Vocabulary Strategy Training to Enhance Second Language Acquisition in English as a Foreign Language
Vocabulary Strategy Training to Enhance Second Language Acquisition in English as a Foreign Language

By
María Pilar Agustín Llach
and Andrés Canga Alonso
TABLE OF CONTENTS

Introduction ................................................................................................ 1

Part 1........................................................................................................... 5
Strategies, SLA, and Vocabulary Acquisition: Literature Review and Theoretical Framework

1.1. Learning strategies and learner autonomy ..................................... 5
1.2. Strategies and Second Language Acquisition ................................ 9
1.3. Vocabulary strategies .................................................................. 14

1.3.1. Vocabulary learning strategies (VLS) ................................... 17
1.3.2. Vocabulary communication strategies ................................. 25
1.3.3. Vocabulary teaching strategies or How to teach vocabulary ............................................................................... 27
1.3.4. Should we teach vocabulary learning strategies? ................ 32

Part 2......................................................................................................... 39
A Class Experience

2.1. Learner autonomy and learning strategies ................................... 39
2.2. Learner autonomy and vocabulary learning strategies ................. 43
2.3. The study. Method ....................................................................... 43
2.4. The study. Results and discussion ................................................ 47

Part 3......................................................................................................... 55
Teaching and Practising Vocabulary Learning and Communication Strategies in the EFL Classroom

3.1. Vocabulary learning and communication strategies .................... 55

3.1.1. The keyword method ........................................................... 57
3.1.2. Promote dictionary search ................................................... 59
3.1.3. Rote learning ....................................................................... 67
3.1.4. Grouping words ................................................................... 69
3.1.5. Keeping notebooks .............................................................. 70
3.1.6. Circumlocution and paraphrase ........................................... 72
3.1.7. Asking others ....................................................................... 73
3.1.8. Guessing from context ........................................................ 74

3.2. Exercises and tasks ...................................................................... 78
This book intends to be a guide and help for future teachers of English as a Foreign Language (EFL) at primary, secondary and university levels, where language awareness and explicit teaching take over the implicit character of child foreign language acquisition during pre-school education (nursery school and kindergarten). It is precisely this explicit, metalinguistic learning of vocabulary, which serves as the link and common aspect among EFL learning at the primary, secondary, and tertiary levels. This also serves as a justification for the vocabulary learning strategies training program. If learning is assumed to be, at least partially, explicit and conscious, then it is desirable that learners are instructed in how to make the most of that learning with vocabulary learning strategies. The present work is also addressed to EFL learners, as well, who can benefit from the information, practical and in theory, contained in this volume.

Our main aim is to endow future teachers and conscious EFL learners with the tools, resources and abilities necessary to enhance vocabulary instruction via strategies; and to supply them with some concrete examples or ready-made activities to teach vocabulary learning strategies. Concurrently, a better understanding and knowledge, a deeper insight, and a more frequent use of vocabulary learning strategies contribute to developing learner autonomy.

Giving learners hints on learning strategies to remember vocabulary by means of self-assessment activities and tasks to be developed in the foreign language classroom will also favor life-long learning, which is one of the main aims of the policies passed by the Council of Europe in recent decades (Common European Framework of Reference, CEF 2001).

Giving learners a tool to improve and speed up their vocabulary learning can lighten up the process of Second Language Acquisition (SLA), and make it funnier and more interesting and motivating. This improvement of the teaching-learning process is in the hands of the teachers and autonomous learners, as well.

Vocabulary knowledge is central in foreign language acquisition and use. Words instantiate the grammar of a language and give sense to its messages. Without words, nothing can be conveyed (cf. Wilkins 1972: 11, Widdowson 1978: 115).
Introduction

Vocabulary to function in the foreign language is pre-conditional for successful language learning, since learners with larger vocabularies, and all other things being equal, perform better (cf. Meara 1996). In this sense, several studies have confirmed the relevance of lexical competence for the performance of different tasks in the foreign language (FL), such as reading comprehension (Qian 2002), listening comprehension (Staehr 2008), or writing (Laufer and Nation 1995, Albrechtsen, Haastrup, and Henriksen 2008, Agustin Llach and Terrazas 2009). Vocabulary knowledge is closely linked to general levels of proficiency, so that learners with higher levels of lexical competence are also found to display better overall linguistic competence (e.g. Meara 1996, Laufer 1997, Nation 2001, Cameron 2002, Qian 2002).

The issue of foreign language acquisition has occupied researchers for a long time; however, research findings so far, have not fulfilled the curiosity of researchers to learn more about foreign vocabulary acquisition or the endeavours of teachers to improve vocabulary teaching. When facing the task of lexical learning and teaching, two approaches stand out: incidental versus intentional learning/teaching (e.g. Meara 1997; Nagy 1997; Sökmen 1997; Singleton 1999; de Groot 2000; Nation 2001, and in L1 acquisition McKeown and Curtis 1987). This dichotomy between incidental and intentional learning/teaching is pervasive in the literature and a very useful one in discussions on how to best and most cost-effectively introduce new words in the FL classroom. It is generally acknowledged that both modes of learning are involved in vocabulary acquisition. Intentional vocabulary learning is very effective in relative terms (e.g. Gu 2003, Lee 2003). However, it is very time-consuming and we cannot possibly teach every word in the FL. Additionally, there is practical evidence that some words are learned without having been taught explicitly, as we all know from our own experience as FL learners (Cf. Criado Sánchez et al. 2010). In addition, incidental word learning as the result of listening or reading has been repeatedly accounted for (e.g. Krashen 1989, Rodrigo, Krashen and Gibbons 2004, Vidal 2003). Other studies show the increase in the difficulty of the new vocabulary to which learners are exposed. Vocabulary tends to get more complex and abstract and this hampers the development of lexical competence (Graham 2006). Furthermore, students report having difficulties in learning large amounts of new vocabulary as collected in a study by Graham (1997). Additionally, Graham (1997) found that learners used a very limited range of vocabulary.

1 Multiple choice, synonym, antonym or hyperonym matching, collocations, translation, bilingual lists, mnemonic techniques or word form analysis are typical activities for intentional vocabulary acquisition.
Vocabulary Strategy Training to Enhance Second Language Acquisition

Learning strategies, which fairly consisted of list-making and short-term memorization. These findings put forward the need to train students in strategic competence so that they can improve and extend their vocabulary knowledge in an autonomous and effective way. Strategic competence refers to the ability to use different stratagems or strategies to compensate for communication problems in comprehension or production or for lack of linguistic knowledge (cf. CERF 2001).

In general terms, vocabulary intervention studies either in intentional or incidental lexical learning have proved the positive results of explicit vocabulary strategy instruction (e.g. Lawson and Hogben 1998, Fraser 1999). Graham, Richards and Malvern (2008) note that the potential impact of strategy training and the process of strategy awareness raising on vocabulary acquisition merit further exploration.

With all this in mind, and stressing the important role of learning and communication strategies as facilitators of general language learning ability (cf. Takac 2008), we want to provide a guide to teachers and learners on how to best and most effectively deal with strategy training for vocabulary acquisition and use.

The main rationale behind this book is our interest in vocabulary acquisition and the variables and factors that contribute to it. Additionally, the observations also stated that learners have a hard time learning relatively large amounts of new vocabulary in the EFL classroom. This has made the necessity of a guide like the present one even more evident. Our belief is that by training students in strategy use and by fostering the use of learning and communication strategies, they can improve their vocabulary knowledge and consequently, their general language proficiency.

The book will be divided in three main sections. The first part includes an overview on learning strategies and their relationship with SLA and vocabulary learning. This first part sets the theoretical framework by reviewing theoretical and empirical studies that have dealt with the issue of vocabulary learning strategies, foreign language acquisition, and its benefits for the fostering of learner autonomy. In part two, we will focus on an experimental study in strategy training conducted with first year undergraduate students at the University of La Rioja. The university context and primary and secondary school contexts share their explicit nature of foreign language learning, and in this sense, we believe the need for and benefits of explicit strategy training are justified in all three learning contexts. Finally, part three provides EFL learners and prospective EFL practitioners with various tasks to put in practice the strategies analysed in Part 1. It includes some ready-made activities addressed to teachers or EFL learners, which show vocabulary learning
Introduction

strategies and their evaluation according to students' own views. This last part intends to be a guide for strategy training for future EFL teachers in primary, secondary and tertiary levels and for conscious EFL learners to use on their own.
PART 1

STRATEGIES, SLA, AND VOCABULARY

ACQUISITION:

LITERATURE REVIEW AND THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK

This first part intends to review the existing literature related to learning strategies in general, and to vocabulary learning strategies, in particular. Likewise, it aims at setting the theoretical framework for the rest of the volume. A general account of strategies and definitions of key terms will be followed by considerations related to vocabulary learning strategies, teaching and learning strategies, and strategy training.

1.1. Learning strategies and learner autonomy

This section offers an overview of research-related studies dealing with strategies and accounting for the different types of strategies (Oxford 1996, 2001, 2011; Chamot et al. 1999; Cohen 1996; Takac 2008) and their effect on the development of learner autonomy (Sinclair 2000; Benson 2001).

There is not a single or indisputable definition of learning strategy, and many are the researchers who define learning strategy within the frame of their own studies, i.e. they create their own ad-hoc definition of strategy to suit the purposes of the specific research study (Oxford 1996, 2001, 2011; Chamot et al. 1999; Cohen 1996; Takac 2008). What they all have in common is highlighting the facilitative role of strategies in the second language learning process (cf. Chamot 2004, Takac 2008: 51). However, not all agree in their conscious nature (e.g. Oxford 2003), their cultural adequacy (e.g. Chamot 2004) or their teachability (Chamot 2004).

For the purpose of the present volume, we chose Oxford’s widespread definition, which asserts that:
Learning strategies are operations employed by the learner to aid the acquisition, storage, retrieval and use of information, specific actions taken by the learner to make learning easier, faster, more enjoyable, more self-directed, more effective and more transferable to new situations (2001: 166).

According to this definition, learning strategies allow learners to store and use information to make their learning easier, faster and more enjoyable. Thus, as it will be shown in the following sections, by using different strategies, apprentices will be able to take control of their learning process and become more autonomous learners.

Another area of conflict arises with the categorization of language learning strategies. Myriad classifications or taxonomies invade the field. For example, McLaughlin (1987) distinguishes among learning (simplification, overgeneralization, transfer, inferencing, intralingual, extralingual, hypothesis testing, practice), production (planning, semantic simplification, linguistic simplification, correcting strategies), and communication (reduction, formal, functional, achievement, compensatory, retrieval) strategies (cited in Takac 2008). The learners' intention is, in this case, the classification criterion. Also in Takac (2008), Stern (1986: 411) includes strategies in his model attempting an explanation of second language teaching and learning and groups them into active planning, academic "explicit" learning, social, and affective.

In what is probably the most popular of classifications, Cohen (1999, 2012) (see also Oxford, e.g. 2003, Chamot 2004, 2005) distinguishes between cognitive, metacognitive, affective and social strategies. Cognitive strategies involve the identification, relation, storage, and retrieval of words, phrases, and other elements of the target language. This type of learning strategy will be analysed in detail in the following sections since it is of paramount importance for the development of vocabulary learning strategies and, therefore the acquisition of new words in the target language.

Metacognitive strategies deal with the pre-assessment and pre-planning, planning and evaluation of language learning activities. Therefore, they are key to foster learner autonomy since they imply students' reflection on their own learning (vocabulary learning in the case of the present volume) and the evaluation of the tasks they have done in order to improve their (vocabulary) knowledge in the target language. The overt teaching of these strategies in the foreign language classroom is vital for learner involvement in their learning, and relevant to foster life-long learning and learner autonomy (Benson 2001, Little, Ridley and Ushioda 2002; De Florio-Hansen 2009; García Magaldi 2010).
Affective strategies serve to regulate emotions, motivation and attitudes and are closely related to social strategies since the latter include the actions that learners choose to take in order to interact with other learners and with native speakers.

In the same vein, Oxford and Leaver (1996) claimed that the aim of learning strategies is “to help students become more self-directed, autonomous and effective learners through the improved use of language learning strategies” (p. 227). Therefore, the application of learning strategies in the classroom involves active learning-strategy instruction and growth on the part of each student. Strategy training involves instruction, helping students to know more about themselves, so that they can try out, test, and become experts in using the strategies that help them the most.

More recently, Oxford (2011) developed the Strategic Self-Regulation Model (S²R) of language learning. As this author claims, self-regulated learning strategies help learners regulate or control their own learning, thus making it easier and more effective. What is more, self-regulation, according to its Latin roots, involves not only self-management but also “self-righting,” i.e., self-adjustment or self-adaptation if something goes off track or needs improvement. Self-regulated L2 learning strategies are defined as follows:

**Self-regulated L2 learning strategies** are defined as deliberate, goal-directed attempts to manage and control efforts to learn the L2 (based on Affierbach, Pearson, and Paris 2008). These strategies are broad, teachable actions that learners choose from among alternatives and employ for L2 learning purposes (e.g., constructing, internalizing, storing, retrieving, and using information; completing short-term tasks; and/or developing L2 proficiency and self-efficacy in the long term). (Oxford 2011: 12).

Examples of these strategies are planning, evaluating, obtaining and using resources, reasoning, going beyond the immediate data, generating and maintaining motivation, and overcoming knowledge gaps in communication.

Self-regulated L2 learning strategies are employed consciously, involving four elements of consciousness: awareness, attention, intention, and effort. They make learning easier, faster, more enjoyable, and more effective, and are manifested through specific tactics in different contexts and for different purposes (cf. Schmidt 1995).

According to Oxford (2011), self-regulated strategies also reflect the whole, multidimensional learner, not just the learner’s cognitive or metacognitive aspects; and can be combined into strategy chains, i.e., groups of strategies working together. These strategy chains are applied in
Part 1

A given situation but can be transferred to other situations when relevant and helpful.

Oxford’s S 2R model is strikingly consistent with learners' active control of learning. Through the effective use of learning strategies, learner autonomy is fostered, since learners choose appropriate strategies for the purpose and situation and evaluate the success of these strategies. Therefore, they progressively take charge of their own learning which favours learner autonomy. What is more, students can use strategies to regulate many aspects of their learning, their internal mental states, beliefs, observable behaviours, and the learning environment.

Identifying strategies is not always easy, and authors have used a number of different instruments and resources to find out the strategies that learners are using (Chamot 2004). Below, we will deal more in depth with vocabulary learning strategy questionnaires. For now, suffice it to say here that apart from questionnaires such as the SILL (Strategy Inventory for Language Learning) (Oxford 1989), researchers have used self-reports, which are somehow inaccurate and not completely truthful; retrospective and stimulated recall interviews; diaries and journals, which raise metalinguistic awareness and usually have instructional purposes; and think-aloud protocols, which reflect online processing (cf. Chamot 2004).

The Strategy Inventory for Language Learning (SILL) (Oxford 1990) is perhaps the most frequently used inventory for collecting research data on L2 strategies. Each item describes a language learning strategy and learners are asked to respond to the SILL items by indicating how often they employ these strategies by selecting one response out of five Likert scale options. The SILL classifies language-learning strategies into six parts; each part comprises strategies with a similar function.

In another attempt to systematize learning strategies, Sheorey and Mokhtari (2001) and Mokhtari and Sheorey (2002) developed a new instrument named the Survey of Reading Strategies (SORS) designed to measure the metacognitive reading strategies of L2 readers engaged in reading academic materials. It works in the same way as the SILL with learners choosing from Likert scale options of frequency of use.

We consider that Oxford’s (2011) S 2R Model is the best-developed questionnaire, since it covers all the aspects mentioned in all the other strategy inventories (e.g. SILL and SORS), so we will deal with it in more detail below.

In the following section, we will provide a classification of learning strategies and we will highlight their facilitative role in SLA.
1.2. Strategies and SLA

In the previous section, we have briefly introduced some classifications of learning strategies and have distinguished between cognitive, metacognitive and affective strategies (Cohen 1996). In the present section, we will provide the reader with a classification of learning strategies according to the more recent S 2R model. We will also put forward and highlight the beneficial and facilitative role of learning strategies in the SLA process. To this end, we will deal with the SLA and FLT studies, which either explicitly mentioned or implicitly illustrated, include reference to learning and communication strategies and their facilitative role in learning the foreign language.

In her comprehensive review of learning strategies, Oxford (2011) distinguishes three dimensions in language learning strategies (LLS). Dimension 1 includes cognitive strategies for remembering and processing language. Dimension 2 refers to affective strategies linked with emotions, beliefs, attitudes, and motivation. Finally, dimension 3 covers socio-cultural interactive strategies for contexts, communication, and culture.

The S 2R model contains six cognitive strategies in Dimension 1, which are listed below:

1. using the senses to understand and remember,
2. activating knowledge,
3. reasoning,
4. conceptualizing with details,
5. conceptualizing broadly, and
6. going beyond the immediate data.

These strategies take some tactics associated with them, for instance, “I understand better when…” or “I distinguish between” (Oxford 2011: 46-47). The aim of cognitive strategies in Oxford’s model is to help the learner concentrate, pay attention, plan, gather resources, organize, monitor, and evaluate, using metacognitive knowledge as a basis.

In the same vein, cognitive approaches to SLA also put learning strategies in a prominent position according to Takac (2008). In the cognitive view of L2 acquisition, the learner is active and consciously learns the L2 using the strategies at hand, among other learning approaches. 

---

2 Tactic means: “a specific, “ground level” application of a strategy or metastrategy by a particular learner in a given setting for a certain, real-life purpose to meet particular, immediate needs, same as operations in activity theory” (Oxford 2011: 299).
Part 1

10 instruments, to organize the new linguistic system (Takac 2008: 29). This relates to the idea that using strategies promotes learner autonomy. However, prior to current efforts towards lifelong, independent and autonomous learning, research on language learning strategies had a cognitive stance. The mental processes that learners engage in while learning a second language and especially the way good language learners process linguistic information arose interest in the early days of strategy research (O’Malley and Chamot 1990, Wenden 1987, Rubin 1975, Stern 1975, Oxford 1990, Oxford 1996; Oxford 2011; Oxford and Leaver 1996, Cohen 2012). Good language learners were those who used learning strategies, and in turn, learning strategies were the stratagems and behaviours put forward by good and successful language learners in their language acquisition process.

Affective strategies, which make up Dimension 2 in Oxford’s model, help the learner effectively deal with attitudes, beliefs, emotions, and motivation and thus optimize them for learning (Oxford 1990). The S 2R model contains two affective strategies:

1. activating supportive emotions, beliefs and attitudes, and
2. generating and maintaining motivation (Oxford 2011: 64).

Affective language learning strategies are central to SLA because they have been found to relate to L2 proficiency both directly and indirectly through increasing motivation and improving beliefs and attitudes (Chamot 2004, 2005, Oxford 2003).

The sociocultural context has gained importance in SLA and FLT in recent decades. Thus, sociocultural strategies should be considered to favour FL language learning and, therefore foster learner autonomy. The S2R Model goes a step further from previous theories on strategy training and describes two categories of strategies: socio-cultural interactive (SI) strategies and meta-SI strategies.

Meta-SI strategies can be viewed as the “community manager” in the S2R Model since they cover six areas: person knowledge, culture or group knowledge, task knowledge, whole-process knowledge, strategy knowledge, and conditional knowledge. This dimension includes eight strategies, of which the following are especially relevant for vocabulary learning: paying attention to contexts, communication and culture, planning for contexts, communication and culture, obtaining resources for contexts, communication and culture, and organizing for contexts, communication and culture (Oxford 2011: 87-88). We consider these four as the most relevant for the purpose of vocabulary strategy training.
because learners need to plan the strategies they need to use, paying attention to the context to select the appropriate words and organize the words chosen to produce a coherent speech or piece of writing.

SI strategies are known as the "community workers which directly facilitate communication and deep understanding of the socio-cultural context and one's roles in it" (Oxford 2011: 88). Oxford includes three strategies under this heading: interacting to learn and communicate, overcoming knowledge gaps in communicating and dealing with sociocultural contexts and identities. These strategies help students interact and collaborate with others. Overcoming knowledge gaps in communication is particularly relevant for a student's word choice, since they use a synonym or antonym when they cannot think of the word needed in a given communicative context.

As we have tried to explain throughout this section, the main goal of strategy training and use is to enhance learning, i.e., to improve learning outcomes and facilitate learning. This assisting role is what makes strategies so relevant in the process of acquiring a foreign language. Moreover, learners themselves acknowledge that using strategies is helpful and necessary and that strategies help them improve their lexical repertoire and thus become more autonomous learners (Oxford and Scarcella 1994; Nyikos and Fan 2007, Sinhaneti and Kalayar Kyaw 2012). Strategy use characterizes successful language learners (Takac 2008: 58, 63-64), and distinguishes them from other learners.

For this reason, it is necessary to teach learning strategies for students to become better, more motivated, and more autonomous learners. In this sense, Oxford & Leaver distinguish among five fundamental levels of learner autonomy:

1. Identifying and improving strategies that are currently used by the individual;
2. Identifying strategies that the individual might not be using but that might be helpful for the task at hand, and then teaching those strategies;
3. Helping students learn to transfer strategies across language tasks and even across subject fields;
4. Aiding students in evaluating the success of their use of particular strategies with specific tasks;
5. Assisting subjects in gaining learning style flexibility by teaching them the strategies that are instinctively used by students with other learning styles. (1996: 227)
The higher the number of strategies used and the higher the frequency of their use, the higher is the learning success. Chamot (2004) believes that the effectiveness of specific strategies in language learning depends to some extent on the learning purposes, that is, depending on what learners want to do, on their learning goal, one strategy will be more effective than others. Similarly, she defends that learners need to experiment, explore, and evaluate different strategies to pick their set of effective strategies, with metacognitive strategies being beneficial for all learners and all learning styles. In this sense, Oxford (2003: 8) already stated that good or effective strategies are not such by definition, but are those that relate well to the task at hand, that fit the students' learning style, and that are employed effectively and in combination with other relevant strategies.

In this line, Selinker (1972) lists learning and communication strategies as two of the five basic components in interlanguage development, the other three being language transfer, transfer of training, and overgeneralization (which are actually strategies themselves as well, see Takac 2008). In a somewhat similar vein, Schmitt (2014) comments that using different strategies necessarily leads to different kinds of learning. He is specifically referring to how learners acquire new words and he highlights the different types of knowledge that may derive from learning words in isolation from word lists or learning them within a given context, for instance. The first learning strategy might contribute to strengthening the form-meaning link, whereas the second might provide learners with, among others, collocational knowledge. In this sense, not only are learning strategies relevant because they help, promote, speed up, and consolidate the acquisition process, they are also crucial, because they determine the type of learning and knowledge to be obtained. On the contrary, communication strategies can lead to fossilization, since learners stop learning and improving their L2 when an acceptable or successful communication level has been reached, on most occasions, to the application of communication strategies.

These considerations add more weight to the need to study strategic competence and to develop it in practice within the foreign language classroom. As already hinted above, in the introduction section, it is one of the basic competences that make up communicative competence, and consequently an important and indispensable component in SLA. Bachman (1990, 107-108) provides the following definition of strategic competence:

Strategic competence is seen as the capacity that relates language competence, or knowledge of language, to the language user's knowledge structures and the features of the context in which communication takes place.
Strategies, SLA, and Vocabulary Acquisition

Place. Strategic competence performs assessment, planning, and execution functions in determining the most effective means of achieving a communicative goal. A well-developed strategic competence will aid the process of foreign language acquisition and will therefore contribute to improving learners' communicative competence. Martín Le ralta (2008) defines a series of descriptors to evaluate strategic competence: a) range of the strategy repertoire, b) adequacy to the task, c) effectiveness in its application, and d) degree of awareness of use. Transfer of the strategies to new learning contexts can also serve as a sign of a developed strategic competence. As a result of developing learners' strategic competence, they feel more motivated to pursue their learning and increase their learning experiences.

Learner autonomy, strategic behaviour, motivation, and success are four (inter)related concepts (Dam 1995, Little 2001, Benson 2003). First, learners who use different strategies when learning an L2 are able to take control of their own learning since they are capable of choosing those strategies, which are most suitable to attain a given goal. Moreover, this choice usually leads learners to succeed academically and contributes to raising their extrinsic, intrinsic motivation and self-efficacy. Different studies have proved the relationship of these factors in different academic contexts. Thus, Nikopour, Salimian, Salimian and Farsani (2012) proved that intrinsically motivated Iranian learners used metacognitive strategies more than any others did. On the contrary, Xu (2011) proved that there is a correlation between extrinsic motivation and strategy use, since the motivated Chinese learners they analysed tended to use a great number of learning strategies. Schmidt and Watanabe (2001) in a study conducted with students from different origins at the University of Hawai‘i concluded that the motivational factors of Value, Motivational Strength, and Cooperativeness affect strategy use and pedagogical preferences most strongly, while the Heritage Language factor appears to have little or no influence on these variables. Chang and Liu (2013) also found a strong correlation between the frequency of strategy use and motivation. Participants with a high English proficiency level displayed a significantly higher level of strategy use than their counterparts at lower and intermediate levels display and were more motivated towards EFL.

As for self-efficacy and motivation developed through strategy training, Lavasani, Mirhosseini, Hejazi and Davoodi (2011) found that the teaching of self-regulation learning strategies has had a significant effect on the academic motivation and self-efficacy of the students. Teachers were also asked about the importance of learning strategies (Cheng and Dörnyei 2007). The results indicate that the list of motivational
Part 1

14

macro-strategies that emerged in this study provides reassurance that at least some motivational strategies are transferable across diverse cultural and ethnolinguistic contexts. However, there are findings indicating that some strategies are culture-sensitive or even culture-dependent. In line with this, Sozler (2012) argues that training in how to use effective vocabulary learning strategies can have a motivating effect, since using strategies leads to vocabulary acquisition and thus to developing or improving communicative competence. Consequently, learner autonomy is reassured, anxiety is lowered and learners feel more self-confident and motivated. In this line, Ping and Siraj (2012) found that low motivation led to a lack of strategy use.

In the particular case of vocabulary acquisition and vocabulary learning strategies, which is the main goal of the present volume, learner autonomy provides students with several skills, which foster and promote language learning, for example, more free opportunities for communication, increase of a learner's willingness to engage in active learning, and mastery of the basic skills that are required for long-lasting learning. Nevertheless, becoming an autonomous vocabulary learner is a long process, which needs the help and assistance of the teacher, or a guidebook such as the present volume, which provides the learner with some tips about learning strategies and how they can be applied to promote autonomous vocabulary learning.

In the next couple of sections, we will address the issue of vocabulary learning strategies and vocabulary strategy training more specifically. The main focus of the present work is vocabulary because vocabulary knowledge is of paramount importance in SLA and learner autonomy should be enhanced in vocabulary learning to make the most of the lexical acquisition process (Daller, van Hout and Treffers-Daller 2003, Morris and Cobb 2004).

1.3. Vocabulary learning strategies

In the words of Takac (2008: 58), research in vocabulary learning strategies started as the result of two observations, one was that most of the learning strategies used were addressed at apprehending vocabulary, and the other was the desire to look into the effectiveness of strategy use in lexical acquisition. Additionally, the big learning burden imposed by lexical acquisition plus the need to master a great number of words to achieve fluency and develop communicative competence make vocabulary a good candidate for strategy use (cf. Oxford 1990). As briefly hinted above several times, vocabulary is central in the SLA process, and every
strategies, SLA, and vocabulary acquisition
Table 1.1. Vocabulary learning strategies listed by Gu & Johnson (1996)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Vocabulary learning beliefs</th>
<th>Metacognitive strategies</th>
<th>Cognitive strategies</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Vocabulary should be memorized</td>
<td>Self-initiation</td>
<td>Guessing strategies</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Vocabulary should be picked up naturally</td>
<td></td>
<td>Dictionary strategies</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Vocabulary should be studied and used</td>
<td></td>
<td>Note-taking strategies</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Activation</td>
<td>Memory strategies: rehearsal</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Memory strategies: encoding</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

One year later, Schmitt (1997) proposed a very thorough and comprehensive taxonomy of vocabulary learning strategies, and conducted a detailed study with it. This work by Schmitt (1997) serves as a benchmark and starting point of many subsequent studies on vocabulary learning strategies by setting the scene and providing the first comprehensive taxonomy exclusively devoted to vocabulary learning strategies. He used a twofold classification. Thus, parting from Oxford's (1990) systems of classification, he distinguished between two basic types of strategies: discovery and consolidating. Discovery strategies refer to the behaviours learners display when they see the word for the first time and try to discover the new word's meaning. They encompass many different sub-strategies such as the determination strategies of guessing from textual context, using a bilingual dictionary, checking for L1 cognates, analysing parts of speech, and the social strategies of asking classmates for meaning, asking for a paraphrase, or an L1 translation. Consolidation strategies, on their part, allude to what students do to consolidate and learn the meaning of a word once it has been encountered, and include social strategies such as interaction with native speakers, study and practice meaning in a group, memory strategies such as to imagine a word's meaning, connect a word's meaning to a personal experience, use semantic maps, cognitive strategies such as verbal repetition, word lists, note-taking, and metacognitive strategies such as testing oneself, using media to learn, just to name a few of the total 58 vocabulary learning strategies in this taxonomy.
Ma (2009) also proposed a process-oriented classification of vocabulary learning strategies. First, she listed eight stages, which summarized the process of vocabulary acquisition (p. 164):

1. A new word is encountered through different contexts
2. The meaning of the word is found out
3. Various aspects of the meaning and form of the word are studied
4. The information about the word is recorded or organized
5. The word is memorized with the help of some strategies
6. The word is reviewed to ensure retention
7. When the word is met again, it is retrieved
8. The word is used to consolidate its acquisition.

For each stage, she identified the strategies that aided learners overcome the stage and go to the next one. Thus, for stage one concerning how learners discover new vocabulary, she talks about cognitive strategies, social strategies, and metacognitive strategies; to help learners make sense of the new vocabulary, they can make use of metacognitive strategies, cognitive strategies, and social strategies; to learn the different aspects of the new words they might resort to cognitive strategies; to organize the new lexical information, they have metacognitive strategies and cognitive strategies; to memorize new vocabulary, Ma (2009) mentions cognitive strategies and memory strategies. In order to review the newly learned vocabulary, learners might use metacognitive strategies and social strategies; to retrieve the needed vocabulary, they use cognitive strategies and finally to make use of the new vocabulary productively learners can use metacognitive strategies and social strategies.

In the present work, we will first deal with vocabulary learning strategies, i.e. those aimed at facilitating the acquisition, and retention of new vocabulary and then, we will move on to communication strategies which are addressed at making communication possible both in production and comprehension.

1.3.1. Vocabulary learning strategies (VLS)

In his "big" vocabulary book, Nation (2001) also deals with vocabulary learning strategies. For him vocabulary learning strategies need to meet four requirements or conditions. Thus, they a) involve some kind of choice, b) consist of several procedural steps, c) require knowledge and benefit from training, and d) enhance vocabulary learning and use. Other researchers such as Takac (2008) also highlight the four main characteristics...
Part 1

18 of VLS which, in line with Nations' (2001) proposal are 1) require selection, 2) are complex, i.e. developed in several steps, 3) can be developed through instruction, and 4) make L2 vocabulary acquisition more effective.

Individual vocabulary learning strategies have long since aroused great attention. In particular, the application of the Keyword Technique to learn and retain new vocabulary has been widely researched in the literature (e.g. Avila and Sadoski 1996, Van Hell and Mahn 1997, Rodriguez and Sadoski 2000). Notebooks (McCrostie 2007), dictionaries (Lew and Doroszewska 2009), and games (Huyen and Nga 2003, Yip and Kwan 2006) are individual vocabulary learning strategies which have also been submitted to study. However, inventories of vocabulary learning strategies as a whole are rarer (but see e.g. Stoffer 1995, Schmitt 1997, Kudo 1999, Takac 2008).

Back in 1995, Stoffer developed the VOLSI (Vocabulary Learning Strategies Inventory) containing 53 strategies, but found that they could be clustered into nine main categories: involving authentic language use, for self-motivation, to organize words, to create mental linkages, memory strategies, involving creating activities, physical action, to overcome anxiety and auditory strategies. Using this self-report instrument, the VOLSI, she managed to get data from 707 American learners of different foreign languages and most interestingly, she found that learners of different languages also reported a preference for different strategies: self-motivation for Japanese, memory strategies for Russian, and creating mental associations for lexically related languages such as French or Spanish. Additionally, learners of non-related and lexically distant languages (e.g. Japanese, Russian) reported the highest use of strategies.

As already mentioned above, Schmitt (1997) also offers a comprehensive typology of vocabulary learning strategies classified into several groups and subgroups according to their purpose. On the one hand, he identifies strategies aimed at finding the meaning of the new words, discovering strategies; on the other, at consolidating the meanings of known words, consolidating strategies. The first group is comprised by determination and social strategies, and the second by social, memory, cognitive and metacognitive strategies. In total, he could account for a considerable number of individual vocabulary learning strategies amounting to 58. Learners in his study, who were Japanese EFL university learners, highlighted bilingual dictionary use as the most popular vocabulary learning strategy followed by oral and written repetition and study of spelling. Among the least used strategies, students mentioned use of physical action, word association, semantic maps and, curiously enough...
strategies, SLA, and vocabulary acquisition 19

the keyword method (so popular and loved among researchers, but as we see not so among students). Nevertheless, these strategies, that require deeper mental processing and greater cognitive effort, became more popular among older students, probably because they could better appreciate their value. These results are in line with the idea that students use and value the strategies that they perceive as useful (e.g. Chamot 2004).

Some time later, and based on these previous studies, Kudo (1999) conducted an investigation of vocabulary learning strategies among Japanese EFL learners. He found that social strategies were rare, as were semantic mapping and the keyword method, but memory and cognitive strategies were more frequent, with bilingual dictionary use ranking top again. The cultural context of the students is most probably influencing these results, the same as in Schmitt (1997). Japanese culture advocates for memorization, dictionary use, and translation among the methods and techniques to learn foreign languages (Kudo 1999). The age of the students, adolescent senior high school students, is also argued to explain the lack of use of deeper cognitive strategies.

On their part, Griva et al. (2009) offer a very simple taxonomy distinguishing between strategies to understand the meaning of the words, and those specifically aimed at learning new words. Among the former, they mention guessing from context, deducing the form-meaning link, linking to cognates, or using the dictionary; among the latter are included repeating, organizing in the mind, and linking to background knowledge. This distinction is similar to the one adopted in the present work.

To end with in this review on vocabulary learning strategies, we want to deal with Takac's (2008) work, which probably represents the most comprehensive classification of vocabulary learning strategies. She conducted a study to examine the vocabulary learning strategies of elementary school EFL learners (Takac 2008: 91-104). This study focuses on the design of a questionnaire to elicit data from her young informants and aims at a comprehensive classification of the strategies these learners use. She finally came up with the VOLSQES (Vocabulary Learning Strategies Questionnaire for Elementary Schools), a 27-item questionnaire (out of an initial 53 items) on vocabulary learning strategies, where students had to choose from three-scale options of strategy use. According to the results she obtained, she proposed a novel classification of vocabulary learning strategies:
1. Strategies of formal vocabulary learning and practising. In this context, the learners use instrumental motivation and aim at formal language learning. Strategies in this type include repeating words and testing word knowledge with bilingual lists.

2. Self-initiated independent vocabulary learning reflects a conscious effort on the part of learners to apprehend new lexical items. Some strategies in this type are taking notes, grouping words together to study them, using words in sentences, using the dictionary to learn new words, or associating words with context.

3. Spontaneous (incidental) vocabulary learning (acquisition). The use of this type of strategy depends on learners' personal interests and reflects their communication needs, especially outside the classroom. They do not imply conscious effort to learn the FL. Examples of these strategies are listening to songs, using circumlocution, or remembering words from the internet, TV, and so on.

Researchers have tackled the examination of strategy use when learning and using vocabulary in the target language (TL). They have identified the most and least frequently used strategies. As a general rule, more proficient learners produce more vocabulary learning strategies and the strategies they use tend to be more elaborate or cognitively demanding, e.g., contrastive analysis, use of contextual information, than the ones used by less competent learners, such as L1 translation or dictionary consultation (e.g., Griva et al. 2009).

Specifically, Griva et al. (2009) rank strategies according to students' preferred use and perceptions of usefulness. They discovered that among Greek EFL 6th graders (12 year-olds), low-demanding strategies were preferred and more complex and highly demanding ones, such as use of morphology, or semantic associations, e.g., using a synonym, ranked lower in the list. The following figure shows the ranking of the strategies with the number of students who mentioned them (Griva et al. 2009).
Table 1.2. Preference list of vocabulary learning strategies

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Vocabulary learning strategy</th>
<th>No. of students mentioning it</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Repeatin orally</td>
<td>116</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Translatin in mother tongue</td>
<td>110</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Lookin up the words in the dictionary</td>
<td>108</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Askin teacher for clarification</td>
<td>89</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Written repetition</td>
<td>81</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Placin new words in sentential context</td>
<td>80</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Guessin fro context</td>
<td>79</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Underlinin the words in the text</td>
<td>72</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Self-evaluatin in word learnin</td>
<td>79</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Usin imager</td>
<td>66</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Switchin to mother tongue (check for L1 co-inate)</td>
<td>65</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Associatin with alread known words</td>
<td>63</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Usin word parts</td>
<td>61</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Groupin words in ppatterns</td>
<td>43</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Cooperatin with pears</td>
<td>27</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Thus, Ping and Siraj (2012) confirm lack of use of deep cognitive and metacognitive strategies by Chinese pre-university EFL learners. Dictionary consultation, note-taking and oral repetition are the most frequently used strategies, while semantic encoding or using word structure are the least commonly used. Likewise, they found that learners lack strategic knowledge, they indicate that they do not try out new strategies or set goals or plan their learning or monitor or evaluate their learning. The authors allude to low self-efficacy and motivation as reasons for poor strategy use and call for specific strategic training to increase learners' vocabulary acquisition. Motivation and self-consciousness are relevant concepts for strategy use, and working on them can be a good way to help learners develop their strategic knowledge and increase and maximize their strategy use. In the same line, Rasekh and Ranjbary (2003) believe that being aware of their progress increases learners' motivation for learning. Again, their study emphasized metacognitive strategies as the most effective for vocabulary learning among university students of intermediate proficiency level. Mechanical strategies involving repetition of some kind were found to be the most strategic procedure in learning Italian FL by Australian learners (Lawson and Hogben 1996). Deeper cognitive strategies leading...
Part 1

22
to associations or transformation of the new information, or those involving context were comparatively much less common.

Komol and Sripetpun (2011) conducted a study with Thai university learners and reached several interesting conclusions. They found that determination strategies such as dictionary consultation or learning from word lists were the most frequently used by more and less proficient learners, with social strategies ranking last in the frequency scale. Unfortunately, these determination strategies, especially looking up words in the bilingual dictionary did not result in contributing to vocabulary knowledge. For all the strategy types, learners with bigger vocabularies had a significantly more frequent use, but the order of frequency of strategies remains stable across vocabulary size levels. Finally, they also showed a relationship between vocabulary size and efficient strategy use. Similar findings are reported by Dóczi (2011) who stated that social and metacognitive strategies were least frequently used by Hungarian adolescents and young adults. More specifically, older learners made more frequent use of social strategies than younger ones, of whom only 44% report using this type of strategy. Use of memory strategies also increases with age. Younger and older students resort to discovery strategies, especially guessing from context and bilingual dictionary use, with similar frequency. She used a questionnaire based on Schmitt's (1997) taxonomy to gather her data.

In sum, the more complex the strategy, i.e. more demanding of deeper and more active manipulation of information (e.g. keyword, making associations), the more effective it is (e.g. Takac 2008: 59), but not necessarily the most frequently used by students, who prefer strategies that are easier to apply and which require less cognitive effort (see review above). Among the main factors identified in the literature to influence vocabulary strategy use, we find age, the L1 and FL being learned, not to mention the big individual variation related to preferred cognitive and learning styles. Providing learners with a wide inventory of VLS is the best way to have the whole range of possibilities covered.

Some other studies have looked into the effectiveness of some vocabulary learning strategies over others as regards vocabulary acquisition. Gu and Johnson (1996) probed that self-initiation, selective attention, contextual guessing, dictionary use for learning, note-taking, analysing word forms, contextual encoding and intentional activation of new words correlated well with vocabulary size and general language proficiency. They had Chinese university EFL learners as informants and used a battery of vocabulary tests together with a VLS questionnaire. Also with Chinese university EFL students as informants, Wen and Johnson
Strategies, SLA, and Vocabulary Acquisition

(1997) looked at the relationship between, among other variables VLS, and language achievement in EFL. They used proficiency tests, interviews, diary studies, on-task observations and questionnaires to obtain their data; and concluded that VLS have a positive effect on general English proficiency. Some time later, Sozler (2012) probed that memory strategies, i.e. associating the new word to known words and images, were more effective in vocabulary acquisition and word retention than learning from word lists. Similarly, memory strategies were also better for vocabulary recall and retention than other strategies in kindergarten learners (Kron-Sperl, Schneider and Hasselhorn 2008). McDaniel and Pressley (1989) found the superiority of the keyword technique over contextual vocabulary learning. Likewise, in Lawson and Hogben's (1998) study, the keyword technique also proved more effective than other strategies. Training in paired-associations also resulted in more vocabulary gains than use of other strategies (Cohen and Apek 1980).

As the previous review suggests, it is difficult to generalize results, since studies were conducted on learners of different age, L2 proficiency, or L1 background. Likewise, the strategies focused on also vary from study to study. What seems to be undeniably true is that the more competent the learners, the more frequently they use strategies and the higher is the number of different strategies they use. Additionally, research studies coincide in concluding that vocabulary learning strategies are effective and enhance vocabulary acquisition in the FL.

Schmitt (2010) believes that the key aspect in research about vocabulary learning strategies is the one about the quality of strategy application, i.e. how learners make use of the strategies they have at their disposal in a qualitative, learning-relevant way; and not how many strategies they make use of, the so-called quantity of strategy use. In this sense, Oxford's (2011) model of Strategic Self-Regulation (S2R), a model of language learning, in which learners actively use strategies to manage their learning, becomes especially relevant. If learners are able to self-regulate their use of vocabulary learning strategies, they can much better benefit from them, particularly in qualitative terms.

However, this model is very new to the field, and has not yet been subject to much empirical research, in particular in the field of vocabulary learning strategies. For Tseng, Dörnyei, and Schmitt (2006), current popular questionnaires for assessing vocabulary strategy use do not measure the quality of such use, but only give an account of learners’ perceptions of their strategic behaviour in quantitative terms, but they leave the researcher clueless as to whether the learner is a successful strategy user (cf. Kulikova 2015). Thus, they take up the concept of self-
Part 1

regulation and develop an alternative approach to exploring strategic behaviour. Accordingly, they focused on the learners' ability to self-regulate and decide which strategies to apply and how for each specific situation. In order to look into this self-regulatory capacity, they devised a self-report questionnaire consisting of 20 items divided into five sections (Tseng et al. 2006, cf. Kulikova 2015). The five sections are: 1) Commitment control, 2) Metacognitive control, 3) Satiation control, 4) Emotion control, and 5) Environment control. Within each category of self-evaluation, they include a series of questions or statements for reflection. Thus, for commitment control they mention:

- When learning vocabulary, I have special techniques to achieve my learning goals.
- I believe I can achieve my goals more quickly than expected.
- I persist until I reach the goals that I make for myself.
- I believe I can overcome all the difficulties related to achieving my vocabulary learning goals.

In the case of metacognitive control, the questions and statements for reflection are the following:

- I have special techniques to keep my concentration focused.
- I think my methods of controlling my concentration are effective.
- I have my special techniques to prevent procrastination.
- I think my methods of controlling procrastination are effective.

Concerning satiation control, learners are asked to reflect about:

- Once the novelty of learning vocabulary is gone, I easily become impatient with it.
- During the process of learning vocabulary, I feel satisfied with the ways I eliminate boredom.
- I am confident that I can overcome any sense of boredom.
- When feeling bored with learning vocabulary, I know how to regulate my mood in order to invigorate the learning process.

With regard to emotion control, Tseng et al. (2006) suggest the following statements:

- When I feel stressed about vocabulary learning, I know how to reduce this stress.
- I feel satisfied with the methods I use to reduce the stress of vocabulary learning.