 2010).

Hulstijn (2003) pointed out that there are two popular views on what it means to learn a second language. One view holds that it means months and even years of 'intentional' study, involving the deliberate efforts done to remember thousands of words (Their meaning, sound and spelling) and dozens of grammar rules. The other, 'incidental' learning involving the 'picking up' of words and structures, simply by engaging in a variety of communicative activities, in particular reading and listening activities, during which the learner's attention is focused on the meaning rather than on the form of language. In short, intentional learning is defined as learning process that is being designed, planned for or intended by a teacher or a student and incidental learning as the

type of learning that is a byproduct of doing or learning something else (Hatch & Brown, 2000).

Research by Nagy and colleagues claimed that learning from context is one of the most significant aspects of incidental learning. This laid the groundwork for the belief that authentic context is a particularly powerful source of incidental language learning (Krashen,1989; Pitts, White & Krashen, 1989) as cited in Smith, Killgarriff & Sommers (2008). For proficient readers, incidental vocabulary acquisition is a common mean of learning new vocabulary. Students with excellent reading skills may realize substantial gains in their vocabulary without direct instruction. The incidental learning of vocabulary requires teachers to provide opportunities for extensive reading and listening. As cited in Hunt and Beglar (2002), in the long run, most words in both first and second languages are probably learned incidentally, through extensive reading and listening (Nagy, Herman & Anderson, 1985).

There is a little doubt that incidental learning, particularly, that is acquired through reading is a key to learning vocabulary in order for functioning in an English environment. Some researchers have argued that this form of acquisition has limitations and that a vital role is played by the direct instruction of strategies for learning vocabulary and meaning. Without these, they believe long- term retention of new vocabulary rarely follows. They emphasize the role of dictionaries and other word reference books, and note that direct instruction is important in fostering an interest in words (Smith, Kilgarriff and Sommers, 2008). According to Chaffin (1997) and Zechmeister, Chronis, Cull, D'Anna and Healy (1995) as cited in Shostak (2002), research has shown that although reading is essential for vocabulary growth and development, it is not sufficient for most students because the meanings they take away from their readings will not be deep and enduring: nor does it help them gain strategies for becoming independent word learners. Researchers agree that

although reading is indeed vital to achieve deeper, richer levels of lasting vocabulary understanding, direct instruction is more effective and more efficient than incidental learning (McKeown and Beck, 1988).

In the literature on vocabulary learning, intentional learning is commonly known as a cognitive interpretation, as the rehearsal and memorizing techniques invoked by learners when they have the explicit intention of learning and retaining lexical information (Schmitt,1997) as cited in Hulstijn (2005). Direct acquisition studies recognize that vocabulary can be learnt using tools that bring the learner's attention into direct contact with the form and meaning of words, such as dictionaries and vocabulary lists. Leaver, Ehrman and Shekhtman (2005) assured that certainly one could seek to gain a large vocabulary by memorizing the dictionary. However, the question of the best way to use these tools for direct vocabulary acquisition remains answered.

In Asia, the traditional approach towards vocabulary has been simply to memorise the vocabulary item along with one or two possible first language translations (Smith, Kilgarriff & Sommers, 2008). Direct study is considered efficient, particularly for students with poor vocabulary (McGraw-Hill, 2005). This is supported by Shostak (2002) who said that the teaching of vocabulary should be systematic, repetitive and eclectic. In order to introduce new words, teachers should be guided by three principles that Stahl (1986) recommends that other research supports (Baumann and Kameenui, 1991):

1. Use both a defitional and a contextual approach
2. Strive for "deep processing"
3. Provide multiple exposures.

In short, emphasising explicit instruction is probably best for beginners and intermediate students who have limited vocabulary. On the other hand, extensive reading

and listening might receive more attention for more proficient intermediate and advanced students. In view of the important role played by vocabulary in second language acquisition, Hamzah, Kafipour and Abdullah (2009) contended that a number of linguists have recognized the significance of learner independence in vocabulary acquisition for many years. Hence, it is vital to help second language learners to be independent learners in order to speed up their vocabulary acquisition process. In order to learn vocabulary, one should try using vocabulary learning strategies as it helps with learning. Learning strategies can aid to improve intentional learning as it involves learning a language consciously.

2.5   Theories of Language Learning

Humans have diverse understandings when it comes to theories and perspectives of how people learn (Wang, 2012). All these views might originate from individual experience, observation, reflection and also formal study. Theories guide one's actions in terms of how one goes about learning new skills, knowledge, and attitudes (Brown, 2007). In this section, some of the theories related to vocabulary learning will be reviewed.

Over the years, numerous researchers have engaged in an endless debate about which learning theories are the most valid, and which learning theories apply to learners of various age groups. The development of learning theories date back many years, for example, as early as the 19th century, John B. Watson (1878 – 1958) piloted a study of learning on animals. Behaviourism theory stems from Watson's experiment, which was itself influenced by Russian researcher Ivan Pavlov's (1849 – 1936) theory of conditioned reflexes (Wang, 2012). In the 1960s, B.F. Skinner further developed on the behaviourism approach. Based on the work of Watson and Skinner, various researchers tried to make

comparisons between animal and human learning. The assumption was that animals learn from reflexes, whereas humans learn via reflection (Wang & King, 2006; 2007).

Next by the year of 1965, the Universal grammar theory was proposed. Universal grammar theory is a mentalist perspective connected to nativism and cognitive theory. Chomsky believes that "children are born with a language acquisition device" (as cited in Hadley, 2001, p.58). In addition, Chomsky also stated that language learning hinges on biological mechanisms and that children are innately programmed to learn a language. He also added that "all human brains contain language universals that direct language acquisition" (as cited in Horwitz, 2008, p.77). However, Chomsky's approach was criticised by other scholars as his theory only relates to first language learning and it is not applicable to second language acquisition. Furthermore, the different way adults and children learn a language raises questions about the process of language learning, as debated extensively in the literature.

Among the various theories of second language acquisitions, is Krashen's Monitor theory, which is centred upon a set of hypotheses. This theory aims to explain the process by which it is possible to "enable a beginning student to reach acceptable levels of oral communicative ability in the language classroom" (Krashen & Terell, 1983, p.17). This theory is based on a theoretical model consisting of five hypotheses:

1. The Acquisition – Learning Hypothesis

2. The Natural Order Hypothesis

3. The Monitor Hypothesis

4. The Input Hypothesis

5. The Affective Filter Hypothesis

The acquisition – learning hypothesis is about "the distinction between 'natural' acquisition as seen in first language and the formal learning that emphasises conscious

rules and error correction" (Lightbown, 2007). Krashen stated that there are two independent systems of second language acquisition, which are the acquired system and the learned system. The acquired system refers to the acquisition process which is a product of the subconscious process. This process is very similar to the process which children undergo when they acquire their first language. It refers to meaningful interaction in the target language in a natural situation. The learned system refers to the learning process which is the product of formal instruction and it comprises a conscious process which results in conscious knowledge of the language. According to Krashen, acquisition is more important than learning (Krashen & Terell, 1983). Acquisition is crucial as it allows learners to grasp the vocabulary heard in a natural setting. The information obtained will be stored and re-used more often compared to the information received during the learning process as the information received from the learning process requires learners to memorise the rules or structure and then store it in their long-term memory. This process may not be applicable for young learners as they might find it difficult to learn abstract knowledge.

On the other hand, the "natural order hypothesis suggests that the acquisition of grammatical structures follows a 'natural order' which is predictable" (Lightbown, 2007). For a given language, some grammatical structures tend to be acquired early while others are acquired late (Krashen & Terell, 1983). This hypothesis states that the natural order of acquisition occurs autonomously of thoughtful teaching and therefore teachers cannot change the order by which learners acquire grammatical structures.

According to the Natural Order Hypothesis, learners of a second language acquire structural items in a predictable order regardless of the order in which they are presented (Krashen, 1988). This means that some structures are more easily acquired than others, and the order of the difficulty does not correspond with what we believe is an easy or

difficult structure. For example, one of the structural items that students are first taught in most language classes is the third-person singular of the simple present tense. Surprisingly, this is one of the structures that is acquired last. That may be one of the reasons why students from different proficiency levels often make mistakes with this simple pattern. This hypothesis also accounts for students' mistakes and errors. Students make mistakes when the structure used has not been completely acquired. However, students can use their learned competence to modify their production, hence correcting mistakes as they appear in their statements. Mistakes will always be present during the acquisition process. Consequently, the best way to correct students' mistakes is to provide more input.

The Monitor hypothesis emphasises that conscious learning has the limited function of "monitoring" or editing language performance. Krashen believes that the acquisition system is the utterance initiator, whereas the learning system performs the monitoring role as an editor. The "monitor" acts in planning, editing and also correcting function when these three conditions are met, that is: the second language learner has enough time at his or her disposal, the second language learner focusses on the correctness of form and also the second language learner knows the rule. Krashen also emphasised that the role of the monitor is limited as it is only used to correct deviations from "normal" speech to a more "polished" appearance (Krashen, 1988). The monitor's role should not be used critically as it might demotivate students as they will have lack of self-confidence.

Krashen's Input Hypothesis highlights the importance of having or using comprehensible input to help students learn a second language better. Comprehensible input comprises messages or information learners receive that they can understand and comprehend well (Abukhattala, 2012). Conversely, Krashen also suggest that this comprehensible input should be one step beyond the learner's current language ability,

represented in the formula "i + 1". The "i" represents the students' current language proficiency, while '+1" represents one level above this. Krashen's theory proposes that giving students input that is one level above their ability allows them to progress with their language development.

According to Krashen (1985), we all acquire language the same way. Every person uses the same approach towards learning a language but, but to actually understand a language well depends on how well the input is sent or taught. For instance, if students from a beginner class do not use appropriate learning strategies, they are less likely to succeed in learning English as they are more likely to encounter difficulty in understanding the content of the lesson. However, if the students use appropriate learning strategies in class, they will then receive input which may aid their learning. Therefore, learners acquire language in one way and the one way is when learners get comprehensible input by using learning strategies to aid learning.

Finally, the affective filter hypothesis focusses on students' feeling and emotions when learning. The affective filter hypothesis highlights the obstacle that manifests during language acquisition. The affective filter, which is a "screen" influenced by emotional variables, can prevent learning (Ellis, 1985). According to this hypothesis, the affective filter does not impact acquisition directly but rather prevents input from reaching the language acquisition part of the brain. The affective filter can be prompted by many different variables including anxiety, self-esteem and motivation.

The affective filter is activated when the student has high anxiety level, very low self-esteem level and low motivation level (Krashen, 2000), and blocks all comprehensible input from reaching the language acquisition device (LAD) in the brain (see Figure 2.1). The affective filter hypothesis proposes that students should have low anxiety levels as well as high motivation and self-esteem levels to successfully acquire a language.

However, if this hypothesis needs to be applied in the daily classroom, it can make teachers to feel frustrated. With the large number of students in the class, teachers cannot know every individual's feelings in the class.
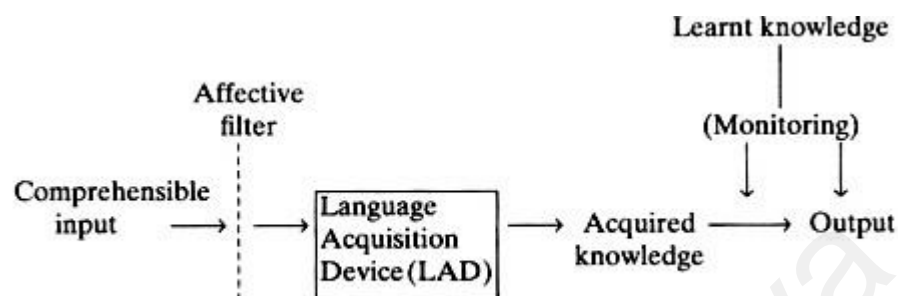
Figure 2.1: The Input Hypothesis Model of L2 learning and production

Source: Cook (1993)

The Monitor theory by Krashen emphasises comprehensible and meaningful input rather than grammatically correct production. Vocabulary, as a bearer of meaning, is considered by the Monitor theory to be very important to the language acquisition process.

Krashen and Terell (1983) found the following:

> "Acquisition depends crucially on the input being comprehensible. And comprehensibility is dependent directly on the ability to recognise the meaning of key elements in the utterance. Thus, acquisition will not take place without comprehension of vocabulary. (p.155)"

Krashen and Terell proposed that the acquisition process depends on learners' comprehension of vocabulary. According to Zimmerman (1997), the learning of vocabulary emphasises the importance of interesting and relevant input being able to comprehend vocabulary used in the language input they receive. In other words, the

hypothesis proposes that acquisition and learning takes place when learners are facilitated towards comprehension of vocabulary.

In addition, Krashen emphasised another important message for language learners to learn vocabulary which is described in the following quotation from Krashen & Terell (1983):

> "Just as a particular affective acquisition activity, for example, may entail the use of certain grammatical structures, the activity is not designed to learn that structure. The same is true of vocabulary; activities are not necessarily 'vocabulary builders'. Students' attention is not on vocabulary learning per se but on communication, on the goal of any activity. In this way, we encourage true vocabulary acquisition."
> (p.156)

In other words, students may learn vocabulary unconsciously while focusing on communicative aspects of a particular activity. For students at the intermediate or advanced levels, Krashen suggested that reading is the most efficient way in which a student can acquire new vocabulary (Krashen, 1993b). In a nutshell, Krashen believes that voluntary reading is the optimal way to obtain comprehensible input as reading provides "messages we understand presented in a low – anxiety situation" (Krashen, 1993b, p.23).

On the other hand, psychometric studies suggest that "vocabulary is a central factor in reading ability, along with other specific factors like decoding" (Rosenshine, 1980). Vocabulary is evidently an essential and enduring factor in language learning; therefore, this research will also focus on the role of vocabulary in reading from the perspective of Dual Coding Theory (DCT).

DCT is a "theory on cognition which accounts for verbal and nonverbal cognition" (Paivio, 1971 p.43). This theory has lately progressed as a general theory of literacy (Sadoski, Paivio & Goetz, 1991) and also places a significant difference between verbal and non- verbal code. The verbal code is specialised for signifying and handling language in all forms including speech and writing, whereby the non-verbal code deals with representation and processing of nonverbal objects, events and situations. Mental imagery is the primary cognitive form of nonverbal representation. All knowledge, meaning and memory is explained by representation and processing within and between the two codes in this theory.

An important distinction in DCT is the difference between abstract language and concrete language. Abstract language has less access to nonverbal imagery, for example, the word "true", whereas concrete language has direct access to sensory referents, for instance, the word "tree". In this theory, abstract language depends on a web of verbal associations for its meaning. Concrete language also evokes a web of language, but it additionally evokes nonverbal images as a form of meaning. The two mentioned kinds of processing systems, verbal and nonverbal are functionally and structurally independent. This means that each of them can work independently of the other one and that they work on different kinds of representational units. The representational units refers to "relatively stable long-term information corresponding to perceptually identifiable objects and activities, both verbal and non-verbal" (Paivio, 1986 p.39).

The verbal and non-verbal processing are connected with two kinds of connections. The first connection which is known as associative connections represents connections between verbal and non-verbal processing which enables forming verbal-verbal and non-verbal – non-verbal associations. For instance, the word school can elicit verbal entities like whiteboard, or boredom. The second connection is known as referential connections,

which represents links between non-verbal and verbal processing. The referential connections enables performing operations like imaging to words and naming or images to words. For example, association of an image of a school building or an unpleasant feeling (both non-verbal entities) elicited by the word school (a verbal entity). Figure 2.2 illustrates the components of this theory.
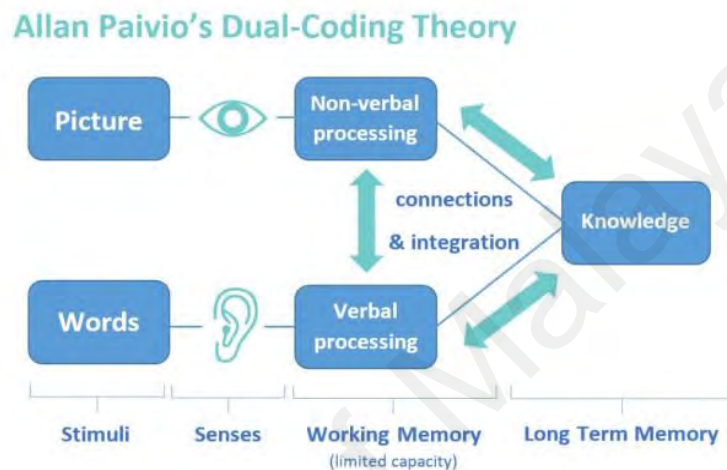
Figure 2.2: Verbal and Non-verbal processing

Source: Adapted from Paivio (1986)

DCT implies that building links between precisely-learned visual and auditory-motor mental representations is important in decoding words, but it also implied that building links between these representations and both mental images of picture meaning and verbal contextual meanings should promote the learning of sight words. The usefulness of pictures would be influenced by several factors, including the concreteness value of the word, because it is easier to picture concrete words such as tree than abstract words such as true.

According to a study conducted by Bridge, Winograd, & Haley (1983), a vocabulary strategy for learning sight words was used to connect between the words and its meaning has been proposed and empirically tested. Target words to be learned as sight words were

first accompanied by pictures and verbal contexts in patterned books and then on charts without pictures; that is, words were presented first in meaningful verbal contexts with picture cues and then without the picture cues to ensure attention to the word forms. The strategy which was used in the study, resulted in the first graders learning more than twice as many target sight words as a control group using an illustrated basal reader that emphasized repetition. The experimental group also learned even more incidental sight words and reported more positive feelings about reading aloud than the control group when interviewed with a questionnaire.

DCT is relevant to the study of vocabulary learning strategies as it accounts for learners' ability to incorporate abstract language and concrete language. For instance, if the task involves more concrete and non-verbal processing, the contribution of non-verbal processing system will be more crucial to the outcome and vice versa. Therefore, when learners are completing a task, they will depend on either verbal or non-verbal processing which later on prompts them to choose an appropriate strategy to aid their learning.

In conclusion, Krashen's Monitor theory explains how learners acquire vocabulary and learn comprehensible input whereby the DCT theory explains how nonverbal or verbal processing can prompt learners to choose the appropriate vocabulary learning strategies in order to utilise them for their learning. In this research, the participants from the intervention group were given treatment in the form of explicit teaching about vocabulary learning strategies. The participants were then expected to use the strategies taught in order to complete the task. Paivio (1990, p.235) stresses this point that, "dual coding enhances the probability of finding a common ground, that is, a connection between topic (vocabulary) and vehicle (strategy), in long- term memory; the synchronous or integrated nature of imagery enables large amounts of potential relevant information to become available quickly". Hence, the idea of DCT posits that two systems

of input, which can either be verbal or non-verbal, enhances better with the aid of vocabulary learning strategies.

2.6   Vocabulary Learning Strategies

Vocabulary learning strategies are derived from language learning strategies. Therefore, it is crucial to briefly mention language learning strategies. The term "language learning strategy" has used widely by various researchers. Wenden and Rubin (1987, p. 19) described learning strategies as "steps, plans and routines used by the learner to facilitate the obtaining, storage, retrieval, and use of information." On the other hand, Richards and Platt (1992) specified that "language learning strategies are intentional behaviour and thoughts used by learners during learning to better help them understand, learn, or remember new information".

Language learning strategies are a tremendously influential learning tool, according to O'Malley, Chamot, Stewner-Manzanares, Kupper, and Russo (1985). A quarter century ago, researchers like Rubin (1975) and Stern (1975) investigated the likelihood that success in language learning might be correlated to how learners deal with or handle a task. Other researchers such as Cohen (1998) and Chamot (2001) have suggested that learners might be able to learn a language more effectively by using appropriate language learning strategies. In addition, Politzer and McGroarty (1985) and Wong-Fillmore (1985) agreed that the use of language learning strategies is closely linked to language acquisition.

As mentioned, strategies of language learning are basically a series of plans, tactics, actions or even thoughts that learners of language use to learn a language. According to Carroll (1977), language learners find it quite frustrating to learn a new language as it

requires them to put in a lot of effort. Therefore, the use of particular strategies facilitates the language learners' attempts to comprehend and produce a target language.

Kitajima (2001, p. 470) has stated that vocabulary plays a major role in EFL or ESL classrooms as it helps learners to become more proficient in their target language. Consequently, vocabulary learning is important as it plays a major role in building learners' skills and knowledge. In order to successfully expand their vocabulary, it is necessary for learners to use appropriate strategies, also referred to as "vocabulary learning strategies".

Vocabulary learning strategies are defined as "the actions that learners take to help themselves understand and remember vocabulary items" (Cameron, 2001, p. 92). Catalan (2003, p. 56) utilised the definitions given by previous researchers (Oxford, 1990; Rubin, 1987; Schmitt, 1997; and Wenden, 1987) to define "vocabulary learning strategies" as "knowledge about the mechanisms (processes, strategies) used in order to learn vocabulary as well as steps or actions taken by students (a) to find out the meaning of unknown words, (b) to retain them in long-term memory, (c) to recall them at will, and (d) to use them in oral or written mode".

On the other hand, According to Intaraprasert (2004, p. 9) ,vocabulary learning strategies are "any set of techniques or learning behaviours, which language learners reported using in order to discover the meaning of a new word, to retain the knowledge of newly-learned words, and to expand their knowledge of vocabulary." Vocabulary learning strategies are used differently depending on an individual learner's primary goal of learning the language. Schmitt (2000) "active learning management is important in which good language learners do many things such as use a variety of strategies, structure their vocabulary learning, review and practice target words and so on" (p. 133). In addition, Gu and Johnson (1996) suggested that language learners can be excellent

strategy users by monitoring the use of their vocabulary learning strategy. This includes selecting the suitable strategy, deciding how to use the strategy and switching to other strategies if required.

This research employs Schmitt's (1997) taxonomy as the basis of the study. Schmitt's taxonomy has stated and assigned vocabulary learning strategies into five types of strategies which are *determination, social, memory, cognitive, and metacognitive*. *Determination strategies* help learners to determine the meaning by using dictionaries, guessing the meaning from the context and identifying the parts of the speech and constituent elements. In other words, determination strategies are individual learning strategies that help learners to identify the meaning of new words without the others help (Schmitt, 1997).

Social strategies can be used to determine the word definitions by asking teachers, classmates and native speakers. In other words, social strategies can encourage learners to interact with each other and learn from each other (Schmitt, 1997). They can also be used to stabilize information by speaking to native speakers or even language teachers outside the class.

Memory strategies are a large number of strategies that learners apply to recall to recall the vocabulary. In other words, memory strategies help learners to acquire the new words via mental processing by connecting their background knowledge to the new words (Schmitt, 1997). As an example, when the learner encounters the word "dog", he groups the word "dog" under the category of a four-legged animal since the learner is aware of the image of these four-legged animals from its background knowledge. Memory strategies consist three groups: a) using images to create a strong connection with the word and its meaning. These images can be shaped in the mind or drawn in notebooks, b) using strategies to link words together to help retrieval of vocabulary. For instance,

using words in the sentences make retrieval easier or using synonyms and antonyms, and c) using vocabulary knowledge aspects to stabilize the meaning of the words. Specific examples include giving attention to the word's phonological or orthographical form, memorizing affixes and roots, matching some words to their corresponding physical action, and learning the word class.

Cognitive strategies deal with mechanical aspects of learning vocabulary and are not related to mental processing (Schmitt, 1997). Repetition is one of the most commonly used cognitive strategies. Other examples are taking notes and highlighting new words, making lists of new words, using flashcards to record new words, putting English labels on physical objects, keeping a vocabulary notebooks, and writing the words multiple times.

Metacognitive strategies mirror learners' capability to find opportunities to learn and then record and review those experiences. In other words, metacognitive strategies include monitoring, decision-making, and assessment of one advance. They can also aid learners to specify suitable vocabulary learning strategies for learning new words (Schmitt, 1997). Specific examples include using English language media, studying new words many times, paying attention to English words when someone is speaking in English and answering a word test.

According to Jones (1998) and Yamato (2000), cognitive and metacognitive strategies are used frequently by students to be more autonomous and responsible for their learning. Students should use their individualised strategies, which may differ depending on their cultural background, education level and learning styles.

Moreover, various perspectives on vocabulary learning strategies have been proposed by researchers such as Cohen (1987; 1990); Rubin and Thompson (1994); Stoffer (1995);

Gu and Johnson (1996); Lawson and Hogben (1996); Schmitt (1997); Weaver and Cohen (1997); Cook (2001); Decarrico (2001); Nation (2001, 2005); Hedge (2000); Pemberton (2003); and Intaraprasert (2004).

According to Baumann, Kameʻenui, and Ash (2003) and Ellis (1994), research on vocabulary strategies of primary school students showed that children acquire their vocabulary best indirectly, by getting involved daily in verbal language, listening to adults read to them, and reading with the ability to understand the text completely. Besides that, vocabulary can be taught to students by presenting precise words before reading, providing chance to use new words, and giving a continuous exposure to the vocabulary in different contexts. Teachers may help learners to learn new and unfamiliar words by teaching them about how to use various vocabulary learning strategies.

Jenkins, Stein and Wysocki (1984) conducted a study on learning vocabulary through reading, involving American fifth graders with an ESL background. The participants were asked to read passages containing unfamiliar words before being randomly assigned to different numbers of context presentations: 0, 2, 6 or 10 passages read over several days (Jenkins, Stein & Wysocki, 1984). Half of the unfamiliar words were informally taught before presenting the passages to the participants. The study found that vocabulary learning was more successful when words were learnt from context with more frequent presentation in context (Jenkins, Stein & Wysocki, 1984). The researchers realised that by exposing the target words to the learners more frequently enhanced learning (Jenkins, Stein & Wysocki, 1984), which indicates that frequent presentation of target vocabulary can aid children's vocabulary learning. This study could be improvised by using a taxonomy from the literature, as the frequent presentation of context words can be linked to memory strategies, according to Scmitt's vocabulary learning taxonomies.

The current research was conducted by focusing on Schmitt's (1997) adaptation of Oxford's (1990) taxonomy. Oxford's original taxonomy consisted of 5 categories which are as follows:

Category 1: Memory

Category 2: Cognitive

Category 3: Compensation

Category 4: Metacognitive

Category 5: Affective

Category 6: Social strategies

Oxford (1990, pp. 17-21)

Upon conducting various studies, Schmitt (1997) then established a vocabulary learning strategies' taxonomy based on the extensive vocabulary learning strategies prepared by Oxford (1990, pp. 17-21), and added a new category which is the determination strategy. One of Schmitt's studies (1997) was on vocabulary learning strategies used by language learners, in which he used a questionnaire to elicit learners' preferences about strategy use. In Schmitt's questionnaire, the series of strategies was separated into 2 categories: strategies that are useful for the initial discovery of a word's meaning and those useful for consolidating a word once it has been encountered. It was discovered that asking the teacher for a synonym/paraphrase, analyzing pictures and gestures and the use of bilingual dictionaries, were strategies most preferred by the participants in the category of strategies to discover word meanings. The least preferred

strategy for discovering meaning was to skip or pass a new word. Schmitt stated that students use strategies based on their understanding and comfortability (1997, p.147).

The current research focusses on Schmitt's study and strategies as the categories are precisely described. Naeimi and Yaqubi (2013) conducted a study to examine the impact of structure reviewing in reading comprehension using vocabulary learning strategies among university students. The researchers used Schmitt's taxonomy (1997), which is derived from Oxford's (1990) taxonomy (Naeimi & Yaqubi, 2013). The participants, who were at the pre-intermediate language proficiency level, were divided into two groups of EFL language learners, experimental and control groups (Naeimi & Yaqubi, 2013). Although both groups were taught how to use vocabulary learning strategies for few weeks, only the experimental group was exposed to structure reviewing vocabulary learning strategies (Naeimi & Yaqubi, 2013). The researchers based their theoretical framework on Schmitt's (1997) taxonomy and concluded that structure reviewing, as a sub-branch of direct strategy training, could improve vocabulary learning (Naeimi & Yaqubi, 2013). Moreover, they considered Schmitt's (1997) taxonomy as the most comprehensive taxonomy (Naeimi & Yaqubi, 2013).

As Krashen's Monitor theory and DCT theory are key theories which inform the study, Schmitt's (1997) taxonomy was considered the most appropriate taxonomy of vocabulary learning strategies due to its compatibility with these theories. According to his Input hypothesis, Krashen believes that input is crucial to learners as they should be provided with input being at a difficulty level higher than students' proficiency level. This concept should be applied to all learners especially language learners. The DCT theory, on the other hand, relates to the concrete and abstract knowledge that learners should learn. By learning language which is one level above the learners' proficiency level, learners might be able to learn the concrete and abstract knowledge required in vocabulary learning.

However, language learners might encounter difficulties when they are learning vocabulary. Therefore, language learners should employ vocabulary learning strategies in their learning process. As discussed in this section, various researchers have described and categorised vocabulary learning strategies over the years. These categories were actually derived from one taxonomy and then developed by other researchers after conducting various studies. Schmitt's (1997) taxonomy, which was developed from Oxford's learning strategies, seems to match well with Krashen's hypothesis as well as DCT theory. Schmitt's taxonomy includes strategies which can be used by language learners to differentiate between concrete language and abstract language. Furthermore, Schmitt's taxonomy also consists of strategies, such as cognitive and affective strategies, which relates to Krashen's Affective Filter hypothesis.

According to Ghazal (2007), language learners need a wide array of target language words to be successful in production and comprehension activities in the second or foreign language. One way to help learners to enhance their knowledge of vocabulary is by equipping students with a variation of vocabulary learning strategies. Ghazal's (2007) study shows that learners should be trained in the strategies they lack. However, in Malaysia, there has been limited research conducted on primary international school students with the use of Schmitt's (1997) taxonomy. One study involving 360 Malaysian tertiary students in UKM (2007) has used Schmitt's (1997) taxonomy. The aim of the study was to identify the types of learners based on their VLS preferences. The instrument used in this research was a vocabulary learning questionnaire established by Gu and Johnson (1996) and it was discovered that the participants of the study preferred the strategy which involve the usage of dictionary.

Oxford (1995) quoted a famous metaphor that is "cultural iceberg", which refers to the many aspects of culture, such as certain beliefs, perceptions, and values, which lie below

the surface of consciousness, in comparison to cultural aspects such as clothing and TV habits, which are in the conscious area. These cultural aspects often influence how people learn languages. In consideration of the influence of culture, the present study will also be focusing on students' nationalities. Moreover, the researcher intends to identify how students with different level of proficiency learn English vocabulary. To the researcher's knowledge, there have been limited studies about vocabulary learning strategies conducted on international primary school students with different levels of proficiency.

2.7   Differences between National and International Schools in Malaysia

Education is the responsibility of the Government and the government is committed to providing a sound education to all. The Malaysian education system encompasses education beginning from pre-school to university. Pre-school, primary and secondary education falls under the jurisdiction of the Ministry of Education (MOE) while tertiary or higher education is the responsibility of the Ministry of Higher Education (MOHE).

MOE sets in place a comprehensive schooling system from pre-school to secondary education, apart from its responsibilities of regulating the operations of all public and educational institutions. The strategies to enhance educational outcomes are spelt out in the National Education Blueprint. Under the national education system, a child's education begins at pre-school. The government provides 11 years of free primary and secondary education in public schools.

Education in Malaysia has been continuously enhanced by the development of strong content knowledge in mainstream subjects and language (Rezlana, 2016). However, higher order thinking skills have been in the spotlight of recent times. Due to continuous progression of the education system it is put forth that the performance of a Malaysian

student may be at risk (Mushadiq, 2014). Other educational systems in countries such as Singapore have already found ways to enhance educational outcomes, yet the international assessments of Malaysian students show figures of the declining performance rate of the students (Fathima, 2016).

International schools, however, follow a curriculum model from UK, USA, Canada, Australia or New Zealand. This results in children attending top-notch universities around the world due to high quality of education, placement or IGCSE offerings and scholarship. Through the holistic education system, they find out about each other's cultures and views on the world. By sharing everyday parts of their lives such as dining and living together, and helping each other tackle the challenges of an exciting outdoor education programme, they learn to develop tolerance. Friendships are formed which transcend traditional barriers and differences. Ordinary day-to-day situations become opportunities to educate the students beyond their own cultural mind. These interactions are important as they develop a shared set of experiences and aspirations for the future, through which a common national identity and unity are forged.

Malaysia's international school market has been gradually growing since its early existence decades ago (Nasa, 2017). Not only are their education policies susceptible to changes but the school policies too are constantly being upgraded. Back then, international schools were only made available for expatriate children and local students rarely had a chance to study in one. This was partly due to the policies back then where local children were generally not accepted in international schools even though their families could afford it. This was followed by setting up a quota for local students allowed to study in international schools (Pilay, 2017).

However, the restriction was abolished after 2012, sending many parents rushing to enroll their kids in these prestigious schools. Today, international school administrations

have no issue 'on the number of locals applying. They can fully accept local applicants into their institutions.

The lift in restrictions has had a positive influence in the rise of international schools in Malaysia. Malaysia has been included in the top 10 of the preferred destination for education in the world (Pilay, 2017). According to data obtained from International School Consultancy (2017), there are 7,017 international schools in the world (56% of these in Asia) meeting the learning needs of more than 3.5 million students, all of which use English as the language for learning (Kiddy, 2017).

In Malaysia, more and more local families are earning better incomes as a result of the middle-class boom such as increase in salaries, promotions and job opportunities. Many working families from the lower income group as rising as middle class earners. This makes them more than capable to seek out a better quality of life, which includes better quality education for their children. Parents are enrolling their children to international school because it helps their children to develop a keen understanding of internationalism and inter-cultural perception (Kiddy, 2017). Furthermore, international school also provides all the benefits and advantages linked to multilingualism. It is obvious that it is not only the expatriates or upper class Malaysians who send their children for international education for their children, but more and more middle class Malaysians are also enrolling their children in international schools due to be a part of the ever-expending communities of cultures.

Parents are enrolling their child to international schools due to the difference in education between both the schools (Lyons, 2017). Palmer, Chen, Chang, and Leclere (2006) indicated four educational differences in learning styles, teacher/student-centered teaching, learning linked to cultural views and explicit/implicit learning which is discussed further in section 2.8 till 2.9.

2.8   Clash of Cultures

Language is formed to present the speakers ideas or concepts; these can change depending on which culture elements are dominant at any given moment. Whenever language expands, the culture changes.

An obvious advantage of human language as a learned symbolic communication system is that language has infinite flexibility (Kuo M., 2006). This means that the meaning of a word can be changed, and then a new symbolism can be created. For example, the English word "nice" now generally means pleasing, agreeable, polite and kind. However, in the 15th century, "nice" meant foolish, lascivious and even wicked. This simple example reveals that vocabulary can evolve in response to the changing historical and social conditions. It is a known fact that the culture of Malaysia is made up of many different cultures and languages. Each of these individual cultures are impacting on, shaping and redefining Malaysian culture. Many new words are being added in daily Malaysian speech. For instance, the sentence "long time no see" is not Standard English. It was translated from Chinese. Other suffix like "lah" from the Malay language and words like "tauhu" (tofu) also appear in Malaysian society. People accept and understand them because these adaptations have already become a part of the "local" culture and blended in people's lives (Allison & Vining, 1999)

Culture is assumed as a system that includes beliefs, values, norms, practises, symbols and ideas. Strictly saying, culture can be defined as a lifestyle practised by certain groups of people and involves social system, arrangement of the economy organisation, politics, beliefs, traditions, behaviours and values (Ahmad, 2010). According to Tan Yao Sua (2005), the culture concept is also seen from a holistic perspective, which is an equipped lifestyle and involves mutual understanding among the members of social group. Hall (1996) stated that culture is the "silent language" and the "hidden dimension". Culture

gives the identity to a group of people in lifestyle aspects. Therefore, culture is said to be a body of intellectual and material equipment that fulfils biological and societal needs besides being capable of adapting to the environment.

Cultural knowledge is crucial in achieving linguistic and vocabulary proficiency, and the culture of society can be changed depending upon the language used. For instance, some old word remain even when they are no longer used cultural. New words emerge as they become identified with particular cultural activities. The slang words used by people from the 80s were very likely different from those we use today. Different eras often have differing "pop languages". These languages are most likely to be influenced by TV programs, politics or music, and little by little they create their own cultural trend. Therefore, language is always cultural in some aspects.

According to the National Standards for Foreign Language Education project (1996), students cannot truly master new language until they have mastered the cultural context in which the new language occurs. This means that understanding a new culture is an important element in achieving the success in second language acquisition. In fact, the learning of language and culture can be compared with a child's first experiences with the family which he or she is born, the community to which he or she belongs and the environment in which he or she lives (Lu, 1998). Infants acquire their first language in a natural way because the society, environment and culture continually feed them. Similarly, when learners acquire a language, they need to ingest the culture's nutrients.

As Lado (1957) mentioned in his book Linguistics across Cultures, if certain elements of a second language differ greatly from the student's native language, that student is likely to encounter difficulties. It can be assumed from this that the learning of second language is facilitated wherever there are similarities between that language and the learner's mother tongue because languages usually have difference of syntax,

pronunciation, and structure. It is perhaps through cultural support and understanding that the diversity of languages can be resolved and students' learning difficulties can be resolved.

The social process that occurs among ethnic groups of different culture around the world is the social interaction pattern (Yusuf, 2010). The interaction process involves cultivating ethnic, interaction and socialisation realisation since childhood. The learning process involves ethnic socialisation (Ahmad, 2010). Ethnic socialisation denotes the development process where children learn about behaviour, perception, values, and manners in an ethnic group besides beginning to see themselves and others as members in a group (Phinney, 1987). A person is inclined to interact with individuals that share similarities with him and friends from similar ethnic groups can be equalised in their respect towards culture values, tradition, experience and opportunities (Baerveldt et al., 2004). However, frequent interactions among ethnic groups can cultivate cultural interaction besides strengthening the relationship between both the parties. When different ethnic groups interact and have a good relationship, the members of these ethnic groups have better opportunities to understand each other (Baharuddin, 2003). The relationship among classmates of different ethnicities is encouraged as this minimises prejudice and pressure in inter-ethnic relations. Therefore, a multi-ethnic culture facilitates improved social interaction patterns among ethnic groups (Yusuf, 2010).

Studying the culture alongside vocabulary is considered today to be the fifth skill which is beginning to claim its rightful place in language studies, namely cultural awareness (Tulpan E., 2017). The term cultural awareness is described by Tomalin and Stempleski as "sensitivity to the impact of culturally-induced behavior on language use and communication" (1998:5). One of the rules of communication is to be sensitive to the difference between what the speaker says or hears and what the listener says or hears –

that is, to be aware that human thought and behavior differ from one individual and group to another.

Children from international schools are exposed to culturally diverse environment as other children around them come from different countries with different cultures. They are expected to interact with other children from different culture in order to promote 'international mindedness'. International mindedness is referred to as understanding and respect for other perspectives, cultures and languages (Bhavani, 2013). Children and teachers in international school are expected to promote international mindedness in school by interacting and working cooperatively with students with different cultural background. Therefore, as children interact with each other they tend to absorb certain vocabulary used, accents and sentence structure used by their peers in their daily life.

As children learn their peers' vocabulary unconsciously, they find it difficult to assimilate the culture around them in school with the culture at home. According to Mariella Vitteteo-Castillo (2017), the impact of negotiating the minefield of culture and identity experienced by local students in international schools is most likely to manifest itself in school. Confrontations as students test boundaries are hardly unusual, but local students from international schools may feel even more of a distance between their life and their home, while parents might think children who are more questioning are "answering them back" rather than showing them respect that is valued in Asian society as described in the following quotation:

> *"There is a point where it can become a clash of cultures between*
>
> *students and their parents. Parents need to accept that their children*
>
> *are growing up in a culturally diverse environment like international*
>
> *schools. They need to have their own process of loss; understanding*

that their children's cultural values may be different from them."

Mariella Vitteteo-Castillo (2017, p. 10)

Children in international schools are exposed to learner-centered approach, where they are required to ask questions in order to promote learning (Liu, 2015). However, this learning approach may not be accepted by people from the certain culture. For instance, Asian parents are not comfortable with their children questioning them as it is considered rude in Asian culture to question the parents' decision. Nevertheless, this approach is encouraged in the Western culture as it is believed that by asking question it allows the children to think independently (Smith D., 2006).

On the other hand, local children who are students in international schools may also find that they have less of a grasp of the local language and less knowledge of local history, and are thus labelled as arrogant or elitist, simply for having studied at an international school. Children also need to learn to deal with the constant cycle of change they experience at school as students come and go (Pilay, 2017).

In spite of that, the range of languages learnt in international schools makes each student bilingual or multilingual, which opens doors for an international outlook. This adds a reality to the life of students as they are continuously in this environment. National schools in Malaysia also promote bilingualism as two languages are usually taught in national schools which is the Malay language followed by English language. However, the students from national schools in Malaysia are only exposed to people from Malaysia with different religious background. On the other hand, most international schools students in Malaysia are exposed to other children from around the world with different cultural background. These interactions with people from different cultural background are important as they help students to develop a shared set of experiences and aspirations for the future, through which a common national identity and unity are forged.

One of the biggest advantages international students have is when different cultures, nationalities and languages are brought together in one place (Fathima, 2015). Students have a chance to recognise that what makes them human is not their cultural identity, language or religion but something spiritual that transcends all these things. It gives students the chance to rub shoulders with another human being at a more essential level. For example, in the challenges of outdoor education, young people from varied backgrounds discover that they experience the same human feelings or fear apprehension and achievement by using a variety of vocabulary to express their feelings. An international education is as much about the quality of the relationship that can be formed between human beings as it is about a particular curriculum or set of qualifications which then cultivates to international mindedness by assimilating different cultures in vocabulary learning.

2.9   Learning Environment

Children experience a key part of their childhood in their primary school and it forms one of their principal social spaces (Dudek, 2000). The school site, its building and grounds, provides the infrastructure which supports learning and development. According to the Ministerial introduction to the building of UK schools (Berman S., 2003), "school buildings should inspire learning. They should nurture every pupil and member of staff. They should be a source of pride and a resource for the community". The design, disposition and use of buildings transmit educational and social values (Alexander, 2001, p. 176); so does the value placed by society on the quality and appropriateness of the spaces it provides for children's learning, inside and outside of school. To understand the ways in which school buildings impact on children and teachers it is necessary to consider a number of key features of the environment.

Prior to the establishment of national schools, teaching involved large numbers of students being taught in rows in large communal rooms. According to Dudek (2000), some schools have introduced the use of separate classrooms, with sufficient circulation space for a teacher to inspect each student's work. The arrangement allowed each child to leave his or her desk during the lesson. Varying the layout and monitoring the impact on students' outcomes can help schools see what works in different situations to aid pupil progression. Classrooms also included a generous area at the front for display, presentation and general circulation.

According to a study conducted by Keeble (2016), effective international schools make the most of the classroom environment. They challenge themselves about whether they have student learning at the heart of what they do, rather than "showing off" for the benefit of visitors. In addition, Keeble has also stated the following criteria which should be fulfilled by international schools in order to be an effective learning environment for learners:

- A tidy, organised classroom which, viewed from a pupil's perspective, avoids clutter and unnecessary distraction

- How the classroom promotes a calm and purposeful approach to learning, helping children to focus and supporting children's self-regulation (that is, being able to avoid impulsive behaviour and stay focussed)

- Have resources (like books) available to children so that they do not need to get them

- Make sure everyone has access to prompts and learning cues to strengthen independence and help children move on when they get stuck

- Opportunities to use classroom display to extend children's learning.

Effective international schools were also found to use displays that balance permanent and new elements to promote ownership and engagement. Displayed pieces of work are inspirational and celebrate excellence.

It was also discovered that the class teachers in international schools tend to create many learning corners in the classroom such as writing corner, mathematics corner, science corner and also reading corner (Keeble, 2016). The learning corners can be located anywhere in the classroom. They can be as simple as creating a poster, or as sophisticated as science lab activities. Students often work in small groups or with partners to generate shared products, and at times it is also appropriate for students to work independently on skill-based, review or practise-level tasks. According to Warren (2015), learning corners help children and teacher in the following ways:

- Promote independence

- Help students become more responsible

- Allow children to learn through self-discovery

- Provide teachers with time to pull children one-on-one or in small groups to target specific academic skills and better meet the needs of individuals.

The goal of reorganising a classroom into learning corners is to allow the teacher to provide the highest quality instruction to a small group of students, while other students work productively, independently, and cooperatively in a variety of interconnected task at other learning corners (Hilberg, 2003). At scheduled times, students shift to a different corner so that eventually all students have the opportunity to complete the tasks at every corner, as well as to work with the teacher in a small group. In a nutshell, the learning corners which have been implemented by international schools appear to offer many

educational benefits, which indicates that these benefits may extend to the learning of vocabulary.

Learning must be rooted in meaningful context and supported by a classroom environment to have a significant effect (Collentine, 2004). This can be explained by a research that was conducted by Collentine (2004) on a group of second language learners who immigrated to the US. It was discovered that the participants of the research developed their vocabulary skills faster in their new classroom environment compared to their previous school environment. It is only through repeated interaction with the social environment in classroom that learners begin to build linguistic proficiency. In other words, an English language learner must find opportunities to interact with their classmates in order to allow them to obtain more learning opportunities to use the language.

2.10   Teacher Beliefs and Traditions

Strong traditions tend to govern the way in which teachers teach and how students are supposed to learn. These traditions find their base in different theories of how learning takes place and the specific purpose of education. Lundahl (2014) observes that the "greatest dividing line regarding the role of education is probably found between those who place the child at the centre and those who emphasise knowledge" (p. 33). It can be hard to grasp the difference between these two positions but, as Lundahl (2014) declares, putting the child at the centre entails "discovery-oriented approaches to leaning and formative assessment", and learners should be "active in finding answers to their own questions" (p. 21). In contrast, emphasising knowledge places the teacher at the centre, as the main source of knowledge. The teacher becomes the one who is supposed to transmit the right kind of knowledge to the learners (Lundahl, 2014). The key difference

lies in the view of how language development takes place, as a social activity or as learning the "right" kind of information.

The traditions and views of language learning are reproduced in policy documents and guidelines for schools and teachers. Lundahl (2014), for example, stresses that a curriculum should be full of "learner-centred ideals" (p. 21). A curriculum was developed by the Councils of Europe by a group of teachers (Skolverket, 2011) which was designed in accordance with the view on language teaching and learning represented in the Common European Framework of Reference for Languages (Council of Europe, 2001). In this document, users and learners of a language are seen primarily "as '*social agents*', i.e. members of society who have tasks (not exclusively language-related) to accomplish in a given set of circumstances, in a specific environment and within a particular field of action" (Council of Europe, 2001, p. 9). The basic view is that the students should, as efficiently as possible, be able to participate in different communicative situations (Council of Europe, 2001). In other words, teachers' believe that the learner is a social agent based on the social constructivist view of language developed from "the urge to participate in a social group" (Lundahl, 2014, p. 22).

On an individual level, these traditions and views on how learning takes place are represented in *teachers' beliefs*. These beliefs affect how teaching and learning happen in the classroom and can of course differ from teacher to teacher:

> *A belief is a proposition which may be consciously or unconsciously*
>
> *held, is evaluative in that it is accepted as true by the individual, and is*
>
> *therefore imbued with emotive   commitment; further, it serves as a*
>
> *guide to thought and behaviour (Borg, 2001, p. 186).*

One must have in mind that these beliefs are created in a certain context. No teacher exists as a single independent atom free from the influence of contextual factors. Phipps and Borg (2009) argue that "attempts need to be made to explore, acknowledge and understand the underlying reasons" behind tensions between teachers' beliefs and practices (p. 388). Bateman (2008) emphasises that teacher preparation courses can "play an important role in the formation of prospective teachers' belief systems" (p. 17). This statement is echoed in Borg's research (2011, p. 378). These contextual factors can be structural, ideological, or practical "here and now"- choices that have to be made by the teacher. Phipss and Borg (2009) mention "prescribed curriculum, time constraints, and high stakes examinations" as factors that an affect and restrict the extent to which the individual teacher can "act in accordance with their beliefs" (p. 381). This means that the teaching is the product of an intricate relationship between the teacher's beliefs and the teaching context.

Like all content-area teachers, language teachers spend their childhood and adolescent years in school observing teachers, and consequently – consciously and subconsciously – forming opinions about the teaching profession. Their experiences as students are the source of very deep- seated beliefs for many teachers.

In the opinion of Richard and Lockhart (2006), the development of teachers' belief through their own experiences as language learners is a natural outcome of Lortie's (1975) notice of 'apprenticeship of observation' (as cited in Richards & Lockhart, 2006). That is, the observations that students make over hundreds of hours in school during their youth are naturally what inform their theories about language instruction when they become teachers.

In a study of the beliefs about teaching of four pre-service ESL teachers, Johnson (2004) found all four participants were deeply affected – in a negative way- by their previous formal language learning experiences. None of them wanted to emulate their former language teachers. One of the participants described her high school language classes as "the typical teacher asking questions, students giving answers type of thing," and another recalled learning languages "through a very traditional approach, more focused on grammar than on language use. I never knew why I was learning something" (Johnson, 2004, p.443). One of the trainees declared that many teachers "become settled in their methods and require that students either adjust to their agenda or find another teacher." (p.444). This same trainee believed she would be a more effective teacher because she would be "willing to go beyond what is easy" (p.444). All four of the teachers-in- training believed they could be more successful teachers than those who taught them. In this sense, they were much like optimistic and idealistic new teachers in Pajares' (1992) review who felt that they would rise above institutional and classroom problems and be more effective teachers than those who had taught them.

One of the ESL teachers in a study by Woods (1991) also felt a negative impact from his formal language learning. Teacher B, as he called, described the experience as demotivating due to lack of authenticity: the absence of real language, real contexts, and real purposes" (p.7). As a result of this discouraging experience, Teacher B strove to provide his students with authentic materials (i.e., materials that were prepared for an English-speaking audience). Teacher B believed that authenticity was essential to his lessons, so the reading and listening passages he used in class were chosen based on the materials' authenticity (Woods,1991). Teacher B believed that authentic materials were more stimulating for his students' language learning.

The other teacher in Woods' (1991) study, Teacher A, believed in "using unauthentic simplified texts" (p.5) and progressing steadily through the curriculum. She started with relatively easy activities to assure the students' success, and then gradually moved to more difficult activities. Woods referred to Teacher A's approach to implementing a new ESL course as "curriculum-based" (p.8). She followed the parameters of the new curriculum very closely and did not supplement the course with authentic materials as did Teacher B.

Both Teacher B and A were given the task of implementing a new ESL curriculum with two similar groups of learners. They approached this task in very different ways. Woods describes Teacher B's approach as 'student-based' and Teacher A's approach "curriculum based" (p.8). Woods placed the two teachers at opposite ends of this approach continuum, which is the evidence that teachers' belief can motivate teachers to approach the same task using different techniques. Therefore, it is evident that a teacher's belief can aid language learners learning as it depends on how the teacher adapts his or her lesson in order to teach.

2.11   Summary

This chapter has provided an explanation of how vocabulary learning strategies are derived from language learning strategies, types of vocabulary learning strategies and the theories and framework which are used in this study. In addition, the chapter discusses relevant aspects of the research context, including the difference between national and international schools in Malaysia, the clash of cultures, the learning environment, and teacher beliefs and traditions. The following chapter presents the methodology used in this study.

CHAPTER 3: METHODOLOGY

3.1 Introduction

This chapter describes the methodology used in the study, beginning with a restatement of the key research questions presented in the introduction chapter (Chapter 1). This is followed by a discussion of the framework used to study vocabulary learning strategies and the considerations made in adapting the framework of vocabulary learning strategies. The research design and method, pilot study, the participants, and the instruments, are then discussed in detail. Finally, the procedures used for data collection and data analysis are presented.

3.2 Key Research Questions

This research required research to identify the vocabulary learning strategies employed by ESL learners from an international primary school. This research also seeks to investigate to what extent does the students' proficiency level affects vocabulary learning strategies employed by the students. This research intends to identify to what extent does knowledge of vocabulary learning strategies aid students in comprehending the meaning of words.

3.3 Vocabulary Learning Strategies Framework

Vocabulary learning strategies are defined as steps taken by the language learners to acquire new English words. There are an extensive range of different vocabulary learning strategies as demonstrated by the classification of vocabulary learning strategies are proposed by different researchers (Stoffer, 1995; Nation, 2001; and Gu, 2003). In

addition, there is a wide- ranging inventory of vocabulary learning strategies developed by Schmitt in 1997. While a variety of definitions of the vocabulary learning strategies have been suggested, this research has applied the framework that is suggested by Schmitt (1997) who saw it as two main groups of strategies:

1) Discovery strategies: Strategies that are utilized by learners to discover learning of words.

2) Consolidation strategies: A word is consolidated once it has been encountered.

The details of the framework are presented in the Table 3.1.

Table 3.1: Schmitt's Categorisation of Vocabulary Learning Strategies (1997)

Category 1: Strategies for the discovery of a new word's meaning
i.   **Determination Strategies (DET)** ii. - Analyse part of speech; iii. - Analyse affixes and roots; iv. - Check for L1 cognate; v.   - Analyse any available pictures or gestures; vi. - Guess meaning from textual context; vii. - Use a dictionary (bilingual or monolingual)
viii. **Social Strategies** ix. - Ask teacher for a synonym, paraphrase, or L1 translation of new word; x.   - Ask classmate for meaning
xi. **Category 2: Strategies for consolidating a word once it has been encountered**
xii. **Social Strategies** xiii. - Study and practise meaning in a group; xiv. - Interact with native speaker
Memory Strategies - Connect word to a previous personal experience; - Associate the word with its coordinates;

- Connect the word in its synonyms and antonyms;
- Use semantic maps;
- Image word form;
- Image word's meaning;
- Use Keyword Method;
- Group words together to study them;
- Study the spelling of a word;
- Say new word aloud when studying;
- Use physical action when learning a word
Cognitive Strategies   - Verbal repetition;   - Written repetition;   - Word lists;   - Put English labels on physical objects;   - Keep a vocabulary notebook
Metacognitive strategies   - Use English-language media (songs, movies, newscasts, etc.);   - Test oneself with word tests;   - Skip or pass new word;   - Continue to study word over time

Upon viewing these different classifications, this research used Schmitt's taxonomy as a basis of the study. It was developed based on Oxford (1990)'s classification of vocabulary learning strategies. The classification of strategies perhaps is the most wide-ranging in vocabulary learning strategies usage. Although, Schmitt's five major strategies maintained their application in an ESL environment due to the fact that

he established his taxonomy using Japanese L2 learners. Similarly, the present study has used second language learners from an international school as samples of study.

3.3.1 Adapted Framework of Vocabulary Learning Strategies

As this research is process-oriented, it not only examines the process of vocabulary learning itself, but also examines the broad spectrum of input which may have an influence on the process and product of the learning. Thus, the researcher attempted to take a comprehensive approach by including five strategies based on the framework proposed by Schmitt in his classification of vocabulary learning strategies (1997). The researcher adapted the framework in order to suit the participants' young age. For instance, metacognitive strategies contained four methods which are as follows: -

- Use English-language media (songs, movies, newscasts, etc.);
- Test oneself with word tests;
- Skip or pass new word;
- Continue to study word over time

The researcher tabulated the methods and chose only one method based on the participants' young age and learning experience in school. The researcher selected the strategy which is more related to participants of this research which is testing participants as a strategy as the participants are accustomed to answer assessments in school. Tests demonstrates a sort of ability. Hughes (1989) points out that they are needed to check the progress of learning, as well as to assess the level of knowledge about some language area. According to Schmitt (2000, p.163), tests have been found to transcend the fact of estimating the abilities of examinees and to shape their way of viewing the content of a course. On the other hand, Nation (2001) views that testing vocabulary knowledge is

needed for two reasons; first, in order to measure how well a particular word is known and second, how many words are known. Therefore, the researcher selected the word test strategy as it enables the researcher to measure the effectiveness of vocabulary learning strategies when participants were learning vocabulary.

Determination strategies encompasses a few techniques. The researcher selected the strategy on use of dictionary. Laufer (1990) believes that a word in a sentence could look familiar to language learners; however; they may find that this meaning in the given sentence makes no sense. In addition, guesses of the meaning of an unknown word are rarely accurate. Kaivnapanah and Alavi's (2008) study confirms that leaners' inferences about the meaning of an unfamiliar vocabulary are not always reliable. Thus, the advocate of dictionary suggest that teachers should encourage learners to use a dictionary to find the particular meaning of an unfamiliar word in a given context. Dictionaries are essential source of information about words in a language (Walz, 1990). Hayati and Fattahzadh (2006) also recommended that learners consult a dictionary for the meaning of an unfamiliar word to make certain that their assumptions are correct based on contextual information. Access to dictionary helps learners become more independent because they can find suitable interpretations of unknown words in sentences without depending on their teachers' explanations (Gu, 2003)

Social strategy involves interaction and collaboration among groups, such as when learners interact with their teachers or other fellow students to discover the word meaning. This strategy can be observed in the classroom when teachers are asked by the students to clarify the meaning of a word. The researcher selected the skill on practising with group which is related to social strategy. The reason why the researcher has selected the particular skill is supported by the findings from a research conducted by Asgari A. (2010) who discovered that the participants practice new words among friends in the

university in order to learn vocabulary. The participants from the research benefitted from the receptive and productive knowledge of vocabulary learning in second language. The findings obtained from Asgari A. (2010) is consistent with those from Nation (2001) and Webb (2005) who found that the receptive and productive role of vocabulary learning in second language. Webb (2005) has also indicated that the greater part of vocabulary is learned receptively through speaking with peers.

Memory strategy involves relating the word to be retained with some previously learned knowledge, some form of imagery, or grouping (Huong, 2018). This strategy is the link between the process of learning new vocabulary and mental processing when relating what is already known to the new meaning of vocabulary. Memory strategy can be practiced in the classroom by using synonyms and antonyms with the reference of imagery which is the skill selected by the researcher for this research. Chia- Wen Chuc (2008) examined the effects of memory strategy instruction on elementary school students' vocabulary learning. The result of this study suggested that after memory strategy instruction, participants in the experimental group applied memory strategies more frequently and their vocabulary productive performance improved. It supported the positive influence of strategy training. Moreover, memory strategy instruction facilitated elementary school students'' word spelling ability. In addition, both more and less proficient learners' vocabulary productive ability significantly improved. The usage of synonyms and antonyms associated with imagery are often considered as a useful way for learners to become more conscious about their vocabulary learning process (Lessard, 1994; Schmitt, 1995; Tang, 1997; Leeke, 2000; Fowle, 2002; Ghazal, 2007). By using the skills, it activates a complicated mental process that is carried out during the action of memorising the word.

According to Oxford (1990), cognitive strategies usually involve the identification, retention, storage, or retrieval of words, phrases and other elements of the second language. The researcher selected the skill on repetition from cognitive strategy as it is supported well by other researches. Lo (2007) conducted a study to specify the perceptions of low achieving Chinese EFL students about the use of cognitive strategy and its usefulness. The study showed by repeatedly spelling words, the participants of the research were able to improve the vocabulary knowledge. Another research conducted by We (2008) discovered that the learners applied the repetition skill in order to learn vocabulary.

The researcher sought to find out if a learner uses the same strategy for the same task although the task may be in a different context. For instance; do the participants use the determination strategy when the teacher is explaining the information in a text or do they use the determination strategy when they are attempting to find out the rules of suffixes? The set of strategies selected for this research is extended from the strategy set of overcoming limitations in speaking and writing (Schmitt, 1997). This involves the strategy of listening and the way to ascertain how students overcome the challenges of listening in and out of the class, which is considered crucial to allow continual flow of oral input.

The researcher decided to only use one method for each strategy in order to focus on a few targeted methods from the strategies. It is believed that this adapted framework would be more likely to be comprehended by the young learners. Furthermore, the adapted framework is more achievable due to the limited 10-week time frame given by the school. The framework was also adapted to suit young learners' cognitive, academic, social and communicative abilities. Having too many strategies in a framework might cause confusion to the young participants.

The researcher adapted Schmitt's (1997) framework of vocabulary learning strategies to suit the participants' young age as follows:

Table 3.2: Adapted Framework of Vocabulary Learning Strategies

Category 1: Strategies for the discovery of a new word's meaning	
Determination Strategies (DET)	Use a dictionary (bilingual or monolingual)
Category 2: Strategies for consolidating a word once it has been encountered	
Social Strategies	Study and practise meaning in a group
Memory Strategies	Use of imagery
Cognitive Strategies	Using verbal or written repetition and also vocabulary notebook
Metacognitive strategies	Test oneself with word tests

3.4 Research Design and Methodology

This research is a quasi-experimental study, which involves time –series data, in which the researcher observed one group of participants (treatment group) repeatedly both before and after the administration of treatment. This can be done in a controlled experimental setting, but the design also lends itself well to a more naturalistic setting in which data are commonly collected on a group of subjects and researchers are interested in the effects of some treatment which they did not experimentally apply. The method of data collection was cross-sectional. This research involves looking at two groups, which are the experimental and control group at one specific time in order to identify the effectiveness of vocabulary learning strategies.

Robson (1993, p.290) stated that, "There is no rule that says that only one method must be used in an investigation. Using more than one method in an investigation can gain substantial advantages, even though it almost inevitably adds to time investment

required. One important benefit of multiple methods is in the reduction of inappropriate uncertainty. Using single method and finding a pretty clear-cut result may delude investigators into believing that they have found the right answer". This would suggest that the use of more than one method of data collection method in a research is accepted and is likely to be more beneficial.

However, in order to serve purpose of their research works, researchers have their own ways of selecting data collection methods. Creswell (2003, p.12) specifies, "Individual researchers have a freedom of choice. They are 'free' to choose the methods, techniques, and procedures of research the best meet their needs and purposes." The crucial part is that individual researchers can select data collection methods that best meet their research purpose. Certainly different data collection methods may lead to different conclusion of each study.

Ellis (1994, p. 534) proposes that the use of structured interviews and questionnaires is a method that has been found to be successful since they call for retrospective accounts of learning strategies. Cresswell's (2003) study suggested that the sequential strategies related to the mixed method approach could start with a qualitative method for exploratory purposes and subsequently a quantitative method with a huge sample so that the results can be generalized to the target population.

Different methods of data collection have been engaged, through an extensive review of related literature in the field of vocabulary learning strategies. The two key methods of data collection utilised in previous study in the part of vocabulary learning strategies comprise studies involving survey by the use of vocabulary strategy questionnaire or/and interviews; or experimental studies through the usage of diverse individual vocabulary learning strategies.

In this research, data collection methods were considered and a mixed method approach was chosen. Researchers like Merriam (2002); Metz (2002); and Robson (1993; 2002) highlight that the use of two or more data collection methods to study complex issues and to increase valid of research findings. As a result, both qualitative and quantitative data collection methods for the current research including one-to-one interviews and questionnaires have been adopted.

Since the present research was conducted in order to identify the types of vocabulary learning strategies employed by the young ESL learners, both interviews and questionnaire were adopted and assumed as the suitable data collection methods. It is hoped that the mixed method approach for data collection could aid the purpose of the current research as they were to offer abundant deal of information on vocabulary learning strategies reported employing by the research participants.

According to Greene (2001), mixed methodologies can serve triangulation, complementarities, development, expansion, and initiation. Triangulation is referred as the adoption mixed methods to seek convergence, corroboration and correspondence of results across different methods (Greene, 2001). It can be achieved from three aspects: source of data, data collection and analysis method (Freeman, 1998). In the present research, triangulation was adopted.

The triangulation of data source in the present research is achieved by data sources which was the pre-test and post-test results. The triangulation of data collection in the present research is achieved by the adaptation of both quantitative (questionnaire) and qualitative (qualitative).

The quantitative approach (the questionnaire) is triangulated by the qualitative approach (interview), and the results of the questionnaires inform the implementation of

the interview. This raises the other factor which is the time order of the activities (Brannnen, 1992). Among all the data collection method, the post test and the questionnaire was conducted almost simultaneously, one after the other , while the interviews, which need to be informed by the results of preliminary analysis if qualitative data collected via questionnaire and posttest, began two weeks later.

Figure 3.1 explains on the conceptual framework of this research.

Figure 3.1: Conceptual Framework
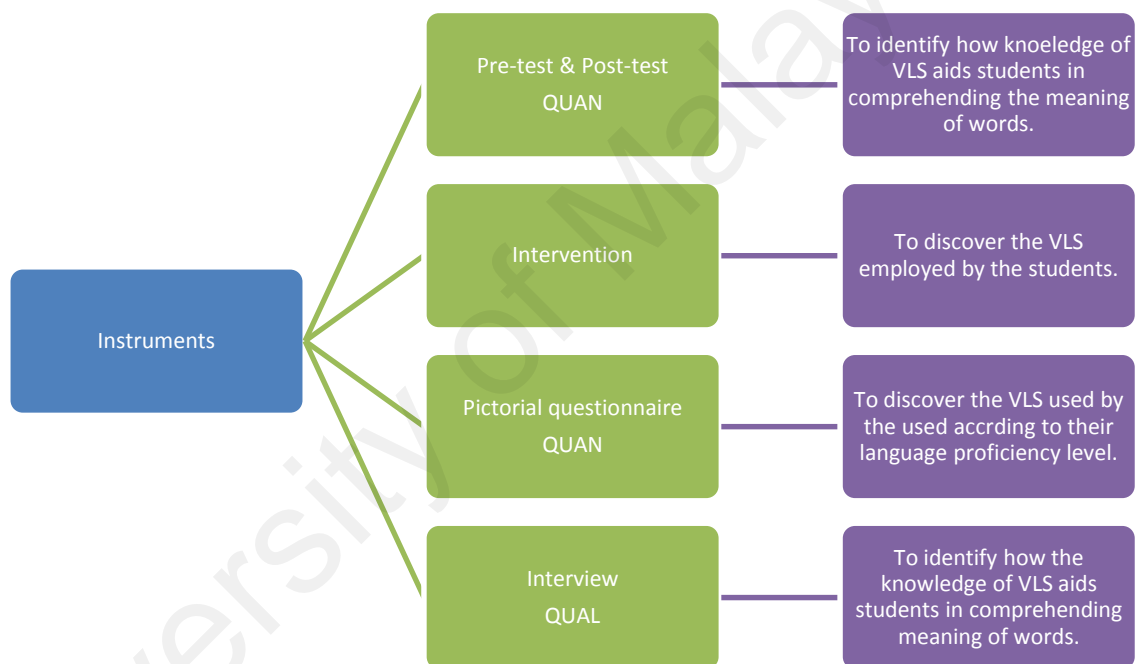
Based on the framework above, This research was conducted in two phases: quantitative and qualitative. It adopts a sequential explanatory model as proposed by Creswell (2003). The first phase involved pre-test and post-test. The participants from both groups were given a pre-test to answer in order to ascertain their level. There were ten words given in the pre-test which later were taught during the intervention using strategies. After the intervention, both groups were asked to answer questions from the post–test. The same ten words tested in the pre-test were tested again in the post-test. The only changes made were the order of the questions. The selected words for pre-test and

post-test was based on the spelling list provided by the school administrator for Year 2. The words from the spelling list were tested in one of the weeks in Term 2 as per the lessons conducted in classroom.

It was emphasised to the participants that the exercise was not a test and they were to do it as per normal situation, that is, they could consult their friends, teacher, dictionary or use any other means. Subsequently, the questionnaire and interview sessions were also conducted. The results obtained in the questionnaires of both groups of participants were further triangulated by the open-ended interview which attempted to capture whatever strategies that might have been used by the participants but were not listed in the questionnaires.

A pre-test and post-test were conducted before and after the intervention session. The pre-test was conducted to know the participants' basic ability in vocabulary whereas the post-test was conducted in order to identify how the vocabulary learning strategy training aided the learners' vocabulary knowledge. A similar method was used Rebecca D. Silverman (2017) who conducted a study on 12 primary school students using a pre-test and post-test, which then recorded a significant difference in their vocabulary knowledge. In addition to pre and post-tests, this study employed data collection via questionnaires and interviews which are the second phase of instruments used in this research. This combination of instruments has been widely used in the literature. For example, questionnaires and interviews were also employed by Ericsson and Simon (1980). They showed that investigation of mental processing is possible by using a variety of cognitive tasks and collecting self-report data, which is, the subjects review (reflect back on how a task was done) and report on what they did in their mental processing.

Figure 3.2 explains on the two instruments used in the second phase of this research.

Figure 3.2: Research Methodology
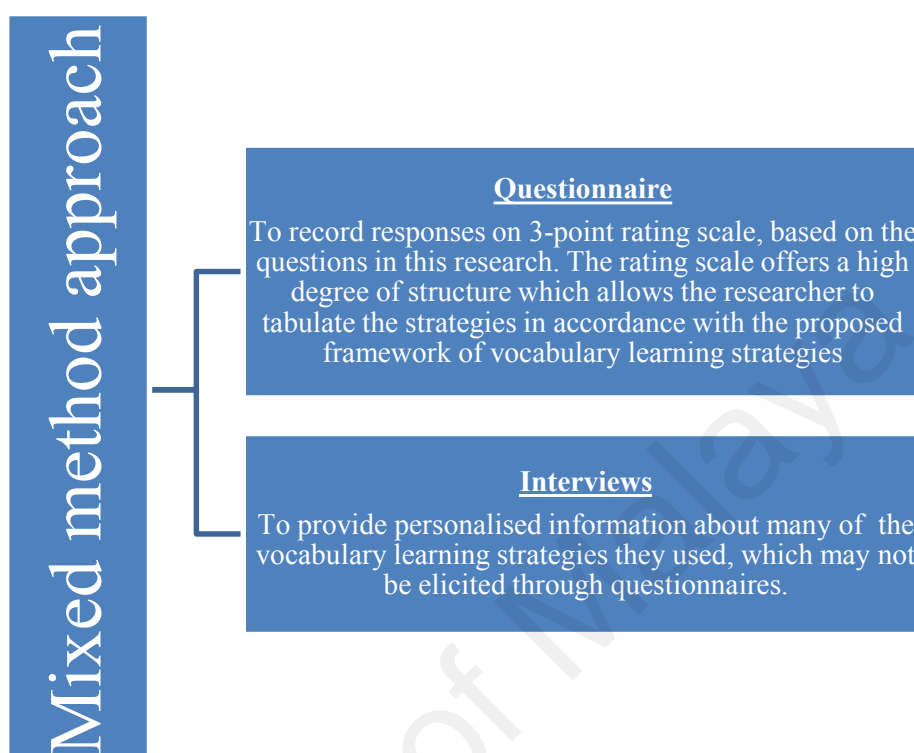
The benefits of standardised interviews have been widely discussed. For example, standardised open-ended interviews will enable the collection of information which cannot be observed directly by the researcher. Brown (2001, p. 5) and Robson (2002, pp. 270-271) indicate that whether the interview is unstructured or structured, students' interviews offer information which are personalised about many of the learning strategies they used, which may not be elicited by questionnaires. In order to obtain data about subjects' personal opinions, beliefs and attitudes, interview is extensively used in social studies study. One of the benefits of interviews is that when the interviewees are asked a question and they are unclear about the question, the interviewer can rephrase the questions so that the interviewee will comprehend. Some disadvantages of interviews consist of time constraints, participants getting distracted and the possibility that participants may distort their answers intentionally.

Questionnaires also offer several advantages for a study. For example, questionnaires allow the researcher to collect very specific data, based on predetermined questions and response options. A questionnaire can be used to record responses on a rating, for example, by rating based on the questions on 3-point rating scale which was used in this research. The rating scale offers a high degree of structure which allows the researcher to tabulate the strategies in accordance with the proposed framework of vocabulary learning strategies (Abid, 2017). The use of a questionnaire also ensures that data collection will be standardised across participants. Moreover, questionnaires can generate quantitative data, which can be analysed using various statistical methods. These will be described in detail in Section 3.6.

Because vocabulary learning strategies operate subconsciously and are not visible, the reliability of data about participants' use of such strategies depends largely on the accuracy of the results obtained from the questionnaires and interviews. By using a combination of interviews and questionnaires allows the researcher to overcome the weakness of each method. One step taken to ensure the reliability of the findings was conducting a pilot study of the instruments and data collection methods, as described in the following section.

3.5   Participants

The participants for this research were from two intact Year Two classes. Since the participants were from an international school, their nationalities varied. There were 26 Malaysian students and 14 expatriate students from countries like Russia, Singapore, Britain, French, Korea, India, Belgium, America and China. The participants of the study are from families in the higher income group. Most of the participants of this research speak English as their second language. The participants come from two different classes,

with mixed levels of proficiency. Hence, the level of proficiency of participants varies across individual students.

The participants' real name were not disclosed and pseudonyms were used to give anonymity to the participants. The following tables present the participants' demographic details and information related to their English proficiency which was obtained from the participants' class teacher and also the status of English in their lives. The researcher included a column consisting the status of participants' English in the table since the participants were studying in an English medium school, therefore there is a need for the researcher to identify the young ESL learners.

Table 3.3: Participants' Info in the treatment group (Class 1)

Student's name	Gender	Proficiency Level	Nationality	Status of English
Dah	Female	Excellent	Singaporean	L2
Chl	Female	Poor	Malaysian	L2
Dz	Male	Good	Singaporean	L2
Aer	Female	Good	Malaysian	L2
Cal	Female	Poor	Malaysian	L2
Ann	Female	Excellent	Malaysian	L2
Jos	Male	Good	Malaysian	L2
No	Male	Good	Malaysian	L2
Phy	Female	Excellent	Malaysian	L2
Leo	Male	Excellent	Malaysian	L2
Dhi	Female	Poor	Malaysian	L2
Zar	Female	Good	Malaysian	L2

Con	Male	Poor	Malaysian	L2
Fre	Male	Good	Russian	L2
Jay	Male	Good	British	L1
Jae	Female	Good	Malaysian	L2
Mar	Male	Excellent	French	L2
Is	Male	Poor	Malaysian	L2
Ar	Female	Poor	Malaysian	L2
Dog	Male	Poor	Korean (Born in Malaysia, therefore English is L2)	L2

Table 3.4: Participants Info in the control group (Class 2)

Student's name	Gender	Proficiency Level	Nationalities	Status of English
Ali	Female	Poor	Malaysian	L2
Et	Male	Poor	Malaysian	L2
Jay	Female	Poor	Malaysian	L2
Sha	Female	Poor	Malaysian	L2
Yen	Male	Good	Malaysian	L2
Ash	Female	Good	Indian	L2
Sas	Male	Poor	French	L2
Arsh	Male	Poor	American	L1
Eun	Female	Good	Malaysian	L2
Sar	Male	Good	Malaysian	L2
Per	Male	Excellent	Belgian	L2
Luk	Male	Excellent	Australian	L1

Kiy	Male	Poor	Mauritian	L2
Char	Female	Poor	Malaysian	L2
He	Male	Good	Chinese	L2
Sha	Female	Good	Malaysian	L2
Oli	Female	Good	Malaysian	L2
Pet	Female	Good	Malaysian	L2
Geo	Male	Good	British	L1
Ant	Male	Excellent	Malaysian	L2

3.6   Instruments

Five instruments were employed in this study: the Ventures placement test, a pre-test, a post-test, pictorial questionnaire and an interview. The Ventures placement test is a placement test used by the international school teachers to group students according to their proficiency level. A pre-test and post-test was used to check the effectiveness of the intervention sessions, which involved training on using vocabulary learning strategies. The questionnaire was used to help elicit information from the participants. As the researcher realised that participants were young and may therefore face difficulties in reading and responding to long questions, the questionnaire was adapted from a study conducted by Chuah (2008) on Chinese ESL learners. The decision to use a pictorial representation as a research tool resulted from the researcher's observation that children draw meanings accurately from clearly illustrated picture books. The pictorial research tool was very effective as it created interest and the participants could relate to the drawings and consequently understood the questions posed to them. The fifth instrument used in this research was an open-ended interview with the participants. Each of these instruments will be described in the following sub-sections.

3.6.1   Ventures Placement Test

The placement test which was conducted online was used to ascertain the students' English proficiency level. The test focusses on reading, vocabulary and grammar recognition. The original placement test consists of 40 multiple choice questions; however, the researcher adapted the test by reducing the questions to only 13, in consideration of the participants' young age and their short attention span.

The researcher began the placement test by greeting the students. The researcher also spent time talking to the participants to help them to relax. The goal of this placement test is to ascertain the students' level of proficiency in a comfortable, non-threatening atmosphere in which to take the test. All participant in this research had basic reading and writing skills which enabled them to answer the questions in the test.

The researcher then explained the purpose of the test, before beginning the testing process. The participants were given 30 minutes to complete the test. The results of the placement test were analysed based on the prorated scoring recommendation in Ventures test as listed below.

Table 3.5: Ventures Placement Test Recommended Scores

Test scores	Level
0-5	Poor
6-9	Good
10-13	Excellent

After the Venture placement test results were analysed, participants were then categorised according to their proficiency level. One class was designated as the

intervention group and the other was the control group. The following tables (Table 3.6 and Table 3.7) present the proficiency levels of participants in each group.

Table 3.6: Proficiency Levels of Participants in the Treatment group

Level	Amount of students
Poor	7
Medium	8
Excellent	5

Table 3.7: Proficiency Levels of Participants in the Control Group

Level	Amount of students
Poor	8
Medium	9
Excellent	3

In the intervention class, there were seven students with low proficiency skills, eight with medium proficiency skill and five with high proficiency skill. On the other hand, the control group consist of eight students with low proficiency, nine students with medium proficiency and three students with high proficiency skills.

3.6.2 Pre-test

The pre-test for this research was comprised on ten fill-in-the-blanks questions. The participants were tested on 10 words, by requiring them to choose the correct word to fill in the blanks. All words included in the pre-test were tested again in the post-test; however, the sentence order was changed (Appendix A). The words used in pre-test were selected carefully by the researcher from all the six intervention sessions conducted with the treatment group. The words tested in the pre-test and post-test were as follows:

- Habitat

- Frost

- Wave

- Punishment

- Glows

- Useless

- Loudly

- Mammal

- Screech

- Afraid

The participants were asked to complete the pre-test within 20 minutes. The next step was the implementation of an intervention, as described in the following section.

3.6.3   Intervention Sessions

After the pre-test, the participants in the treatment group were given an intervention on alternate days focusing on vocabulary learning strategies to use whereas the participants from the control group were not given any intervention on strategies as lessons were conducted as usual in class. However, participants from the control group were free to use any strategies they knew to learn vocabulary. The treatment group received the intervention for eight weeks.

The lessons planned for the intervention session were sourced from a website to which access had been purchased by the international school for the teachers to use it. The website has English lesson plans, activities, online books and also worksheets. The teachers in the school use this website as a daily teaching tool. Therefore, the researcher

adapted the lessons as her intervention sessions. The words from the pre-test and post-test were selected from the lesson plans on the website.

Table 3.8 below displays all the steps which were carried out during the intervention sessions.

Table 3.8: Details of Intervention

Discussion Sessions	Steps
Session one: Information Text. Objective: 1. To familiarise the learners with the non-fiction text structures and sentences used.	1. The researcher showed the front cover of the eBook 'All About Orang-utans'. The Big Question was introduced to participants (a question that provides a link into a non-fiction text, sparking children's interest in the topic). 2. Researcher introduced the determination strategy by focussing on using a dictionary. 3. The determination strategy is used by an individual when faced with discovering a new word's meaning without recourse to another person's expertise (Schmitt, 1997). 4. The researcher read through screens 2-5. The word meanings were discussed (e.g. canopy) using context, glossary pop-ups and dictionaries. Key questions asked by researcher: - Habitat: Would an orang-utan like it in Ellie's flat? - Tree-top living: Could you take an orang-utan for a walk like a dog? - Growing Up: Would an adult orang-utan be safe with children? 5. The researcher read screens 6-8 of 'All About Orang-utans' aloud for the students to find answers. The information in relation to caring for an orang-utan were discussed. Key Questions asked by researcher: - Daily routine: Would an orang-utan sleep in a basket? - Finding food: How would you feed an orang-utan?

	- Zoos: Why do orang-utans in zoos need exercise? 6. While the researcher read the non-fiction text, the participants were required to identify the words with which they were unfamiliar to and note it down on the vocabulary mini book.
Session two: Information Text. Objective: 1. To identify the definition of words from the text.	1. The second session was a continuation of the previous session. 2. The researcher read screens 9 and 10 of 'All About Orang-utans' and discussed new vocabulary e.g. 'endangered', 'pets', 'wild'. The participants were then required to check the meaning of words selected by researcher in their dictionary. 3. The researcher then asked each group to match the words learnt from the text to the meanings provided. The words selected were a mixture of nouns, adjectives and verbs. 4. The participants were required to use the determination strategy by using a dictionary to complete this task. 5. Researcher asked each group to provide the answers and gave feedback.
Session three: Stories with Familiar Settings. Objectives: 1. To use adjectives to describe Ali's feelings.	1. Researcher discussed with participants the on–going lessons in classroom about stories with familiar settings. 2. The researcher explained that they were going to explore the character of Ali from the story 'Operation Night Monster': what he does, what he is like, what his feelings are. 3. The story 'Operation Night Monster' was re-read, pausing to focus on Ali's actions and the things he says. 4. Researcher asked participants for ways to write better using description. Which word describes Ali best? 5. Researcher introduced social strategy focusing on studying and practising meaning in a group. 6. Researcher explained the strategy to participants and asked them to speak to their classmates about words which best describe the character in the story. 7. The researcher also discussed how Ali changes. Key Questions asked: - Would you choose the same words at the start and end of the story? - Why?/Why not?

	8. Researcher discussed and explained the use of adjectives.
	9. In groups, the participants created a Role on the Wall to describe Ali and his feelings at the start and end of the story, using statements from 'Ali' (F PCM 2.1.5). They sorted the statements and placed thoughts or feelings inside the character, and action statements outside the character.
	10. Participants were expected to use the strategy taught in order to be able to do the task.

Session four:
 	
Poetry
 	
Objective:
 	
   1. To explore imagery words and link them to memory.
	1. The researcher showed participants the 'glad me' (P ITP 2.2.2) poem and read the first screen.
	
	Key question asked:
	  - What is the poet describing?
	
	2. The researcher read on, stopping after each verse to allow the participants to identify the subject (e.g. leaves, snowflakes, rivers). The researcher encouraged them to question words (which, who, where, which, what and how) they did not understand.
	Key question asked:
	Did any of these verses remind you of a picture you have seen?
	
	Then, the researcher linked responses from the participants to the photo in P ITP 2.2.1.
	
	3. Researcher introduced memory strategy which involves relating the word to be retained with some previously learned knowledge, using some form of imagery, or grouping (Schmitt, 1997). The participants were encouraged to use pictures/images to learn the words.
	4. The researcher then reread the first verse. By using the Think Aloud method, the researcher modelled the type of response expected.
	Key question asked:
	  - What did it say about the ...?
	  - Which words created a picture in your head? Which is your favourite phrase? Why?
	5. The researcher chose a verse from the poem and modelled the image of the particular word/phrases. This is important so that the participants understand that memory strategy can be used by linking the vocabulary to an image and also associating it with synonyms.
	6. As a task, the participants created pictures in response to their favourite verse from the poem which relates to memory strategy.
	7. Upon completion, the researcher reread the poem and shared corresponding pictures.
	
	Key question asked:
	  - Have the pictures captured the words?

	- Did anyone imagine something different?

Session five:
 	
Word Detectives
 	
Objective:
 	
1. Investigate how the spelling of root words changes when the suffixes '–ment', '–ness', '–ful', '–less' and '–ly' are added
	1. Before starting the task, the researcher introduced cognitive strategy and explained to children ways to use the strategy, which involves using verbal or written repetition and also vocabulary notebooks (Allen, 1983: 50; Gairns and Redman, 1986: 95-100; and McCarthy, 1990: 127-29)
	2. The researcher wrote the following suffixes on the board: '–ment', '–ness', '–ful', '–less' and '–ly'.
	3. The participants identified what kind of letter these suffixes begin with (a consonant).
	4. The researcher wrote the three words below on the board. The participants discussed which of the suffixes could be added to each. How does it change the meaning of the root word?
	
	    care (careful, careless)
	
	    sad (sadness, sadly)
	
	    enjoy (enjoyment)
	
	5. The participants concluded, by using cognitive strategy, that no changes are made to the root word when a suffix starts with a consonant letter. Participants were also informed that there are exceptions, though, which they would investigate.
	  • Top Tips: When a word of more than one syllable ends 'consonant+y' (e.g. 'happy'), the 'y' becomes an 'i' before '–ment', '–ness', '–ful', '–less' and '–ly'.
	  • The word 'argue' is an exception word that drops the final 'e' before the suffix '–ment'.
	6. Participants were given cards from 'Exceptional endings' (WD PCM 2.5). The participants thought and reflected on how the suffixes given in brackets would be added to the words on their card. Can they identify a pattern and then come up with a rule for this?
	7. Next, participants were asked to work in their groups and form the word using the suitable suffix or prefix.
	8. Once they were done forming the words, the researcher asked them to memorise the words by using verbal repetition.
	9. The participants were given 10-15 minutes to memorise the words.
	10. After that, each group were given a blank pop set and they were required to list the words they have memorized. The group which has most words recorded correctly was awarded.

	11. As a task, each participant were required to write the rule on their vocabulary book and decorated it as a reminder to keep with them.
Session six: Stories by the same author Objective: 1. To test using word tests.	1. This session was on metacognitive strategy, whereby each participant reflected on his or her own thinking and learning. A vocabulary test was used for this session as it helps to check on the learners' learning. 2. Before distributing the vocabulary test to the participant, the researcher explained to students that metacognitive strategy is used when they reflect to their own learning. For a question in the vocabulary test, at least three options were given, participants will need to link the word to their understanding. 3. A vocabulary word test (Schmitt, 1997) of the words participants had learnt was distributed. 4. Participants were required to choose the correct definition for the word by linking it to their prior knowledge.

The intervention programme was conducted over eight sessions. The seventh and eighth sessions were designed to enable participants to catch up with any sessions that were not completed within the specified time frame. The researcher decided to allow the two sessions to be the catch up session as she did not want to put negative pressure on the participants of the research. The participants of the research are very young, therefore introducing too many strategies in many sessions will not bring a positive impact on the research (Jenny, 2014).

According to Li (2009) successful learners are more in favour of using learning strategies to learn vocabulary, and they think most of the strategies are useful. Unsuccessful learners have different opinions; they seem not to favour using learning strategies in their study and only a few think it is useful. He concluded that when teaching vocabulary, teachers could teach some strategies and guide learners to use these strategies properly and adapt these strategies in classroom learning (Li, 2009). Therefore, the

researcher intended to identify whether the intervention programme designed for the treatment group will aid learners to use strategies while learning vocabulary.

3.6.4   The Pictorial Questionnaire

The main instrument in the data collection which was the pictorial questionnaire, was administered on the participants from the intervention group. The key purpose of the pictorial questionnaire was to extract types and the frequency of vocabulary learning strategies that the participants reported utilising. This answers the first research question which is; what are the vocabulary learning strategies employed by the international primary students. The other purpose of using the questionnaire was to look at whether or not the investigated variable, which is students' proficiency, relates to the students' use of vocabulary learning strategies gained through questionnaire.

The pictorial questionnaire was selected as an instrument for this research in order to cater to the needs of younger primary students. The pictures were illustrated in a simple way in order for the participants to understand. Descombe (2003) mentioned that a questionnaire is designed to gather information to be used subsequently as data analysis. Besides, this questionnaire consists of a written list of statements and was illustrated according to the questions in order to serve the purpose of the research.

After the questionnaire was piloted on the students, some changes were made to it. Then, the questionnaire was administered on all forty Year 2 students. The data obtained through the questionnaire provided sufficient information for the researcher to focus on the type and the frequency of vocabulary learning strategies that the participants stated they employed for their vocabulary learning, whether inside or outside class.

The frequency of students' vocabulary learning strategies use was characterised as "high", "medium" and "low" use. This was decided according to students' responses to the questionnaire on vocabulary learning strategies. This questionnaire was made up of five questions that elicited data involving the use of vocabulary learning strategies, spread over five strategy groups namely; cognitive, metacognitive, memory, social and determination. (Please refer to appendix B).

The three-point rating scale was used to obtain the participants' view on the vocabulary learning strategies used by them. Bialystok (1981) indicated that the advantage of using a questionnaire is that it can be easily administered to a large group of participants, scoring and data compilation are relatively simple, and quantitative measures can be derived, more importantly precise. Frankel and Wallen (1994, p.114) stated that "it is possible to discover attitudes by asking individuals to respond to the series of statements of preference. The pattern of responses is then viewed as evidence of one or more underlying attitudes."

The researcher overcame the difficulty of posing the statements in the questionnaire to the participants by using a set of drawings which they could relate to. The researcher adapted the questionnaire from a study conducted by Chuah (2008). Chuah conducted her research on second language learners from a Chinese school in Malaysia by using Oxford's framework. The research was conducted on children aged between eight (Standard 2) and twelve (Standard 6). Chuah's (2008) research showed that the pictorial representation of questionnaire statements was a reliable method of eliciting responses about language learning strategies from children.

The questionnaire selected for this research consists of only one section. The questionnaire focusses on vocabulary learning strategies commonly used by the participants. The questionnaire (Appendix B) was designed by the researcher to cater to

the needs of the young participants by adapting Schmitt's framework, as discussed in section 3.2. The procedure for using the set of pictorial representation was as follows:

1. Participants were asked to interpret what each drawing showed.

2. Having ascertained that the interpretation was correct for the intended purpose, the researcher started probing if the participant used the particular strategy in his or her everyday learning of English vocabulary. For instance: The researcher asked "When you learn the spelling of 'waves', what do you see or imagine?" if the participant answers something which relates to image/synonyms (memory strategy). Thus, it was confirmed that the participant used the strategy.

3. If the strategy was used, he/she would be asked the frequency of use – "always, usually or never".

3.6.4.1 Considerations Made in Preparing and Implementing the Pictorial Questionnaires

The considerations made in the drawing of the pictorial representations and during the elicitation process were as follows:

1. The pictures were drawn to illustrate the content of the questions.

2. The drawings were kept as simple as possible to enable the participants to focus on the questions.

3. During data collection, the participants were asked to interpret the drawings.

4. The vital factors for success in the data collection method were using simple and accurate illustrations, which participants could relate to and which could attract their attention to stay focussed, and using appropriate language during elicitation process. No time limit was set as the researcher felt that the participants needed to work at their own pace in order to give accurate answers.

3.6.5 Open-ended Interview

A face-to-face interview lasting thirty minutes was held primarily to elicit open responses from six participants regarding any vocabulary learning strategies used which were not listed in the questionnaire. In order to address the generalisability of the selection of participants, a quota sampling approach was used, whereby the participants were matched to the wider population by the strata of language proficiency level (Clay, 2003). The researcher divided the participants into subgroups which was on the participants' proficiency level. This was done via the results obtained from Ventures Placement Test. The basic idea of quota sampling is to set a target number of completed interviews with specific subgroups of the population of interest (Lavrakas, 2008). The sampling procedure proceeded until the desired number of completed interviews is obtained for each subgroups (language proficiency level). The interview sought to elicit how participants overcame challenges they faced in learning vocabulary.

The questions asked during the interview were as follows:

1. How much time do you spend on learning new words in and outside class?

2. What do you do when you meet a new word?

3. What do you do to study and remember a new word?

4. Do you think the method(s) is/are effective to help you remember a new word?

5. Do you find repeatedly spelling the word in your mind useful/not useful? Why?

6. Do you find analysing the word by breaking the word into sound segments useful/not useful? Why?

7. Do you find remembering words by doing a project useful/not useful? Why?

8. Do you find asking classmates for meaning of the word useful/not useful? Why?

(*adapted from Gu, 1997*)

3.7   The Pilot Study

To ensure the reliability of the data and to fine-tune the instruments and data collection methods, a pilot study was conducted on two Year 2 students. Several steps were taken in performing the pilot study as shown in Figure 3.2.

Figure 3.2: Pilot study process
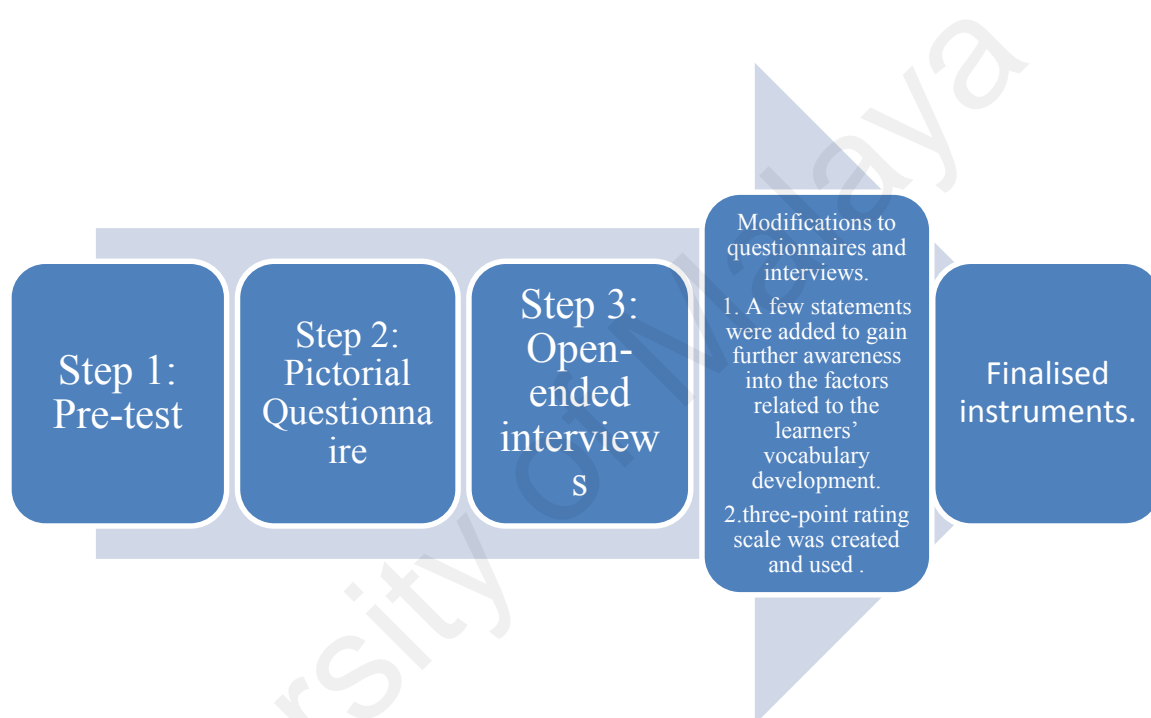
Each step in the pilot study is described in turn in the following sub-sections.

3.7.1   Step 1: Pre-test

The researcher made observations of the participants' current range of overt strategies employed to establish the meaning of ten words, learn their pronunciation, and spelling and make sentences using these words. They were given a relevant information book in which all the words could be found. The students were required to answer the questions from the pre-test before the questionnaire could be administered in order to prevent participants from applying a newly learnt strategy which could affect the data collection. The pilot pretest took place in a very relaxed environment at the researcher's school

library, with which the participants were familiar. This venue was selected in order to closely approximate the participants' daily environment and minimise stress on the young participants. The participants were informed numerous times that the activities were not tests and they were to perform them as they would usually do, which is they could ask their teacher, friends or even refer to a dictionary.

3.7.2 Step 2: Pictorial Questionnaire

Pictorial representations of statements were used as a replacement for questionnaires. In the beginning, to establish if the participants understood what was depicted in the pictures, they were asked to interpret them. The pictures were related to the statements regarding vocabulary learning strategies. There was only one picture for each statement. Students were asked whether they understood what the pictures meant and once they agreed, they were asked to read the statement. Having ascertained that the pictorial representations served their purpose, the researcher started probing the frequency of each strategy and asked the participants to circle either one of the rating scale in the questionnaire.

3.7.3 Open-ended Interview

A standard open-ended interview was conducted with the participants to obtain open responses regarding any vocabulary learning strategies used which were not recorded in the questionnaire. The interview also serves the purpose of getting to know the challenges faced by the participants and ways to overcome the challenges in the learning of English vocabulary. After the pilot study was conducted, a few additional modifications were made to the pictorial representation statements. These are described in the following section.

3.7.4 Modifications made to the questionnaire after the pilot study

After piloting the questionnaire on the two young students, the researcher identified a few additional questions which were required in the questionnaire. Moreover, the rating scale had to be scaled down.

3.7.4.1 Questionnaire

The five-point rating scale involving "always", "usually", "occasionally", "rarely", and "never" turned out to be confusing for the participants. Therefore, a three-point rating scale was created and used which gave participants three response options "always", "sometimes", and "never".

The rating scale was changed because the participants, who were lower primary students, appeared to be confused over the more complex words like "occasionally" and "rarely". Therefore, the original five-point Likert scale was scaled down to offer only three response options, as follows:

Table 3.9: Three-point rating scale

Three- point rating scale	Always	Sometimes	Never
	5	3	1

3.7.4.2 Interview

A few statements were needed to gain further awareness into the factors related to the learners' vocabulary development, therefore it was added into the open-ended interviews, as follows:

- How much interest do you have in learning English?

- How often do you read English storybooks?

- How often do you speak in English with your family?

3.8   Data validity and reliability

Validity and reliability are "the two most important criteria for assuring the quality of the data collection procedures" (Seliger & Shohamy, 1989, p.184). Other than the triangulation method adopted in the research design to enhance the validity and reliability of the data (Johnson, 1992), other measures have been taken for these purposes.

3.8.1   Data Validity

According to Seliger and Shohamy, 1989 (p.188), validity refers to the extent to which the data collection procedures measures what it intends to measure. The most common areas of validity concern are internal validity and external validity. Measures taken in this present research to enhance internal validity will be discussed before those to external validity, for the former is the prerequisite of the latter (Mackey & Gass, 2005).

3.8.1.1   Internal Validity

Internal validity refers to the extent to which the results of a study are a function of the factors investigated (Seliger and Shohamy, 1989). To enhance internal validity, steps have been taken to minimize the most common factors that threaten it: participants' characteristics, data collection location and the collector, instrumentation and participants' inattention.

To minimize the intervention of the participants' diverse characteristics, homogeneity is a criterion for student participants. They are of similar age, and have the same L2 background. They are studying the same subjects in their learning syllabus.

The effect of data collection location and collector is minimised as the instruments were carried out on participants in the participants' classrooms, which is the most familiar

location available for the participants. In addition, the researcher introduced the study to the students and class teachers, recruited the participants and collected the data herself.

To minimize the intervention of participant inattentiveness and inadequate instrumentation, all the data collection instruments and relevant document, such as the questionnaire, were associated with pictures and simple statements. The pilot participants of this research "are the ultimate judges of what is clear and what is not" (Allison et. al., 1996, p.95), as they should be "as similar as possible to the target population" (Teijlingen & Hundley, 2001, p.2).

Besides that, with reference to retrieveability, which is especially related to the internal validity of qualitative research, the interviews were audio-recorded, and notes were taken during the interviews. Thus, the interview data can be reviewed repeatedly for analysis. It has been noted that the presence of a recorder and note-taking in the interviews may threat the records' representation of the interviewees' natural behaviours, which is another factor impacting the internal validity of qualitative research (Seliger & Shohamy, 1989). However, the interviewees had been fully informed about what would happen in the interviews, and had given their explicit agreement to participate by signing the Parent Consent form in advance. Thus, they are supposed to behave naturally as possible. Hence, the threat of measures ensuring retrievability to the representation of the data collected in the interviews is minimised.

3.8.1.2 External Validity

External validity concerns with the generalizability of the findings, while "the base of generalizability is the particular sample selected" (Mackey& Gass, 2005, p.119). The present research targeted all the students in the study setting who met the participant criteria.

3.8.2   Data reliability

One of the main requirements of any research process is the reliability of the data and the findings. In the main reliability deals with the consistency, dependability and replicability of "the results obtained from a piece of research" (Nunan, 1999, p.14). Obtaining similar results in in quantitative research is rather straightforward because the data are in numerical form. However, in qualitative approaches to research achieving the identical results are fairly demanding and difficult. It is because the data are in narrative form and subjective. To this end, Lincoln and Guba (1985, p.288) point out that instead of obtaining the same results, it is better to think about the dependability and consistency of the data. In this case, the purpose is not to attain the same results but rather to agree that based on the data collection process the findings are consistent and dependable. In general, Lincoln and Guba (1985) and Merriam (1998) suggest that the dependability of the results can be ensured through the use of three techniques: the researcher's position, triangulation and audit trial.

1. The researcher's position. In order to increase the reliability of the research, the researcher explained explicitly the different processes and phases of the research which was explained Section 3.9 and 3.10.

2. Triangulation. The researcher used different procedures such as questionnaire and interview to collect data. According to Zohrabi (2013), collecting varied types of information through different sources can enhance reliability of the data and the results. In this way, the replication of the research can be carried out fairly easily.

3. Audit trial. In order to fulfill this procedure, the researcher described in detail (Chapter 4) how the data were collected, how they were analysed, how different themes were derived and how the results were obtained. Therefore, this detailed information can help replicate this research and contribute to its reliability.

3.8.2.1 External Reliability

On the whole, external reliability is concerned with the replication of the study. As Burns (1999, p.20) states "could an independent researcher reproduce the study and obtain results similar to the original study?" It is believed that the external reliability of the research can be increased if the inquirer pays heed to few important aspects of the inquiry (LeCompte & Goetz, 1982; Nunan, 1999). The two aspects involved in this study are as follows:

1) The status of the researcher. This aspects requires that the researcher's social position with regard to the participants of the study to be clarified. The researcher explained beforehand to the participants that the research will be conducted towards them.

2) The social situations and conditions. This research was conducted in an academic situation whereby the research was carried out in the classrooms. All the participants were given equal chance to study and learn English vocabulary. After all the instruments were conducted on the participants from the intervention group, the intervention session was then conducted to the control group in order to provide equal opportunity for the learners.

3.8.2.2 Internal Reliability

Internal reliability deals with the consistency of collecting, analyzing and interpreting the data. Internal reliability might be obtained when an independent researcher on reanalyzing the information. In the present study, in order to guard against threat to internal reliability, the researcher has used a basic strategy suggested by LeCompte and Goetz (1982) and elaborated by Nunan (1999). With regards to the quantitative approach, the researcher included pictorial representation below each statement. The pictures served the purpose of allowing the participants to comprehend the statements easily. In addition,

before distributing the questionnaires to the participants, the researcher conducted a pilot study in order to check the learner's comprehension on the questionnaire. The data of the questionnaires were collected and analysed by percentages and mean. A t-test was also conducted to check whether there was any significance difference after the intervention sessions. The researcher adopted the mechanical recoded data strategy with regards to internal reliability. The interviews were recorded and preserved, therefore, the reanalysis of the data can be easily implemented. This procedure increases the internal reliability of the data and findings.

3.9   Data Collection Procedure

The process of data collection took place at the researcher's workplace, which was also the participants' school. Therefore, it was a familiar environment to participants. The participants were observed individually by the researcher as they answered the pre-test, carried out the tasks such as establishing meanings of the selected words, learning how to pronounce the word correctly and accurately, learning the spellings completing the task designed in the intervention sessions and also showing how they have progressed based on their post-test. A questionnaire was administered, with pictorial representations used as an aid to probe for responses from the lower primary participants. Subsequently, a face-to-face interview was held. The interview questions were piloted with selected students from the intervention group. The participants were selected based on their proficiency level. The researcher needed students working beyond their year group level (high proficiency group), students who are confidently in their year group level (medium proficiency group) and students who need to work towards their year group level (low proficiency group). The researcher wanted to focus on second language speakers.

Therefore, three Malaysian students and three international second language students were selected based on their proficiency level.

The interview questions were presented in a very child-friendly manner. When any of the participants found it difficult to answer the questions, the researcher rephrased the questions and also used some visuals obtained from the internet to facilitate the interview session. Before conducting the research, the researcher explained to participants the steps of the interview process. According to Intaraprasert (2000, p.81), it is helpful for learners to have an interview question guide before the interview took place so that they can focus on their preparation to respond to the proposed questions.

The appointment of each interviewee was scheduled at different times based on the participants' convenience. The duration of the interview ranged between approximately twenty-five and thirty minutes. The researcher, who was also the interviewer, attempted to create a relaxed atmosphere and build a good relationship with the interviewees. Descombe (2003, p.179) indicated that "setting a relaxed atmosphere in which the students feel free to open up about a topic is necessary." Building trust and rapport with the interviewees was also important. Measor (1985) recommended that one way to have a good relationship between the interviewer and interviewee is to address them by their name. Therefore, the researcher only used the names of the participants to address them during the interview process. Descombe (2003, p.179) and Measor (1985) suggestions seemed to be very accommodating during the interview process as the students stated that they trusted the interviewer and felt more confident, less anxious and free, when they were being interviewed under a relaxed atmosphere. Furthermore, the researcher used Robson's (2002) guidelines for interviews by listening more to the participants and speaking less, and putting questions in a clear, non-threatening and straightforward way

to the students while being interviewed. The open-ended interviews for the present investigation were conducted by going through the following steps:

1. Meet students (the interviewees) based on the appointment timing.
2. Mention the objectives of the interview for the current study.
3. Interview them with eight prepared questions and with their permission record the conversation.
4. Use the data gained through the interview to generate the analysis. The interview concentrates on the type of vocabulary learning strategies used and the frequency at which they are used by each participant.

Generally, the interview's duration was approximately twenty-five to thirty minutes. Before starting the interviews, the researcher asked permission to tape record the interview so that, when transcribing, she would not miss any information. Then, the researcher herself transcribed the data obtained through each recorded interview. This interview process provided the preliminary data to help create a better understanding of the vocabulary learning strategies employed by the Year 2 primary students.

As a whole, the open-ended interview was used in the second phase of data collection. Everything was conducted as planned and scheduled, and thus most of the things worked quite smoothly. After the interview process had ended, the researcher transcribed each interview session recording. The next process was to analyse data obtained from the transcription in order to discover vocabulary learning strategy reported to be employed by the participants.

Finally, the results obtained from the questionnaire and interviews were triangulated. The data collection process took five to six hours over a three-day period. It was carried out at the pace of the participants. This was to ensure the validity and reliability of participant responses.

During the entire data collection procedure, the researcher ensured that the classroom which the research was taking place looks uncluttered and comfortable for the participants. This is because the researcher wanted to ensure that the setting will not negatively affect the participants. By having a good classroom environment, it can further develop the learners' vocabulary learning skills as the learners will not face any distraction during the data collection process.

3.10   Data Analysis Procedure

As mentioned earlier, this study employed a mixed method approach, collecting both qualitative and quantitative data through the five instruments described in Section 3.6. Therefore, data analysis procedures varied, depending on the type of data collected. Firstly, the quantitative data from the pre-test, post-test and questionnaires were analysed using descriptive analysis, namely, frequency counts, percentages and t-test. Secondly, the qualitative data resulting from the interview were analysed using the coding technique.

The pre-test and post-test scores were used to measure achievement. The pre-test and post-test is designed to be used with Year 2 children which relates well to the curriculum used in the school. Both this test were administered to all participants from the intervention and control group. The results obtained from the pre-test establishes the gap in vocabulary among Year 2 ESL learners in an international school. At the conclusion of the eight week exposure to intervention sessions, the participants from both the group were given post-test. The post-test was contained identical sentences from the pre-test. The only changes made were the order to those sentences. Not only did the pre-test and post-test compare the findings from intervention and control group, individuals within the groups were also tracked by comparing pre and post-test vocabulary gains. The researcher

also used t-test to check if there was any significant effect after the participants received the intervention by using findings obtained from pre and post-test.

The second phase of the data collection involved the pictorial questionnaire and interview. The pictorial questionnaire were distributed to participants from both groups after the post-test was conducted. The completed questionnaires were then collected and processed by the researcher. The returned questionnaire was tallied and tabulated with the assistance of percentage and frequency. The researcher also attempted to find and analyse whether there are patterns of vocabulary learning strategy use in relation to the participants' proficiency level. Calculating percentage is statistical procedures often used to calculate the effectiveness of vocabulary learning strategies (O'Malley & Chamot, 1990).

The qualitative data were obtained from the interviews. Students' interview data were used for triangulation in answering research question 2. The interview data was transcribed and analysed for themes/ codes and categories. The content analysis or thematic analysis was adopted. It is a way of studying and analyzing written communications in a systematic manner (Kerlinger, 1973), which involves comparing, contrasting and categorizing data (Gall & Borg, 2007). The data were coded under distinct categories developed with reference to the categories and variables in the questionnaire. Simultaneously, unexpected themes generated new categories. In addition, the frequency of the occurrence of the categories was counted to reflect their significance (Gall et. al., 2005).

Figure 3.3 below displays all the steps of the data analysis process which were carried out during this research.

Figure 3.3: Data Analysis Procedure
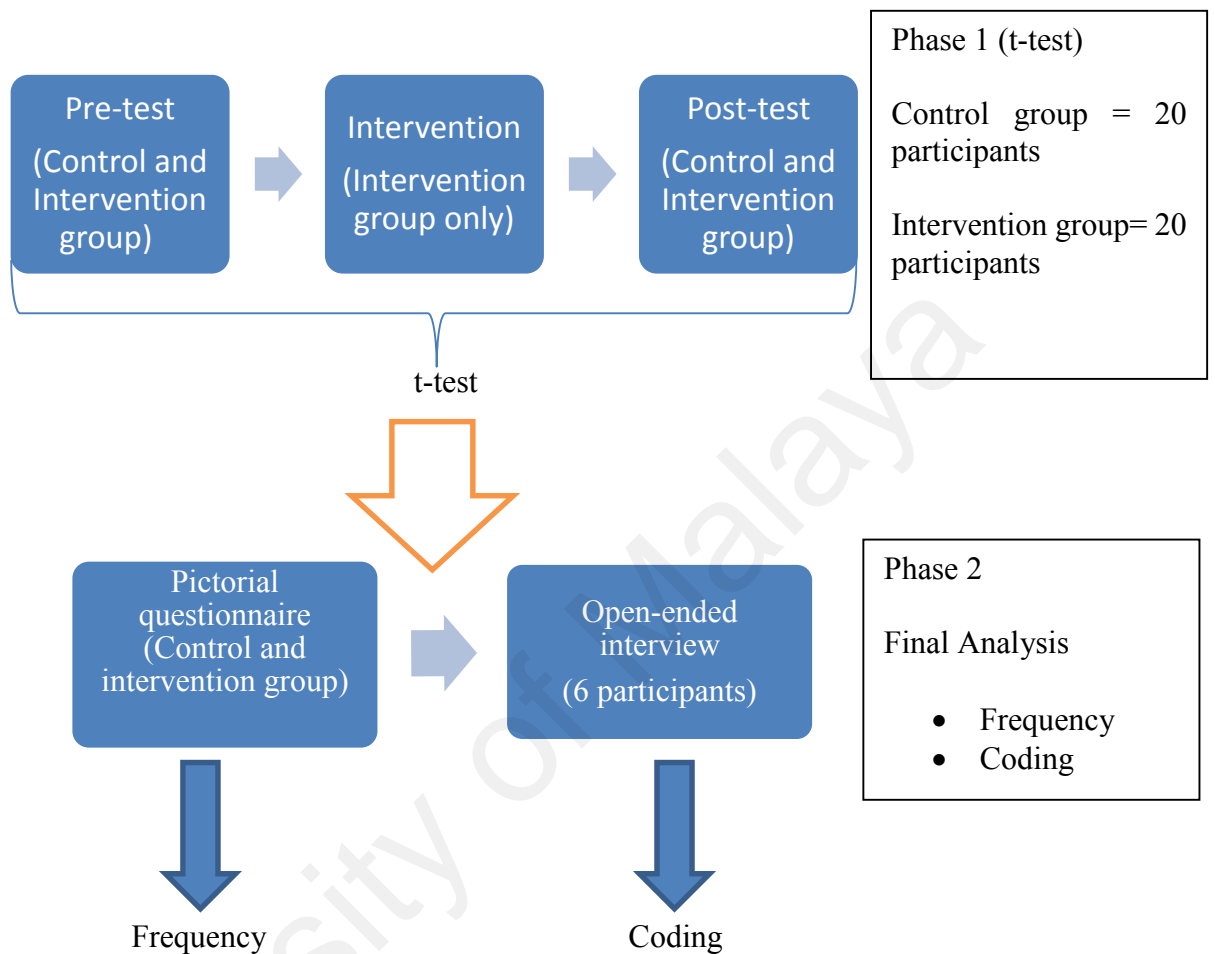
3.11   Ethical Considerations

The main ethical consideration involved in the research was the confidentiality of participant data. Prior to participation in the study, the researcher consulted the head of primary of the school and obtained his permission to conduct a research on the students. A copy of the consent letter is in Appendix M of this dissertation. The parents of the participants were also contacted and informed about this research. A copy of a parent consent form is in Appendix N of this dissertation. After obtaining the parents' signature, participants then went through the data collection procedure. Participants' names were only known to the researcher, who assigned pseudonyms to each participant in the

discussing of the results. As the researcher was holding a teaching position in the department, participants' parents were repeatedly assured that their honest responses to the questionnaires and interviews would not have any implications on their performance in school.

3.12 Summary

This chapter has presented the methodology used in this study to address the three research questions that guided the investigation. First, the theoretical framework for the study was described, followed by an overview of the research design and methodology. Next, the adapted framework of vocabulary learning strategies were presented and the research design and methodology were proposed. This is followed by the explanation on the participants and instruments used in this research. The data validity and reliability was also discussed in this chapter. Finally, the data procedure and the data analysis process were described.

CHAPTER 4: FINDINGS

4.1 Introduction

This chapter is divided into seven sections; pre-test scores, data from pictorial questionnaire, data from interview, the analysis of the strategies investigated in the questionnaire, analysis of the percentage of strategies used by participants in the intervention and control group, analysis of percentage of strategies used based on the participants' proficiency level and post-test results.

4.2 Data from the Pictorial Questionnaire

The starting point of this section involves simple statistical methods used in order to analyse the data obtained from the participants through the pictorial questionnaire. The frequency of students' vocabulary learning strategies used has been categorised as "always", "usually" and "never". This is determined by the participants' responses to the pictorial questionnaire.

4.2.1 Analysis of Determination Strategies

This section will discuss about determination strategy. Determination strategy refers to individual learning strategies which help learners to discover meaning of words by themselves by using a dictionary. The participants were required to choose one of the 3 rating scale. The researcher then analyses the data and presents in a bar graph.

4.2.1.1 The Strategy of Using a Dictionary

As described in Chapter 3, the adapted framework included only one type of determination strategy, which was the strategy of using a dictionary. Figure 4.1 below shows the number of participants from the intervention group who selected each of three response options whereas Figure 4.2 shows the number of participants from the control group who selected each of these three responses.

Figure 4.1: Determination Strategy by Intervention Group
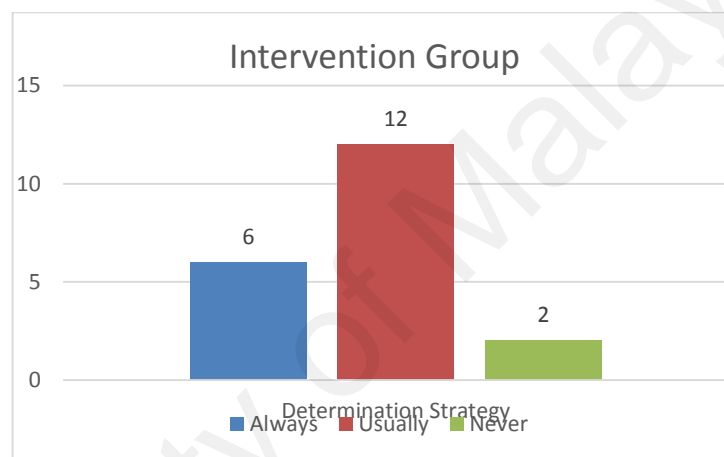
Figure 4.2: Determination Strategy by Control Group

Control Group

As shown in Figure 4.1, the participants from the intervention group reported that they had started using the dictionary to look up a word's meaning after the intervention sessions. It was discovered that 60% (12/20) of the students from the intervention group opted for the "usually" option in the questionnaire and 30% (6/20) students reported they always use dictionaries to look up word definitions.

On the other hand, the responses participants from the control group, which did not receive any intervention sessions, claimed the opposite of what was reported by the intervention group. In the control group, 50% (10/20) of the participants stated that they had never used a dictionary and 25% (5/20) of the participants stated they usually look up the meaning of words in a dictionary.

From the results shown in the two figures, it is apparent that the intervention session which was conducted has benefited the participants as they have learnt a new strategy which could help them in future to learn vocabulary. The participants from the intervention group started to apply the strategy they had been introduced to, in order to learn vocabulary better.

The strategy of using dictionary has implications for teaching and learning. From the experience of the researcher, lower primary students whose proficiency in English is low tend to be inaccurate guessers. Thus, the use of a dictionary can be helpful to such learners as it is essential for vocabulary learning. Knight (1994) stated, in her study on dictionary

use in L2 contexts, that low ability participants gained more from dictionary use, while high ability participants gained more from contextual guessing. In the present study, the researcher discovered another interesting finding which is the high ability students tend to look up a word even if they had successfully guessed its meaning. Furthermore, the researcher also found out that learning vocabulary through the use of dictionary helped participants to improve their vocabulary. However, it was also observed that some participants found it difficult to look for word meanings as they were unaware of the possibility of multiple meanings of a word in the dictionary. The participants were then taught by their class teachers on the correct use of dictionary.

The researcher strongly believes that students should be encouraged to use a dictionary when needed. By making the effort to look for a word's meaning in the dictionary, learners can improve their vocabulary knowledge. This may help learners to have more motivation when learning vocabulary. According to Huang & Eslami (2013), participants' vocabulary improved after the use of dictionary to learn vocabulary. Their findings highlighted the importance of dictionary use in decoding meaning, and the accuracy of sounding the words out in English, which correlates to this present study's findings.

4.2.2   Analysis of Cognitive Strategies

This section will discuss about cognitive strategies. The definition of cognitive strategies, as mentioned in Chapter Two, refers to strategies that do not engage learners in mental processing but is more mechanical means (Schmitt, 1997). The participants were asked to interpret the illustration for cognitive strategy and read the statement below it, which emphasises on the strategies of practising.

4.2.2.1 The Strategy of Practicing

As described in Chapter 3, the adapted framework in this research included only one type of cognitive strategy, which is the strategy of practicing by saying a word aloud. Figure 4.3 below shows the number of intervention participants who answered the questionnaire and Figure 4.4 shows the number of control groups' participants who answered the questionnaire.

Figure 4.3: Cognitive Strategy by Intervention Group
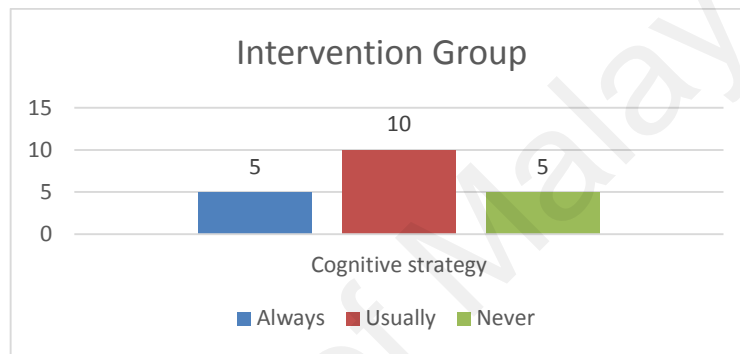
Figure 4.4: Cognitive Strategy by Control Group
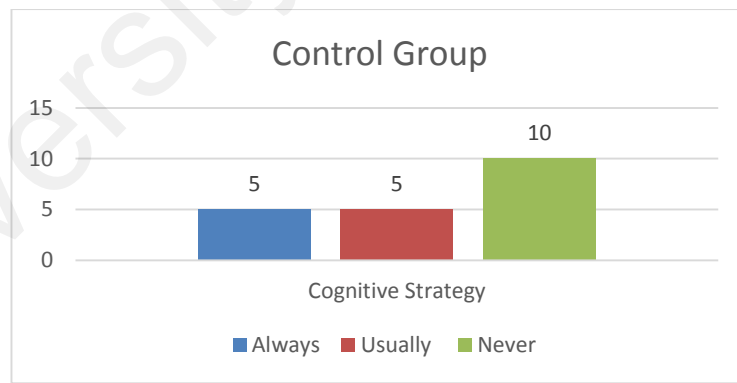
As shown in the figures, it is evident that participants from the intervention group will usually rehearse words by saying them aloud. Fifty percent (50%) of participants or 10 out of 20 from the intervention group reported "usually" using this strategy, whereas 25% (5/20) students from the control group reported they usually use the repeating aloud strategy even though no training was provided for them. In the task where the participants

were asked to learn the suffixes rules, the researcher realised that the participants preferred the strategy of saying words aloud in order to remember the suffixes rules.

Repeating words aloud helps retention far better than silent repetition. Kelly (1994), for example, studied three conditions; studying aloud, studying aloud with written recall, and studying silently, and found out that the first condition always produced better results than the other two. Kelly (1994) then studied the time for relearning after 2, 10 and 42 days and found again that learning aloud was much more efficient than the other two conditions.

The conclusion which can be drawn from the findings is that saying a word to remember it can help learners remember a word better. Behaviourism theory has also stated that language learning is the result of habit formation (Chuah, 2018). Thus, practise through repetition is required to achieve competence.

4.2.3 Analysis of Memory Strategy

This section will discuss about memory strategy. As mentioned in Chapter 2, memory strategies are strategies which involve the arrangement of words or expressions to form personally meaningful relationships to facilitate memory. Moreover, the materials to be reviewed must be significant to the learner. The participants were asked a question based on memory strategy, namely the strategy of creating mental linkages.

4.2.3.1 The Strategy of Creating Mental Linkages

The adapted framework in Chapter 3, included one type of memory strategy, which was the strategy of creating mental linkages, by associating or elaborating. Figure 4.5 below shows the number of participants from the intervention group who selected each

of three response options whereas Figure 4.6 shows the number of participants from the control group who selected each of these three responses.

Figure 4.5: Memory Strategy by Intervention Group
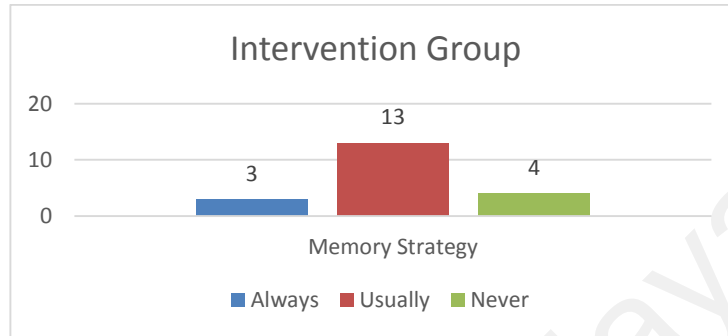
Figure 4.6: Memory Strategy by Control Group
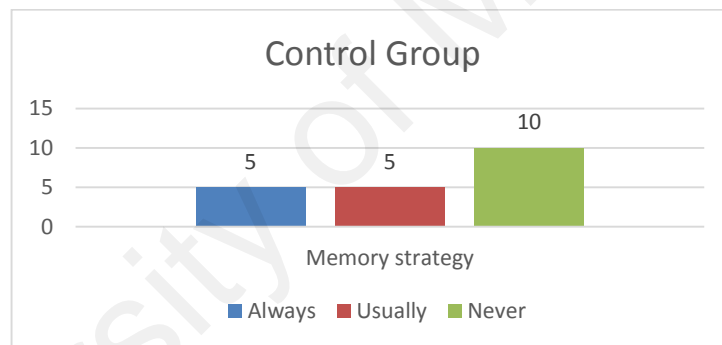
Some 65% (13/20) of participants reported that they usually used the associating and elaborating strategy, while 15% (3/20) participants said that they always used this strategy. From the findings obtained from the questionnaire, it is evident that some students prefer using the strategy of associating and elaborating as it helps them to relate to their prior knowledge. For instance, a student in kindergarten may have learnt the word "test". As they progress to the lower primary, they learn a new word like "examination", which is associated with school test; and eventually in the upper primary they become aware of the word "position" which is associated with "school-test-examination-position".

Other researches has also shown that the use of association and elaboration strategy benefits vocabulary learning (Perez L., 2017). For example, Cohen and Aphek (1980) demonstrated the effectiveness of association strategy and Atay and Ozbulgan (2017) discovered that grouping and imagery strategies were preferred by their group of ESL learners. However, these researchers did point out that most of the participants from the research did not consciously employ memory strategy until they were informed at the end of the research (Alvira R., 2017)

Oxford (1990) points out that memory strategies help learners to remember large amounts of vocabulary but many either do not use them or whose who do, especially those who have achieved a certain level of competency, might be unconscious of how often they employ them. This is reflected in in the present study, with 10% (4/20) of participants from the intervention group reporting the least use of this strategy. The students have a high proficiency in English. Therefore, it is most probable that their use of strategies had become automatic and were unreported.

4.2.4 Analysis of Metacognitive Strategy

This section will discuss about metacognitive strategy. As mentioned in Chapter 2, metacognitive strategies are those which enable learners to coordinate their own learning process so that the learning is effective. The metacognitive strategy investigated in the questionnaire was evaluating one's learning.

4.2.4.1 The strategy of evaluating one's learning

The adapted framework in chapter 3 included only one type of metacognitive strategy, which was the strategy of evaluating one's learning by taking a word test. Figure 4.7

below shows the responses obtained from the participants in the intervention group and Figure 4.8 shows the responses from the participants in the control group.

Figure 4.7: Metacognitive Strategy from Intervention group

Figure 4.8: Metacognitive Strategy from Control group

As shown in Figure 4.7 and 4.8, the participants from the intervention and control group reported using the evaluating strategy. It was observed that 25% (5/20) of participants from the intervention group mentioned that they always use this strategy and another 25% (5/20) of intervention participants usually use this strategy. On the other hand, the participants from the control group reported that 35% (7/20) of the students stated that they always use this strategy. Hence, the findings show that the participants were aware of the need to use the strategy as it is likely that participants' awareness of metacognitive strategy was due to their maturity in learning. However, the participants will need to use more of this strategy as it could facilitate their learning. It was inferred that, the participants were probably motivated to work towards the upcoming assessment

week which was scheduled to be held during Term 3 of their Year 2 school year. This assessment is crucial as it assesses the final academic achievement of a student who has gone through all three terms of Year 2 in the international school.

To conclude, the strategy of evaluating one's learning have some implications; on teaching and learning. Generally, it has been shown that the participants were attempting to take charge of their own learning. This could be prompted by instrumental motivation, since the participants need to do well in the assessment which they will be taking in Term 3 and may therefore be consciously keeping track of their progress.

4.2.5 Analysis of Social Strategy

This section will discuss about social strategy. As mentioned in Chapter 2, social strategies involve interacting with other people. An example of social strategy used to consolidate the word is collaborative learning group in which students practise the meaning of words as well as discovering words. The participants of this research were encouraged to work collaboratively with their group members during vocabulary learning.

4.2.5.1 Strategy of Cooperating with Peers

As described in Chapter 3, the adapted framework included only one type of social strategy, which involved cooperating with peers. Figure 4.9 below shows the responses obtained from the participants in the intervention group and Figure 4.10 shows the responses received from the participants in the control group.
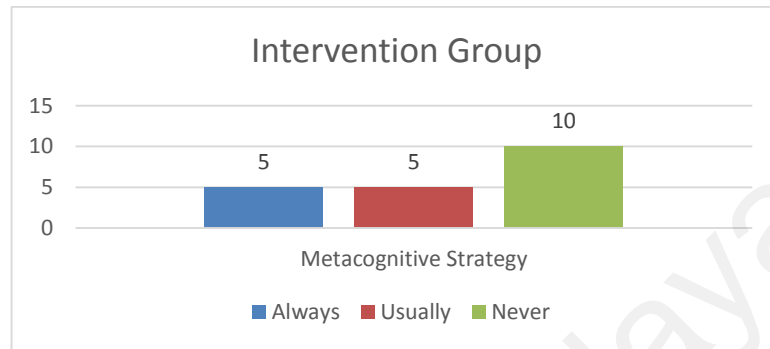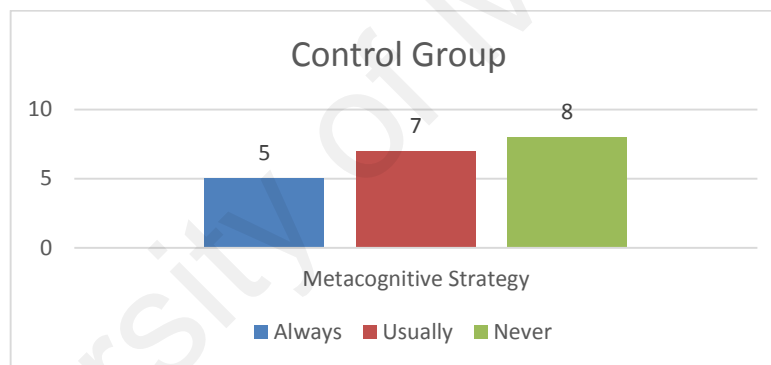
Figure 4.9: Social Strategy from the Intervention Group
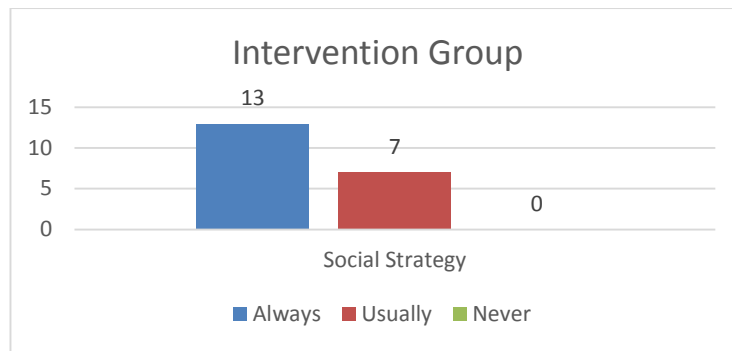
Figure 4.10: Social Strategy from the Control Group
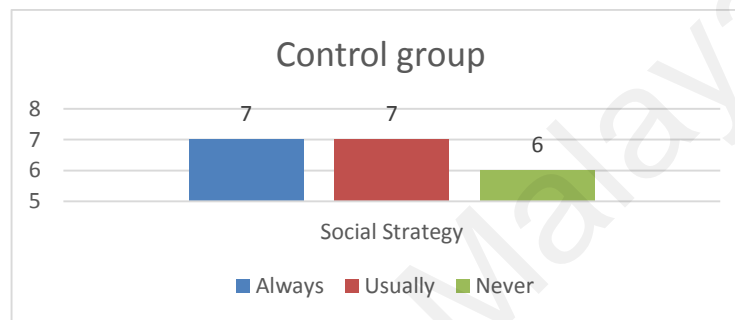
In the intervention group, 65% (13/20) of participants reported that they always used the social strategy because they liked learning by cooperating with peers. The findings indicate that the participants were prepared to work in groups and they liked an element of fun and competitiveness in their work. Oxford (1990, p.46) stated that "Cooperation implies the absence of competition and presence of group spirit. The effects are 'positive interdependence' and mutual support, higher self-esteem, increased confidence and enjoyment." Cooperative strategies have been proven to enhance learning in a variety of reading comprehension tasks (Danserean et al., 1983). However, not all pupils were receptive to this style. According to Cook, introverts would most likely prefer a teaching method that emphasises individual learning and language knowledge while the extroverts would prefer communicative language teaching which emphasises group participation.

To conclude, social strategies have various implications for teaching and learning. Teachers have to be aware of the different personalities and preferred learning styles

across their students, and provide a variety of teaching styles to meet these different learning needs. Reid (1998, p.83) as cited by Chu (2011, p.87) stated that "pupils must be helped to investigate and identify their learning styles and expand their repertoires in order to become more autonomous in their learning". Furthermore, learners who are adaptable to a wide range of learning methods and styles will gain more than less adaptable learners due to the experience and benefits that each methodology may bring. For instance, learners' reading comprehension tasks were enhanced by using cooperative strategies while individual work trains learners to be self-reliant, stay focused to complete a goal and manage time effectively and efficiently.

4.3   Analysis of the percentage of strategies used by participants from intervention group

The returned questionnaires were tallied and tabulated and percentages were used to identify if there was any correlations between participants' proficiency level and vocabulary learning strategies. In this section, the researcher described the highest, lowest and average numbers in each group. After that, the researcher compared these findings across the control and treatment group. (Please refer to Table 4.1.)

Table 4.1: Percentage of strategies used by participants– Intervention group.

Strategies	Determination			Social			Cognitive			Memory			Metacognitive		
Levels/ Proficiency	H	M	L	H	M	L	H	M	L	H	M	L	H	M	L
Always	3	2	1	2	5	5	2	2	1	3	3	0	2	0	0
Usually	2	4	3	3	2	2	3	2	3	2	3	3	3	2	0
Never	0	1	3	0	0	0	0	1	3	0	1	4	0	5	7
Total	5	7	7	5	7	7	5	7	7	5	7	7	5	7	7
Total strategies used	15			19			13			14			7		
% of strategies used	75			95			65			70			28		

As shown in Table 4. 1, social strategy was reported to be the preferred strategy chosen by the participants. The results of this findings indicates that the participants were prepared to work in groups and they prefer the element of socialising and cooperating with their peers while learning vocabulary. The findings of this research support the findings of the study conducted by Schmitt (1997) in Japan. In Schmitt's study, the Japanese students preferred the use of social strategy over the other strategies. According to Nation and Dansereau (1988), students working with each other in finding new word meaning or retrieving vocabulary is a good sign of cooperative learning that stimulates active processing of information and encourages them to reinforce their learning by collaborating in classroom.

The other strategy which is the determination strategy was also opted by the participants. The strategy recorded 75% of strategies used. The participants preferred the strategy of discovering meaning of unknown words by using determination strategy.

This reflects that the participants show some sort of independence by using determination strategy. When they encounter unknown word, those students attempt first using the strategy before resorting to another alternative.

4.4 Analysis of the percentage of strategies used by participants from control group

In this section, comparisons are made between the highest, lowest and average number of strategies employed by the participants from the control group (see Table 4.2)

Table 4.2 Percentage of strategies used by participants – Control group

Strategies	Determination			Social			Cognitive			Memory			Metacognitive		
Levels/ Proficiency	H	M	L	H	M	L	H	M	L	H	M	L	H	M	L
Always	2	1	0	1	0	0	1	1	0	0	1	0	0	0	0
Usually	1	2	1	0	1	2	0	0	0	1	1	1	0	1	0
Never	0	6	7	2	8	6	2	7	8	2	6	7	2	7	8
Total	3	3	1	2	1	2	2	1	0	5	7	7	0	1	0
Total strategies used	7			5			3			4			1		
% of strategies used	35			25			15			20			5		

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As shown in Table 4.2, the highest number of strategies used by participants from the control group was with 35% which was on determination strategy, while the lowest number of strategies used was with 5% of metacognitive strategies. It is probable that the control group participants were not able to use vocabulary learning strategies as they had not been introduced to them.

The participants used between 5% and 95% of the listed strategies, giving an average of only 2% strategies per students. The large gap between the control and intervention group is evident via the analysis of the questionnaire as many participants from the control have not used strategies during their learning process.

Tables 4.1 and 4.2 show the two most common strategies employed by the participants. After receiving the intervention, the participants tended to use vocabulary learning strategies in their learning. The three most common strategies used by participants were the determination strategy and social strategy. This addresses the first research question, which seeks to identify the vocabulary learning strategies employed by the Year Two international primary school students. The determination strategy, specifically, using a dictionary, was a preferred strategy employed by the participants. The role of dictionary use in building learners' vocabulary and language skills has been discussed in the literature, with many studies showing that L2 dictionary use improves reading comprehension and could lead to lexical development (Prichard, 2008). Moreover, three studies by Summers (1998) found that L2 learners who made use of a dictionary scored significantly better on post-reading comprehension and vocabulary tests. In a study of nearly 300 Japanese learners of English, the experimental group with access to dictionaries while reading scored significantly better than the control group on a vocabulary post-test (Luppescu & Day, 1993). In another study involving 112 learners

of Spanish (Knight, 1994), learners who had access to a dictionary scored higher on post-reading comprehension and vocabulary tests. All these studies indicated that the employment of determination strategy improves learners' vocabulary skills.

The participants of this research also preferred the social strategy over the other strategies as they prefer interacting with their peers. This finding is similar to that of Puagsang (2017), who found that vocational students tend to rely on social strategies. Moreover, Cheng, Weng and Zakhrova (2013) found that even though students prefer to use social strategies to learn vocabulary, they still need social support and interaction with each other to learn the vocabulary. Similarly, in the interview session which is explained in Section 4.5, five students reported that their teachers created a relaxed classroom atmosphere in which they felt comfortable interacting with others.

4.5 Analysis of the percentage of strategies used based on participants' proficiency level

This section discusses further about the second research question. The researcher intended to identify how the proficiency level of participants affects the vocabulary learning strategies employed by them. The findings were discovered from one of the instrument of this research which is the pictorial questionnaire. Participants from both, intervention and control group selected their favourite vocabulary learning strategies. Table 4.3 below shows the percentage and mean of strategies used by participants according to their proficiency level.

Table 4.3: Percentages and mean of strategies used by participants according to their proficiency level.

Strategies/ Mean	Poor	Medium	Excellent	Total Percentages
Determination	0.57	0.85	1	75%
Cognitive	0.47	0.55	1	50%
Memory	0.42	0.85	1	70%
Metacognitive	0	0.28	0.6	25%
Social	1	1	1	95%

Based on the findings in Table 4.3, it is observed that one of the most frequently used strategies by all participants was learning vocabulary via social interaction with their friends. The mean recorded by all the proficiency groups is 1, which indicates that nearly every participant of this research used the social strategy while learning vocabulary. It was found by Bahanshal (2015) that language learners prefer to seek others' help while learning vocabulary and it was proven in his research that the participants who used the social strategy benefited tremendously.

The other most frequently used strategy commonly shared by all participants was the determination strategy. Seventy-five percent (75%) of the participants from all proficiency groups reported that they liked using the dictionary to learn vocabulary. According to Tomaszcyzky (1979), the use of dictionary by second language learners generally increases the knowledge of the target language; therefore, using a dictionary to learn vocabulary brings progress to language learners.

The fourth type of strategy for vocabulary learning is cognitive strategy, which involves memorisation of new words by reading them aloud. 70% of participants stated that they rely on cognitive strategy. Researchers have confirmed in their studies that

reading aloud affects the development of vocabulary (Purcell-Gates, McIntyre & Freppon, 1995; Whitehurst et al., 1999; Beck, McKeown, Kucan, 2002; Brabham & Lynch – Brown, 2002; Collins, 2005) and increases language learners' ability to recognise words (Stahl, 2003).

Waring (2002) stated that using synonyms and antonyms to learn a new word is very beneficial to language learners. Unfortunately, most of this study's participants did not show much interest in this cognitive strategy, whereby only 50% of the participants reported that they usually use this strategy. Having this in mind, language learners should be encouraged to try to find a link between the spelling and their knowledge of a word.

The least frequently used strategy by the participants of this research is the metacognitive strategy. Only about 25% of participants reported using the metacognitive strategy while learning vocabulary. The result of this finding is similar to the results of a study conducted by Schmitt (1997), which demonstrated that metacognitive strategies are less frequently used by participants.

As seen in Table 4.3, significant differences in the use of strategies have been identified, with higher proficiency students stating more frequent use of the strategies when compared to lower proficiency students.

The students with high proficiency stated a larger percentage of frequent use of five strategies across the questionnaire, than did the low proficiency students. Similarly, a larger percentage of the medium proficiency students reported high use of the strategies when compared to the lower proficiency students. The pattern of variation in students' frequent use of vocabulary learning strategies reveals that the high proficiency students reported engaging various types of strategies, mostly for self-directed vocabulary learning, which was greater than both the medium and low proficiency students.

In conclusion, the analysis suggests that the participants from high proficiency group used a wider range of vocabulary learning strategies. These results concur with those of other researchers, as explained earlier. In this research, analysis and study of vocabulary learning strategies are more meaningful at the level of the individual learner. Thus, the percentages do not mean much; likewise, proficiency may not be a determining factor in the use of strategies.

4.6   Data from Interview

The type of interview selected depends to a degree on the nature of the topic and exactly what a researcher wants to find out (Bell 1999, p.139). In the current research, semi-structured interviews were used as the supplementary instrument in the process of data collection, in order to elicit the vocabulary learning strategies employed by the Year 2 primary students. The data obtained through the open-ended interviews was used to generate and identify the types of vocabulary learning strategies which were frequently used by the students. The researcher used open-ended interviews to attain qualitative data from individuals. Each question in the interview were created and used in order to elicit information on how learners learn vocabulary. Both groups were interviewed to obtain data from the interview sessions. The data obtained from the treatment group aided the researcher to answer the second research question which is to what extent does the level of students' proficiency affect the vocabulary learning strategies employed by students. The researcher included a crucial question as the first question of the interview which was on the time spent by the participants to learn new words. The researcher wanted to identify the opportunity obtained by the participants when learning new vocabulary with the strategies the participants can use when learning vocabulary. Question two onwards

focusses on the vocabulary learning strategies. The responses received from all six participants were transcribed and described as below:

1. How much time do you spend on learning new words in and outside class?

The majority of the participants reported that they hardly learn new words outside classroom. It was difficult for them to learn new words as they did not come across them often nor use them for daily conversation. Second, most participants had parents who do speak English; however, they do not use the correct pronunciation while speaking. Thirdly, opportunities for learning vocabulary were minimal as some children did not like to watch English television programmes at home. Fourth, the majority of the participants had little interest in reading English storybooks. Some participants commented that they preferred playing with their Lego games instead of reading. Fifth, some participants mentioned that it took a lot of effort to learn the spellings of new words. Lastly, Participant 4 and 5 agreed that they should be taught the correct pronunciation of words; for example, /strength/ was pronounced as /st/ren/.

The findings above show that learners lack opportunities for vocabulary input and output. Some learners lack vocabulary learning strategies to help with spelling and memory. From the researcher's experience, participants who have the knowledge of phonics do better in spelling, reading and pronunciation compared to those who do not. However, an in-depth study is required to confirm this observation. Lastly, teachers need to emphasise the correct pronunciation and be further trained if necessary for this oral task as mispronunciation can lead to miscommunication and eventually the breakdown of communication.

2. What do you do when you meet a new word?

Participant 1 and 4 reported that before the intervention activities were conducted, they tended to ignore any new words that they came across. After learning the strategies, participants 1, 4, 5 and 6 mentioned that they now knew how to "tackle" new words. A few of them preferred using a dictionary even though it is time-consuming. Participant 3, who is from the high proficiency group, stated that "when I use a dictionary, I feel I am more independent." Participant 5 from the low proficiency group also mentioned that when she meets a new word, she will usually get her teacher's assistance to learn the meaning and pronunciation of the words.

3. What do you do to study and remember a new word?

The participants in the school have spelling test every Friday. It is therefore a must for them to remember those words allocated for each week. The spelling list changes every week; therefore, the students have the opportunity to encounter new words.

Participant 6, from the high proficiency group, stated that "every week there will be some new words for me to learn and my parents are always busy to help me, so I use "look, cover and say" method to remember the words. The "look, cover, say" method refers to cognitive strategy whereby the students will read the words aloud to memorise them. Participant 4, who is from Singapore, mentioned that she usually uses a bilingual dictionary on her IPad to translate English words to Mandarin when she is unable to understand the meaning of those words.

4. Do you think the method(s) is/are effective to help you remember a new word?

Participant 2,3 and 6 agreed that the cognitive strategy worked for them to learn a new word. Participant 6 from the high proficiency group also mentioned that in order for him to learn a new word, he needed to link the new word he had learnt with

something he knew. For example, to learn the word /cucumber/ he would link it with /sandwich/ as it is one of the ingredients for a sandwich. As can be seen, some participants preferred the memory strategy over the cognitive strategy. Participant 1 and 4 from the low proficiency group mentioned that they always linked new words to their synonyms. They explained that their parents or previous teachers had always used that method, so they found it easier to recall.

5. Do you find repeatedly spelling the word in your mind useful/not useful? Why?

This interview question provided an interesting insight when the variable of this research is related to the participants' proficiency level. There were a few Malaysian respondents (Participant 1, 4 and 6) for this interview. All Malaysian respondents regardless of their proficiency level agreed that they could only learn a new word by repeatedly spelling it in their mind. It is clear that the respondents preferred the memory strategy when it comes to remembering a new word.

One Indian respondent (Participant 5) who has low proficiency in English disagreed with the memory strategy. He said that he found it difficult to remember when he used this strategy. The high proficiency respondents (Participant 3 and 6) hated the memory strategy and classified it as "headache' to them as they believed it was very stressful. Words had been introduced to them via phonics. Therefore, they preferred to sound the words out using phonics while writing it down, rather than memorise the word. A respondent said the following: "when I sound out the words, I know I am spelling the word correctly."

6. Do you find analysing the word by breaking the word into sound segments useful/not useful?

It is a common practice in international schools to teach children new words via phonics. The participants from the higher and medium proficiency group used this strategy and were very familiar with it as it is widely practiced in the school and also at home. The low proficiency participants (Participant 1 and 5) were also exposed to phonics; however, they did not use the strategy at home with their parents as their parents may not have been familiar with it. Therefore, no low proficiency respondents preferred this method. Most participants did not prefer this strategy as they considered it stressful.

7. Do you find remembering words by doing a project useful/not useful? Why?

One of the intervention activities in this research involved asking participants to make illustrations of the new words they have learnt. This was a project to them. The low proficiency respondents (Participant 1 and 5) for this interview loved the strategy; however, they did not want to use that strategy very often as it was very time consuming. Participant 1 said, "I love to draw something which I know. It makes me to remember things, but I don't like to do it for so long." This research involved children aged seven and eight; therefore, it is understandable if the participants found doing a project troublesome.

8. Do you find asking classmates for the meaning of the word useful/not useful? Why?

All six participants from all proficiency level agreed that they favoured this strategy. The respondents loved interacting with their peers and they found asking a classmate for the meaning of the word very helpful. This is because they believed they could get a simpler and better understanding of a word, if their peers assisted them. These results are

similar to the results of a study by Schmitt (1997), which showed that social strategies are rather popular.

4.6.1   Coding Interview

Upon transcribing the responses received from the participants (Section 4.5), the researcher proceeded with analysing the data obtained by using thematic analysis. The data obtained were coded according to its particular codes. The table below explains further on the codes discovered from the interview.

Table 4.4: Codes from the Interview

Codes	Example
Category : Determination	
Code : No learning opportunity	"My parents cannot speak in English, so I have no one to talk to at home" (high proficiency)
Code : Interest	" I don't like reading storybooks, playing Lego is so much fun" (medium proficiency)
Code : Dictionary	"When I use a dictionary, I feel I am more independent." (low proficiency)
Category : Cognitive	
Code : Reading aloud	"I have to read loudly to remember a word. My tuition teacher said I will learn better if I read loudly." (high proficiency)
Code : Look, say, cover	"Every week there will be some new words for me to learn and my parents are always busy to help me, so I use "look, cover and say" (low proficiency)
Code: Notebook	"When I learn new word, I will write it on my notebook" (medium proficiency)
Category: Memory	
Code : Memorising	"I like to link the new word I learnt with something I know. For example, if I see the word /cucumber/, I

	must add it with /sandwich/ because it is one of the ingredients for a sandwich." (medium proficiency)
Code : Nationality	"In my old school in India, I usually use phonics to learn a new word." (low proficiency)
Code : Linking	"My teacher Ms ***, taught us synonym. So, I remember the word by thinking of the word with same meaning, but this is not my favourite way" (high proficiency)
Category : Social	
Code: Discussion	"I like when my teacher says that we can think, pair and share. I like to learn from my friends." (medium proficiency)
Code : Comfortable	"My friends are very nice to me. They always teach me when I don't know something." (low proficiency)
Code: Group work	"I like to discuss with my friends when we are doing group work. Sometimes, I learn new things from them." (high proficiency)
Category : Metacognitive	
Code : Test	"Test is difficult. My mummy will not be happy if I did not do well." (high proficiency)
Code: To remember the word	"The test we got during the special class was hard. I cannot remember the word." (medium proficiency)
Code: Hate exam	"I hate exam. I cannot do well when we have exam." (low proficiency)

As described in Table 4.4, it was discovered that rich insights to the vocabulary learning strategies were obtained from the interview data. Fifteen codes were identified in the data, which were grouped into five larger categories (determination, cognitive, social, memory and metacognitive strategy). The following sub-sections discusses further on the learning difficulties faced by students and strategies employed by students.

4.6.1.1 Vocabulary Learning Difficulties

Most of the participants, especially the higher proficiency ones, were aware that vocabulary learning is a complex task that may require different strategies. It is notable that all participants, irrespective of their language level, faced difficulties in understanding the meaning of 'unknown words' met in their task during intervention sessions. The researcher discovered a few challenges faced by the participants during the coding process. The list below describes the challenges faced by the participants in vocabulary learning.

a) Comprehending a text (intervention session 1) with a lot of unknown words, causing them a lot of uncertainty and lack of confidence;

b) Pronunciation; *"sometimes my mummy speaks English wrongly, like in school we say 'flour' as 'flower' but mummy say 'flah' so when I do spelling I get it wrong sometimes"*

c) Spelling *'sometimes my teacher use a different way to spell'*

d) Making mistakes and being reprimanded by the teacher.

Based on the four listed statements, the learners appeared to know why they faced difficulty while learning vocabulary. They were also aware of their anxiety when learning vocabulary. Although a certain amount of anxiety sometimes might help learners to reach their peak performance levels, too much anxiety blocks language learning (Griva et al., 2009).

4.6.1.2 Strategies

The students appeared to be able to articulate their processes reasonably fully and it was revealed that more than half of the young learners tried to devise certain vocabulary learning strategies to overcome some limitations and problems of vocabulary learning. Some significant differences were highlighted between the more and less competent learners. The higher proficiency participants employed a greater number of strategies compared to the lower proficiency participants, and used more elaborate strategies like 'linking with synonyms and antonyms and analysing the word using metacognitive strategy'. On the other hand, students with low proficiency level preferred using strategies like 'dictionary use and verbal repetition.'

It is worth mentioning that social strategy was the most frequently used strategy, employed by the vast majority of the participants irrespective of their language level. All six students claimed that they preferred to learn vocabulary via discussion with their friends; "*I like when my teacher says that we can think, pair and share. I like to learn from my friends*". For example, Participant 5 declared, *My friends are very nice to me. They always teach me when I don't know something*", which indicates that the child is happy learning vocabulary within his or her comfort zone. Participant 4 stated that "*When I discuss with my friends about a lesson, we both teach and learn each other like yesterday I taught *** the word invisible and she taught me the word fiction*".

It is also noteworthy that most participants consulted a dictionary to find out the meaning of a word they met while learning English. Participant 5, who is from the low proficiency group, claimed the following: "*When I use a dictionary, I feel I am more independent*". In fact, 'looking up every word in a dictionary', was considered to be the most useful technique and a favourite strategy by a great number (28/40) of participants, irrespectively their proficiency level. Participant 6, a student with high proficiency in

English, explained his perspective as follows, *"I always keep a dictionary next to me when I'm writing in English so that I can always check to do my work correctly".*

Cognitive strategies, which involve verbal repetition and also using vocabulary notebooks, were recorded as one type of strategy applied by both low and medium proficiency students. Participant 6 said, *"every week there will be some new words for me to learn and my parents are always busy to help me, so I use "look, cover and say".* Participants 5, from the low proficiency group, mentioned the following: *"When I learn new word, I will write it on my notebook".*

A few students from the low and medium proficiency group preferred the use of memory strategy. For instance, Participant 6 declared *"I like to link the new word I learnt with something I know. For example, if I see the word /cucumber/, I must add it with /sandwich/ because it is one of the ingredients for a sandwich"* and *"in my old school in India, I usually use phonics to learn a new word."* However, Participant 3 from the high proficiency group stated that he used memory strategy but it was not one of his favourite strategies.

With reference to metacognitive strategies, most students, especially the more competent ones, showed some understanding of the control they have over their own cognition. However, the data showed that metacognitive strategies were underused compared to all other four strategies. They were aware of the ways to develop English vocabulary and for this purpose, they declared they sought to improve their English by using other vocabulary learning strategies. Moreover, many participants felt that answering the word test was not easy. For example, one of the participants from the high proficiency group mentioned the following: *"Test is difficult. My mummy will not be happy if I did not do well".* The participants were also asked if they liked the method of analysing words using their sound segments, which is a metacognitive strategy that

involves phonics. The participants from the low proficiency group did not prefer this strategy even though they were exposed to phonics at school.

In summary, the findings of the interviews shows that the students do use vocabulary learning strategies unconsciously. Generally, these learners get plenty of opportunity for vocabulary input and output. However, they need to be taught vocabulary learning strategies to help them overcome their challenges in learning new words.

4.7   Pre –test Scores

Before conducting the intervention activities with the treatment group, the researcher distributed a pre-test for participants in both groups. The pre-test consisted of ten fill-in-the-blanks questions with the target words listed on the top of the page. Participants were required to decide which words suit the sentences the best. Both the groups got a chance to answer the pre-test because the researcher wanted to check the difference after the intervention activities were conducted. Table 4.5 below shows the mean and standard deviation derived from the pre-test results answered by participants in both groups.

Table 4.5: Pre-test results

Groups	Mean	Standard Deviation
Experimental	5.75	3.29962119
Control	5.85	3.166622807

The participants from the experimental group scored a mean of 5.75, which was lower than the mean of the control group. After the pre-test, the participants from the experimental group underwent the intervention sessions whereas the participants from the control group were not given any intervention and classes went on as usual for them.

4.8   Post-test Results

The third research question, which is "To what extent does knowledge of vocabulary learning strategies aid students in comprehending meaning of words?" is answered in this section by the aid of independent sample t-test.

Both groups were given the chance to answer the pre-test and post-test questions. The purpose of conducting the pre-test and post-test is to check whether there are any improvements by participants after receiving the intervention. The independent sample t-test was administered in order to determine if there is a significant difference between the means of two pre-test and post-test. Table 4.6 below summarises descriptive statistics on the post-test results.

Table 4.6: t-test results

Groups	N	Mean	SD	P	t
Intervention	20	8.9	2.165640783		
				0.0008	3.6583
Control	20	6.35	2.242208732		

Table 4.6 reveals the participants' performance from intervention and control group on the post-test with respect to vocabulary learning. The mean recorded for the pre-test results by the experimental group was 5.75 and after the treatment group had received the intervention, the post-test recorded a mean of 8.9. There was a significant difference in the scores for intervention (M=8.9, SD= 2.17) and control group (M=6.35, SD= 2.24), t= 3.66. The recorded p value is p= 0.0008, which indicates strong evidence against null hypothesis. The difference between the pre-test and the post-test scores of the intervention group who were taught the strategies points at the effect of vocabulary learning strategies

on improving vocabulary learning. These results suggest that vocabulary learning strategies does have an effect on aiding students in comprehending the meaning of words.

As it can be observed from Table 4.6, the participants' performance in the intervention group did improve as a result of vocabulary learning strategies intervention sessions. This is to say, considering vocabulary learning and intervention, the difference between the two groups of the study was statistically significant on the post-test. In sum, the results of the research obtained from t-test revealed that the intervention group of this research did improve in the post-test with respect to the intervention sessions. This finding answers the third research question of this study; which is knowledge of vocabulary learning strategies helps learners better in comprehending meaning of words. The intervention sessions provided participants more knowledge on new words and how to comprehend meaning of words. After the intervention session, participants from the intervention group could answer the post-test and performed well compared to their pre-test results.

This finding corresponds to the findings of other studies investigating the effects of strategy use on language learning. A significant correlation between success in language learning and frequency of strategy use was found by Aziz (2007). Demirel's research (2012) also suggests that the success of students in foreign language examinations increased when they used the vocabulary learning strategies more often. Moreover, Saricoban and Saricaoglu (2008) found a significant correlation between use of vocabulary learning strategies and academic success, while Takac (2008) and Hatch (2000) also note a correlation between success in vocabulary learning and vocabulary learning strategies.

In sum, the finding that the intervention contributed to the participants' improvement in vocabulary knowledge is further corroborated by comparing the pre and post-test results of the control group. In this group, the pre-test mean was 5.85 and the post-test

was 6.35. This shows slight progress between pre-test and post-test even though the participants from the control group did not receive any intervention. After the data analysis, the researcher taught the intervention programme to the participants in the control group to ensure every participant in this research received equal support and benefit.

4.9 How Students' Proficiency Level Affects the Use of Vocabulary Learning Strategies

The link between students' proficiency level and their use of vocabulary learning strategies is supported by a considerable amount of evidence (Siriwan, 2007; Lachini, 2007; Hamzah, Kafipour & Abdullah, 2009; Kafipour, Yazdi, Soori & Shokrpour, 2011; Waldvogel, 2011; and Tilafarlioglu & Bozgeyik, 2012). The findings of these previous studies have revealed the differences in vocabulary learning strategies use among students with low and high proficiency level. The findings of the present study are consistent with these previous studies in that students with high and low proficiency level reported employing vocabulary learning strategies differently.

The current study found that the participants of different proficiency levels employed different vocabulary learning strategies, and beliefs about the usefulness of particular strategies also differed. Taking into consideration that the participants in this study were from a wide range of language proficiency levels, from poor to excellent, the researcher strongly believes that the participants use the strategies based on their proficiency level.

The first possible explanation is that students who already have a high proficiency level are presumably more motivated. According to Ushioda (2008), good language

learners are motivated. Motivation is dealing with 'what moves a person to make certain choices, to engage in action, and to persist in action' (Ushioda, 2008 p.19). In the present study, a greater percentage of high proficiency level students reported high use of vocabulary strategies than those with medium and low proficiency. This implies that students with high proficiency are likely to have personal motivation that drives them to engage in actions or behaviours regarding vocabulary learning and persist in these actions or behaviours more frequently. Students' motivation has also been found to be positively correlated with their use of vocabulary learning strategies (Fu, 2003; Marttinen, 2008). Motivation is considered one of the three essential variables on which good language learning depends (Rubin, 1975). In the present study, personal motivation is assumed to be one of the factors that drive high proficiency students to employ vocabulary learning strategies significantly differently from moderate and low proficiency students.

Another possible explanation for higher use of vocabulary learning strategies by highly proficient participants is variations in learning style. 'Learning styles are moderately strong habits rather than intractable biological attributes, and thus they can be modified and extended' (Reid, 1987, p.10). Chapelle and Roberts (1986) point out that good language learners are flexible in adapting their learning style to the needs of a given situation or task, while less successful learners are less likely to adapt their learning style when a specific need arises and more likely to persist with a particular style. It can be clearly seen by the vocabulary learning strategies used by individual participants that students with high proficiency seem to be more adaptive than the other students in employing techniques or strategies to deal with vocabulary items.

Based on the findings of this study, social strategies seemed to be a very useful, especially for language classes comprising mixed-proficiency students. In such classrooms, English teachers may contribute to "academic" and general vocabulary

proficiency of their students by training them in social strategies and giving them more opportunities to learn vocabulary using their speaking skills. As Torun (2010) suggests, using these means ensures that L2 learners make use of certain vocabulary learning strategies.

A more likely explanation is the high awareness of vocabulary learning of students in a high proficiency group. When taking a closer look at frequency of the individual vocabulary learning strategy levels, it was found that compared to moderate and low proficiency students, a greater percentage of students with high proficiency try to put themselves in an environment where they can learn vocabulary items, such as conversing with friends to retain knowledge on newly-learnt vocabulary items and linking newly learnt words with something they already know. Moreover, the high proficiency students try to make use of the resources, including human and material resources to help facilitate their vocabulary learning. It can be seen that a greater percentage of students with high proficiency level reported significantly used a wider variety of vocabulary learning strategies, for example, 'using a dictionary to look for the word's meaning' and 'creating their own notebook on the learnt vocabulary words'. The high awareness of vocabulary learning among high proficiency students might have contributed towards the high frequency and variety in their use of vocabulary learning strategies.

4.10   Other Potential Factors Affecting VLS Choice

Among the determining factors in the choice of strategies used by participants are the personality and the preferred learning style of individual learners. The strategy of practising naturalistically is popular among the participants. This may be attributable to their age, as proposed by Krashen (1982), who stated that the affective filter of young learners is low, however it will increase sharply after puberty. In classrooms in any

international school, students are always encouraged to perform group work by discussing lessons with their friends. This approach indirectly encourages learners to use the social strategy while learning. Although, conversing with peers is a good strategy to improve their vocabulary, not all learners are receptive to the social strategy of cooperating with others due to their preferred learning style and personality. While extroverts enjoy communicative language learning that emphasises group participation and social know-how, introverts would prefer a teaching method that calls for individual learning and language knowledge.

Another example of individual preferred learning style can be seen in the strategy of using phonics. Segmenting words to into sound is a very popular teaching strategy in the UK for the improvement of literacy skills among young learners. According to the UK National Curriculum (Department of UK Education, 2013), skilled word reading involves both the speedy working out of the pronunciation of unfamiliar printed words (decoding) and the speedy recognition of familiar printed words. Underpinning both is the understanding that the letters on the page represent the sounds in spoken words. This is why phonics should be emphasised in the early learning of reading and vocabulary to beginners. (Department of UK Education, 2013). Therefore, many international schools which employ the national curriculum of the UK embed the teaching of phonics in literacy lessons (Ministry of Education, 2013). Hence, students from international schools have some knowledge of phonics.

In order to improve vocabulary learning, a supportive home literacy environment is crucial because parental influence, through the modelling of phonics and encouragement in vocabulary, has been shown to foster a heightened degree of interest and achievement in vocabulary learning (Wigfield & Asher, 1984). Even for the young ESL learner who comes from a language-rich second language environment, literacy experiences may be

restricted if the adults in the home have limited English language proficiency (Kwan, 2005). The problem occurs when the phonics strategy which has been taught in school is not frequently practised at home as phonics is not a popular strategy among Asian learners as Asians are largely visual learners (Reid, 1995). This directly impacts the way Asian parents teach their child vocabulary.

It is also possible that culture affects strategy choice. The strategy of repeating or rote-memorising is highly used among the participants from Asia. This is because rote-memorising is the traditional concept of learning of across cultures (Penner, 1995). Lee (1993) states that rote-learning is more popular among successful Form 4 students in National Type schools in Penang, Malaysia.

It is generally accepted that the spaces in which people live and work affect them. People are likely to find soft colours soothing, clutter distracting and high temperature soporific. A study of the impacts of the built environment of UK primary schools (4-11 years old) on the vocabulary learning rates of students is the first study to identify the impact of the built environment on children's learning (Wall K.,2008). Six factors came out as particularly influential: light, choice of user, flexibility, connections (such as corridors and the way different areas fit together), complexity (for instance having different types of learning areas in a classroom) and colour (Barrett, 2003). Hence, having a good learning environment is also crucial to develop vocabulary learning skills.

Different approaches in vocabulary teaching across teachers can also affect the students' use of vocabulary learning strategies. Some teachers point out the importance of finding something that motivates and interests their students, and others vary their teaching in order to satisfy their students' needs. In doing so, the focus shifts from the teacher as primarily active role for transmitting knowledge to the students as productive and active participants (Lundahl, 2014, p.21). Teacher-centered approaches should be

replaced by student-centered approaches (Lin G., 2009) where interactive lessons should be carried out in order to provide opportunities to learners to use a wider range of vocabulary learning strategies. An effective interactive pedagogy for teaching vocabulary would one that stir the learners' desire of interacting with peers and make learners feeling relaxed so that they are able to learn vocabulary. The major elements of a successful vocabulary learning should be what River's (1987, 2000) emphasis of interactive approaches.

A learner's attitude towards learning is another factor which can affect the strategy choice. The findings of this study showed that some high and moderate proficiency students were keen learners who displayed the right attitude, and tended to employ the strategy of self–correction and evaluation (metacognitive strategies). In other words, they made the effort to complete all tasks given by the teacher correctly. However, the participants did not know how to plan and evaluate their learning nor were they aware of the importance of using the entire set of metacognitive strategies, which is essential for effective and efficient learning.

Lastly, the researcher believes that a learner's strategy choice can be affected by his awareness of the expectations others have of him. This could be parental expectations, the teacher's expectations, or the expectations of anyone who the learner looks up to. This can be seen in higher proficiency participants who were more aware of the expectations on them, more capable of controlling their emotional anxiety and hence more willing to employ the affective strategy of taking risks in carrying out a given task.

To sum up, the researcher has identified a few factors which can influence the choice of strategies employed by the participants. They include personality, preferred learning styles, culture, learning environment, level of English proficiency, attitude, motivation and the learner's awareness of the expectations on him or her.

4.11 Summary

Chapter 4 has presented the results of this study, obtained through the two-phases, which were the pre-test, intervention and post -test and the second phase was on subsequent data collection through questionnaire and interview. This chapter also discusses how students' proficiency level affects the use of vocabulary learning strategies. It also explores the other factors which affects the choice of vocabulary learning strategies.

The first phase of this study focusses on the effect of intervention sessions. Participants were given pre-test before the intervention sessions and after 8 weeks of the intervention sessions for the intervention group, participants from both groups were given post-test in order to record any difference in results. It was discovered that the intervention sessions benefited participants from the intervention group as there was significant difference in their post-test results compared to their pre-test.

The researcher attempted to systematically examine the variations in frequency of students' use of vocabulary learning strategies, as well as to consider these frequencies in relation to the students' proficiency. The data was collected through the pictorial questionnaire covering a total of five vocabulary learning strategies.

The research findings and discussion presented in this chapter can be summarised as follows:

1) Regarding the students' vocabulary learning strategies, participants from the study preferred the determination and social strategy the most.

2) Based on the questionnaire findings and interview, significant variations in frequency of the reported strategy use by the students were found in relation to the level of students' proficiency.

3) In respect of the students' level of proficiency, high proficiency students reported employing vocabulary learning strategies more frequently than those with both medium and low proficiency

4) There was a significant difference reported after the employment of vocabulary learning strategies by the participants from the intervention group.

The following chapter will conclude this dissertation by providing a summary of the study and its findings, discussing the implications of the findings and making some recommendations for future research.

CHAPTER 5: CONCLUSION

5.1   Introduction

Following the presentation and discussion of the findings in the previous chapter, this chapter will summarise the findings of this study, discuss the implications of these findings and make some recommendations, in order to conclude this thesis on vocabulary learning strategies among young ESL learners. This chapter is divided into five sections, namely, the research questions, the findings, the implications of the study, the limitations and the weaknesses of the study, and finally, the recommendations for further study.

5.2   Research Questions

The three research questions of this study are:

1. What are the vocabulary learning strategies employed by international primary school students?

2. To what extent does the students' proficiency affect the vocabulary learning strategies employed by students?

3. To what extent does knowledge of vocabulary learning strategies aid students in comprehending meaning of words?

5.3   Summary of Findings

The employment of the five vocabulary learning strategies by the Year 2 international primary students are presented below. This information shows the most common

vocabulary learning strategies among participants. It can also indicate which strategies should be taught and utilised more to enhance students' learning of vocabulary.

5.3.1   Vocabulary Learning Strategies used by the International Primary Students

To answer research question 1, the researcher compared the strategies employed by the participants. Out of the five strategies listed, a few strategies were commonly used by the participants. Detailed observation revealed the following:

1. The strategies which the Year 2 students reported using most frequently were the social strategy, determination strategy, cognitive strategy and memory strategy.

2. Based on the findings, the use of dictionary was a popular strategy among the participants, with 94% of the participants from the treatment group using this strategy when learning vocabulary.

3. The cognitive strategy, which involves reading the words aloud, was also a common strategy employed by the Year 2 ESL learners. This strategy choice is likely to be influenced by culture, learners' formed habits and attitudes, as will be discussed in Section 5.3.

4. Memory strategy, which involves relating the word to some previously learned words using imagery or grouping, was used by 90% of the participants from the treatment group. Memory strategy enables learners to study vocabulary in such a way that not only can they deal with the unknown words but they can also use them meaningfully in a context and have little chance to forget them.

5. The social strategy was recorded as the top strategy preferred by all six participants interviewed in the study. The findings indicate that the participants enjoyed working in groups with their peers.

6. The metacognitive strategy of testing oneself with a word test was reported as being the least frequently employed strategy by participants. Metacognitive strategy is basically defined as thinking about thinking (Harputlu & Ceylan, 2014). According to Magaldi (2010), the actual use of metacognition can only be achieved by supporting the use of metacognitive strategies, which will lead to learner autonomy. This is evident in the present research, as some of the participants employed metacognitive strategy by thinking independently to answer the questions from the word test correctly. The results of the word test also indicated that some of the students could not answer the questions from the word test correctly. It is probable that the young participants of this research were not aware of this conscious learning process by metacognitive strategy as metacognitive strategy allows learners use to control and evaluate their own learning.

The researcher concurs with Choo (1996) that there is indeed a progression in the use of strategies, starting from low level ones such as imagery, to those which require higher analytical skills, such as evaluating their own learning. Besides that, the researcher agrees that learners who have a greater awareness of their own learning use more learner-centred vocabulary learning strategies. In contrast to Chandrasegaran (1979), who says that besides using instrumental motivation, not much can be done to change a learners' attitude, the researcher believes that a certain amount of influence can be exerted by teachers and parents to create interest through various teacher and habit forming strategies. From the employment of such strategies, it is hoped that a positive attitude will be generated in learners towards the learning of English vocabulary.

In the next section, the researcher explores in detail research question 2, "*To what extent does the proficiency of students affect the vocabulary learning strategies employed by the second language learners in an international school?*".

5.3.2   How VLS Aid a Learner in Comprehending a Word

The current study employed a pre-test and a post-test to record whether any improvement could be observed after participants had been taught to employ vocabulary learning strategies. The mean of the pre-test results by the experimental group was 5.75 and the mean of the post-test results was 8.9, which indicated a significant improvement. On the other hand, the results obtained from the post-test based on control group shows the mean recorded was 6.35, which when compared to the pre-test which was 5.85. It is observed that the control group did not show significant progress.

The results from the pre-test and post-test from the intervention and control group indicate that vocabulary achievement and vocabulary learning strategies are correlated. This indicates that the intervention process which incorporated the vocabulary learning strategies helped the participants from the treatment group to better comprehend words and apply them to different learning tasks. The instructions given during the intervention also helped the students to know why, how and when to use the strategies. The post-test results showed that the participants in the intervention group used a wider range of vocabulary learning strategies to improvise in the post-test.

The intervention not only seems to have contributed to the improvement of students' vocabulary achievement, but it also appears to have improved their confidence, decreased their anxiety, and increased their motivation, interest and success in learning English language. This helped students be more independent and autonomous in learning, as some

of the participants mentioned during the interview process. One of the participants mentioned that by using the determination strategy, he feels more independent when doing a task. This suggests that training learners in language learning and strategy use may give them an active and responsible role in their own learning, and help them gain autonomy and become better learners. It can be implied from the results of this study that strategy training which the experimental group received contributed to the improvement of participants' vocabulary learning. This corroborates previous studies which have linked the use of vocabulary learning strategies to improvements in language learning skills such as reading comprehension (e.g., Tassana-ngam, 2005; Wharton, 2000; Wu, 2005).

5.4   Implications for English Language Teaching

The findings of this study have some implications for the teaching of English as a second language to young learners, specifically in terms of which vocabulary learning strategies are recommended to improve learners' achievement. Based on the study, the researcher recommends the following vocabulary learning strategies; cognitive, social, memory, metacognitive and social strategies to be taught to lower primary students.

The strategy of *saying aloud while writing (cognitive strategy)* was found to be the most superior among the three repeating strategies and appropriate for lower primary students. This is because research has indicated that the use of more senses in this form of shallow processing leads to better short-term memory retention (Gu, 2003b). Information stored in short-term memory through practising must be transferred to long-term memory and retrieved for use when the need arises. An effective way to do this is by using the *strategy of imagery (cognitive strategy),* which involves forming a mental picture of the word to be transferred or of its spelling. This is because the mind's storage

capacity for visual information is larger than that for verbal material, and visual images may be the most potent device to aid recall of verbal materials (Oxford, 1990). This strategy can be further developed by teaching the ***strategy of acoustic link (memory strategy)***, whereby the sound of the new English words is linked to a known sound of the L2 to assist long-term memory especially pronunciation. Currently, this strategy is rarely used because most Asians are visual learners (Reid, 1995b).

Most participants from this study employed ***the strategy of practising naturalistically (social strategy)***, indicating that this strategy is appropriate for such learners. Teachers can encourage the use of this strategy through active interactional activities in class such as role-play, discussions and drama. For the scripted role–plays and dramas, teachers can highlight to students that they are encouraged to paraphrase while retaining the meaning in the context. This enables spontaneous meaningful use of vocabulary and language to achieve competence and proficiency and ultimately boosts learners' confidence in language learning. Students enjoy such learning activities which can gradually encourage the participation of even the quiet ones (Chuah, 2008).

Besides that, ***the strategy on dictionary use*** (determination strategy) was also found to be frequently used by participants. To incorporate this strategy in their language lessons, the teacher should teach learners how to use a dictionary and ensure the dictionary is appropriate for the students' age. This essential strategy must be cultivated especially in low proficiency students who do not know enough words to understand what has been read. Furthermore, a dictionary may be the only help in a L2 speaker home to solve a student's English vocabulary problem. In order to employ dictionary use, students must also be taught the different 'parts of speech' to enable them to choose the correct meaning of the word based on its context.

Though it was found that participant least preferred the strategies of *reasoning deductively and analysing expressions (Metacognitive strategy),* the researcher believes that these strategies can be taught gradually from the lower primary years. The important consideration for teaching these strategies is to ensure that instruction is applicable to what the students have already been taught. For example, teachers need to teach word building by using affixation or adding 'ed' to regular past tense verbs first before introducing this strategy. In short, like other forms of instruction, strategies training must be at a level which is appropriate to a learner's age and use. Besides, Nation (1994) encourages using the strategy of deducing word meaning from word parts to check if a guess from a context is correct.

To conclude, the researcher has justified the need to teach various vocabulary learning strategies which are appropriate to the lower primary students. She has also explained the advantages for students to expand their learning style repertoires so that they can be flexible in their learning approach and benefit from any teaching style, consequently enhancing their vocabulary learning. While many of the listed strategies can be taught to lower primary students, the teaching of certain strategies should be approached carefully, with considerations made depending on the learners' proficiency levels.

The teaching of language and vocabulary learning strategies has been shown to facilitate language learning success. The purpose of these strategies is not only to enable learner to become more effective and efficient vocabulary learners but also to raise their awareness of possibility that they can be in control of their own learning process. While, it is the teacher's duty to expose them to as many strategies as possible, the choice of strategy use will ultimately be made by each individual.

5.4.1 Methodological Implication

The researcher intended to conduct her research on young ESL learners, however it could be a challenge for the researcher to obtain data from her young participants. Therefore, the researcher adapted Chuah (2008) instrument by using a pictorial questionnaire in order to obtain response from the young participants. The researcher only used a statement and a picture which relates very well to the statement, to gain the participants feedback on vocabulary learning strategies used.

In addition to that, the researcher used interview as another instrument in this research. The interview questions were rephrased and simplified from the adapted version obtain from Gu (1997). The researcher constantly tried to use child-friendly or simple language while interviewing the participants of the research. The instruments used in this research has allowed the researcher to successfully gain information from young respondents.

Schmitt's framework of vocabulary learning strategies was used in this research. However, the researcher adapted it because the participants of this research were young. The adapted framework of vocabulary learning strategies further corroborates by showing that Schmitt's categorisation of vocabulary learning strategies is also applicable to young learners in the Malaysian setting.

5.5 Limitations and Weaknesses of the Study

This study aims to discover the types of vocabulary learning strategies employed by ESL learners from an international school. This was done through an investigation of the vocabulary learning strategies employed by ESL students from an international school. While the findings have provided some useful information about vocabulary learning strategies, there are several limitations and weaknesses of the study. Firstly, the list of

strategies mentioned in this research is by no means exhaustive and it was hoped that any other strategies used were picked up in the open-ended interview. Secondly, the questionnaire was used as the main instrument for collecting data. It must be cautioned that there is always a certain degree of error in reporting and what is reported may not be what actually has taken place. Thirdly, the study limited the number of strategies taught during the intervention. Only one subcategory of each strategy was included in the intervention sessions due to the young age of the participants. The participants of this study were two intact groups from two classes. Each class consisted of 20 students. The small number of participants limits the strength of the findings. The findings are not generalisable to other learners. In addition, the time lapse between the pre-test and the post-test was only 10 weeks due to time constraints. Lastly, the researcher did not seek to ascertain the difference between national school and international school students.

The primary weakness of this study lies in the limited number of strategies which could not be expanded due to the high possibility of participants' unwillingness in answering a lengthy questionnaire. Nevertheless, the commonly used strategies of cognition, memory, determination, social and metacognitive were covered in the questionnaire. Likewise, these strategies can be expanded for example asking questions (pertaining to vocabulary learning when in doubt).

Secondly, the intervention session was only conducted for eight weeks and each session was limited to 60 minutes. The researcher realised that the participants from the intervention group were rushing for time to complete each intervention task. It would have been more beneficial if more time had been given to complete each task. Lastly, the gains between the pre-test and post-test could have been attributed to factors other than the intervention sessions. There are a few possible influences, such as repeated practise which can improve learners' knowledge.

5.6 Recommendations for Further Study

This research is a study of the process by which learning of vocabulary occurs in ESL primary international students through an investigation of vocabulary learning strategies employed by these students. Due to limitations on the number of the strategies that could be listed in the questionnaire, the researcher has inevitably focussed on five strategies' method. Further study is needed to gain a deeper appreciation of the wider range of vocabulary learning strategies that these students employ so as to train them in the use of those which are lacking. This is significant because the vocabulary learning strategies support each other and the use of both has to occur as learners accept increased responsibility for their own learning.

One of the primary objectives of a study on vocabulary learning strategies is to assist less successful English language learners. As this research was conducted with participants of mixed ability, future research could focus only on how less successful students utilise such strategies. This will shed some light on how best to train them in strategy use in order to become more successful vocabulary learners.

Oxford (1994) highlighted that well-combined strategy use often has a greater positive effect than the use of a single strategy and that certain strategies or clusters of strategies are linked to particular language skills. Future research could perhaps investigate how different learners combine different strategies and how this affects their vocabulary learning outcomes.

One interesting fact which has emerged from this study is the benefit of speaking in English at home. Not only will a child gain a wider repertoire of vocabulary comparatively but most importantly, he will also gain a cultural understanding of the

target language, which is essential for language acquisition (Allen, 1983). A possible research could be conducted in future on the benefits of using English language outside a classroom setting. In the homes of some ESL students, it is crucial that students are exposed to as much English as possible. Unfortunately, it is very common that these children to not speak or read any English material outside the classroom due to the lack of interest. Thus, it is important to change the mind-set of such parents.

International schools which employ the UK national curriculum system use phonics when teaching vocabulary to children. How do these teaching strategies affect learners' use of vocabulary learning strategies? Does one teaching and learning method or strategy work for some but not for others? It would be interesting to evaluate the outcome of the learning. Future studies could investigate the role of phonics in the vocabulary learning.

5.7   Conclusion

The current research has been conducted in a data-based, systematic, and descriptive way. It has contributed to the field of vocabulary learning strategies related to the classification of vocabulary learning strategies, the variables investigated, and students' vocabulary proficiency measurement. One of the main contributions of this study was the vocabulary learning strategies that the ESL participants from the international school reported using when meeting new vocabulary items, either in a classroom-related setting, or a classroom-independent setting. The vocabulary learning strategies have been categorised on the basis of vocabulary learning purposes, including the retention of the knowledge of newly-learned vocabulary items, the expansion of one's knowledge of vocabulary and the discovery of the meaning of new vocabulary items, as reported by the participants.

Lastly, the researcher has discussed some implications for the teaching and learning of English arising from the research findings. Limitations of the current research and some future proposals have also been proposed. The researcher believes that with a careful research design, as well as a suitable instrument used to illustrate vocabulary learning strategies, a researcher can gain further insights into how young learners can cope with their vocabulary learning, and how vocabulary learning strategies are employed by different learners in different learning contexts. Other variables, for example, students' previous language learning experience, level of vocabulary proficiency, or gender could have an impact on such research.

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