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Beliefs and Strategies of College EFL Students for Vocabulary Learning*

Cheongsook Chin**
(Inje University)
Cheongmin Yook***
(Hallym University)

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This study aims to investigate EFL students' beliefs and strategies for learning vocabulary and examine how these beliefs and strategies vary in relation to vocabulary proficiency. The participants consisted of 110 college students aged 20–27 years from different majors. According to the scores achieved on an English vocabulary proficiency test, they were placed into two groups (high- and low-level learners) and responded to a self-report questionnaire in class. Descriptive statistics were computed for all the items on the questionnaire. The findings showed that: (1) most of the participants emphasized the belief that vocabulary ought to be studied and used more than the belief that vocabulary should be acquired in context; (2) a significant relationship between the participants' beliefs and vocabulary proficiency was not found; (3) the participants predominantly favored using dictionary strategies for comprehension; (4) high-level learners used partial items of selective attention, self-initiation, dictionary looking-up strategies, oral repetition, semantic encoding, contextual encoding, and intentional activation of new words significantly more than low-level learners; and (5) low-level learners employed visual repetition significantly more than their counterparts. Pedagogical implications for EFL classroom teachers are suggested.

[EFL students/beliefs/strategies/vocabulary proficiency]

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**First author
***Corresponding author

I. INTRODUCTION

By acknowledging that vocabulary plays a pivotal role in communicative competence, it is concluded that vocabulary size has a great effect on language ability. Hence, developing vocabulary acquisition is conducive to overall improvement in language skills. While a huge corpus of L2 errors constantly reveals that vocabulary errors are the most common, L2 learners regard vocabulary errors as the most significant of all error types. Aware of the needs of L2 learners in enhancing vocabulary competence, teachers have been strongly concerned about fundamental issues (e.g. determining which lexical items to teach and how to teach them; vocabulary learning strategies) (Decarrico, 2001; Gass, Behney, & Plonsky, 2013; S. Lee, 2007; O'Keeffe, 2012).

In response to the question of how much vocabulary L2 learners need to know, it is suggested that 2000 words are necessary for conversational speaking, but 3000 word families are required for reading authentic texts. Unless these high-frequency words are mastered, the low-frequency words should not be targeted. As they are under time constraints, however, L2 teachers cannot realistically teach all these extremely frequent words in class. Therefore, it is crucial for L2 teachers to introduce vocabulary learning strategies that learners can employ independently to strengthen their vocabulary knowledge (Nation, 2001; Nation & Waring, 1997; Schmitt, 2000).

L2 learners' vocabulary learning strategies might be a key factor that can determine their vocabulary proficiency levels. Certain specific strategies used by successful learners might emerge as positive predictors of vocabulary proficiency, which unsuccessful learners could learn (Gu & Johnson, 1996; Lai, 2009). In addition, L2 learners' choices of vocabulary learning strategies can possibly derive from their own beliefs about vocabulary learning. To develop more effective vocabulary instruction, EFL teachers need to understand learners' vocabulary learning beliefs and strategies that might significantly influence their individual vocabulary learning outcomes. Thus, the present study investigates EFL students' beliefs and strategies for learning vocabulary and examines how these beliefs and strategies vary in relation to vocabulary proficiency. The specific research questions addressed in this study are as follows:

1. What are EFL students' beliefs regarding vocabulary learning?
2. Is there any relationship between EFL students' beliefs and vocabulary proficiency?
3. What kinds of vocabulary learning strategies do EFL students use?
4. Is there any relationship between EFL students' vocabulary learning strategies and vocabulary proficiency?

II. LITERATURE REVIEW

1. Teaching and Learning Vocabulary

In order to make sentences and comprehend them, learners require good lexical skills. Thus, vocabulary teaching is a central part of teaching language. Knowing a word refers to knowing its form, meaning, and use in addition to its pronunciation, spelling, nuances of meaning, and grammatical constraints. Learners need to understand its restrictions, collocations, and syntactic, pragmatic, and discoursal patterns, as well as its meaning, if they aim to gain mastery of it (Carter, 2001; Decarrico, 2001; Gass et al., 2013; Laufer, 1997).

Moreover, it is important to note the distinctions between receptive and productive knowledge (i.e. passive and active vocabulary). Receptive knowledge involves knowing the specific meaning in certain contexts in that learners are not able to use the recognized vocabulary productively. Productive knowledge involves knowing the exact meaning in various contexts in that learners can automatically activate the vocabulary, such as producing diverse meanings and relevant collocations. By and large, learners retain a larger amount of receptive vocabulary than productive knowledge. Nevertheless, vocabulary knowledge should be defined not as a dichotomy, but as a continuum in which the beginning phase shows recognition and the final phase reaches production (Gass et al., 2013; Laufer, 1997; Melka, 1997).

Vocabulary learning has an incremental nature. In addition to introducing new words, teachers should ensure to facilitate learners' prior knowledge of formerly presented words. Learning a word's meaning and its usage is achieved when learners have access to listening to how it is used in a variety of contexts and consulting a dictionary. Learners might simply pay attention to a word when they first come across the item. Subsequent encounters, however, enable learners to practice choosing pertinent semantic and syntactic information and to consolidate their memory of the word. The essential point is that learning words is a recursive process. Therefore, learners might not exclusively rely on explicit study in that teachers cannot afford to deal with all the possible uses of a word in class. Additionally, certain sorts of word knowledge, such as collocations, register constraints, and frequency, cannot be fully acquired without extended exposure. Hence, as a complement, explicit and incidental approaches are both required in expanding vocabulary size (Gass et al., 2013; S. Lee, 2006; Paribakht & Wesche, 1993; Schmitt, 1998, 2000).

Nation (2001) argues that explicit vocabulary learning is a conscious process that involves linking knowledge of the word form to knowledge of the meaning of the word. L2 learners need to be taught a base of 2000 high-frequency words explicitly to reach a

realistic level of competence. Teachers should clarify the meaning of words, and L2 learners need to be exposed to relevant exercises, use dictionaries, and determine the meanings. With regard to explicit vocabulary teaching, Sökmen (1997) highlights key principles: building a large sight vocabulary, integrating new words with the old, providing various encounters with words, promoting a deep level of processing, facilitating imaging and concreteness, using a variety of techniques, and encouraging independent learner strategies (p. 239).

Teaching word families rather than individual words contributes to maximizing L2 vocabulary learning. Word families, which are a set of words that consist of a base word and its inflections and/or derivations, bring together words that involve associations. A word's meaning can be partially inferred from its relationship to similar words, and vocabulary in a word family is semantically connected by having a common root. Therefore, teaching word lists through word association skills has been shown to be effective for learning a great number of words in a brief period and retaining them. Semantic mapping is another useful activity that makes conscious relationships among the target words and strengthens comprehension by developing associative networks for them (Decarrico, 2001; Schmitt, 2000).

Incidental vocabulary learning occurs as a by-product when learners concentrate on meaning comprehension rather than on explicit learning of new words. When L2 learners have acquired the minimum threshold of two to three thousand high-frequency words through explicit study, most low-frequency words are likely to be learned incidentally from reading at an appropriate level. Extensive reading, where reading is performed consistently over a period of time, can be a potent way of learning new vocabulary in contexts. Vocabulary learning from extensive reading is, however, rather limited. In order to learn a large amount of vocabulary, therefore, learners need to conduct a great deal of extensive reading, which allows unrestricted repeated exposure (Coady, 1997; Gass et al., 2013; Nation, 2001; Nation & Waring, 1997).

2. Vocabulary Learning Strategies

Decarrico (2001) indicates that incidental vocabulary learning can be considerably facilitated when learners make use of vocabulary learning strategies. These strategies are needed in guiding learners to move on to independent learning by determining the meanings of low-frequency words encountered while reading. Strategies are conducive to discovering and consolidating the meaning of a word. Therefore, L2 learners can independently achieve vocabulary growth when they employ a variety of vocabulary learning strategies in addition to extensive reading.

Learners' proficiency level and the frequency of the target words can affect the effectiveness of individual vocabulary learning strategies. For instance, word lists are useful for beginner learners, while contextualized words are better for more advanced learners. On the other hand, strategies for reviewing and consolidation are necessary for high-frequency words taught explicitly, whereas meaning determination strategies, such as guessing from context, using mnemonic techniques, and analyzing word parts, are efficient for low-frequency words encountered incidentally while reading authentic texts. Regarding the variables that influence the success of the guessing strategy, a given context needs to be rich enough to offer clues for guessing the word's meaning as a single context is often insufficient to determine its full meaning. Background knowledge about the addressed topic and/or culture helps in inferencing. Moreover, readers are likely to use local clues in proximity to an unknown word more than global clues that are located far in the distance. Furthermore, learners should be able to determine what clues to search for and where to detect them (Nation, 1990; Schmitt, 2000).

Learners should be encouraged to learn vocabulary by using a dictionary strategy, which aids in comprehension and production (Nist & Olejnik, 1995; Summers, 1988). In a study of inferencing and dictionary look-up behavior, Hulstijn (1993) reported that learners who consulted a dictionary to confirm their guesses performed well in inferencing. Alexandri (1995) investigated the reasons for looking up words in advanced Greek EFL learners. The most common reasons, in order of frequency, for using a dictionary were: to check a word that seemed familiar; because the word is important for understanding; because I couldn't guess what the word meant; because the word is in the beginning part of the text; and because the word is used again later. It is important to note that repeatedly used words are regarded as requiring identification of their accurate meanings in the dictionary for the sake of overall comprehension.

Moreover, Nation (2001) claimed that gaining control of prefixes and suffixes could be another useful strategy in that learners can use knowledge of affixes and roots to learn unfamiliar words by connecting these words to known words or to known prefixes and suffixes, and that they can use this knowledge in verifying if an unfamiliar word has been appropriately guessed from the context. Since there are a limited number of affixes, it is recommended that they are taught in class for the purpose of helping learners improve their vocabulary.

Schmitt (1997) built a taxonomy of vocabulary learning strategies. The strategies used to discover a new word's meaning included determination and social strategies, and the strategies used to consolidate a word after encountering it included social, memory, cognitive, and metacognitive strategies. Using the taxonomy, he investigated vocabulary strategy use. The subjects were 600 Japanese EFL learners who were grouped into junior

high school students, high school students, university students, and adult learners. Regarding the discovery strategies, "bilingual dictionary use" was the most commonly used, followed by "guessing from context." In contrast, "checking for L1 cognate" was the least commonly used. As for the consolidation strategies, "verbal repetition" and "written repetition" were the most commonly used, while "semantic maps" and "teachers checking flash cards for accuracy" were the least commonly used. It was found that the popularity of vocabulary learning strategies changed as learners matured. Schmitt recommended that teachers take learners' maturity and language proficiency into account in selecting strategies.

Using a questionnaire, Gu and Johnson (1996) examined Chinese EFL students' vocabulary learning strategies and the relationship between their strategies and outcomes in learning English. The results showed that the participants relied more on meaning-oriented strategies rather than rote strategies. Specifically, contextual guessing, skillful use of dictionaries, note-taking, paying attention to word formation, and intentional activation of newly learned words all positively correlated with vocabulary size and general proficiency. Visual repetition of new words (e.g., writing words over and over), however, negatively correlated with vocabulary size and general proficiency. The best group of learners strongly believed in vocabulary learning through natural exposure and careful studying, while the weakest group believed in memorization.

In a subsequent study, Gu (2002) found that gender was a potent variable that affected Chinese EFL learners' vocabulary strategies and learning outcomes. Female participants performed significantly better than male participants in terms of vocabulary size and general proficiency, and they were also more likely to employ almost all the strategies that were conducive to success in Gu and Johnson's study. Academic major, however, was a less potent variable than gender with regard to these same aspects.

There have been various empirical studies on vocabulary learning strategies with Korean EFL learners. In an investigation of the relationship between high school students' vocabulary level and vocabulary strategy use, I**.** Jeon (2007) found that the advanced and intermediate groups used a wider range of vocabulary learning strategies compared with the lower group. Additionally, the advanced group employed discovery, memory, and cognitive strategies more frequently than the intermediate and lower groups. The implication is that the higher the vocabulary level of the students, the more positive the attitude they show toward using vocabulary learning strategies. Likewise, J. Huh (2009) explored the relationship between middle school students' vocabulary learning strategy use and their vocabulary proficiency level and discovered that learners' vocabulary proficiency level significantly influenced their vocabulary strategy use. The more proficient learners used vocabulary learning strategies more actively. Specifically, the high-proficiency-level

group favored metacognitive strategies the most, while the middle- and low-proficiency-level groups used cognitive strategies the most.

Using the questionnaire adapted from Schmitt's study (1997), S. Lee (2007) examined college students' perceived use of vocabulary learning strategies and how gender and vocabulary size were associated with their strategy use in terms of pattern and frequency. The results showed that less cognitively demanding strategies were preferred more than ones that involved deeper processing. "Bilingual dictionary use" and "saying a word aloud when studying" were the most commonly used strategies, while "practicing words using flash cards" and "studying or practicing meaning in a group" were the least popular strategies. In general, gender did not significantly influence the pattern and frequency of strategy use, which contrasts with Gu's (2002) observation. Furthermore, the students with a large vocabulary size employed strategies more frequently than those with a small vocabulary size, which supports the result of I. Jeon's (2007) and J. Huh's (2009) studies.

Y. Chon and Y. Kim (2011) also analyzed high school students' lexical strategies regarding vocabulary proficiency based on Schmitt's (1997) taxonomy. The results showed that the proficient learners demonstrated more frequent use of strategies. For discovery strategies, the less proficient learners were not frequently involved in analyzing parts of speech, affixes and roots of words, guessing from textual context, or conducting group work activities, and for consolidation strategies, they did not sufficiently use social strategies. On the other hand, **T.** Pae (2014) explored the structural relationships between college students' vocabulary learning strategies and their vocabulary accomplishments. He found that determination and deep processing strategies had a direct impact on learners' vocabulary accomplishments, whereas social, memorization, cognitive, and metacognitive strategies indirectly affected their vocabulary accomplishments through determination and/or deep processing strategies.

To sum up, most previous studies on EFL/ESL learners' vocabulary learning strategies have been implemented in relation to different age groups, gender, and proficiency level and have yielded contrasting results. Notably, Korean EFL learners' vocabulary learning strategies seem to have been analyzed mostly based on Schmitt's (1997) taxonomy, which may limit the generalization of the findings. However, the relationship between learners' beliefs and vocabulary proficiency, which might influence vocabulary learning strategy use, has been rarely examined. EFL teachers in Korea are often assigned to teach multilevel classes in which students largely vary in language proficiency and learning styles and are in need of individual attention and support (Hess, 2001). In order to better develop new techniques and curriculums for vocabulary instruction that are pertinent to multilevel classes, it is necessary to further explore EFL learners' vocabulary learning beliefs and strategy use in relation to vocabulary proficiency levels.

III. METHOD

1. Participants

The participants in this study were comprised of 110 students who were enrolled in either of the two class sections of an elective English course, which focused on reading comprehension, vocabulary, and grammar, offered at a university located in South Gyeongsang Province. The participants ranged from 20–27 years of age and were from different major fields (e.g., public administration, English, biomedical engineering, law). The majority of the participants were juniors and seniors; no freshmen were involved. The female participants (n = 68) outnumbered the male participants (n = 42).

2. Data Collection

1) Vocabulary Proficiency Test

During the fifth week of the fall semester in 2015, the researcher assessed the participants' vocabulary proficiency levels by implementing a 50-item vocabulary test, which was an adapted version of Nation's (2001) Vocabulary Levels Test at the 3000-word level and the University Word List Level; the time limit was 50 minutes. The data pool revealed that the participants achieved a mean score of 23.4 (range = 9–46 correct items). For the purposes of data analysis, the participants were divided into groups of high- and low-level learners. The participants who scored at or above the mean of 23.4 were assigned to the category of "high-level learners”; those who scored below the mean were assigned to a group called "low-level learners." There were 54 high-level learners with a mean score of 29.9 (range = 24–46 correct items). The number of low-level learners was 56 with a mean score of 17.3 (range = 9–23 correct items).

2) Questionnaire

After taking the vocabulary proficiency test, all the participants were allowed a 10-minute break and then were directed to respond to a questionnaire written in Korean for an hour. Specifically, the participants' beliefs about vocabulary learning and their self-reported vocabulary learning strategies were adapted from the questionnaire developed by Gu and Johnson (1996). Regarding the results of the pilot study, some of the items on the questionnaire were slightly modified or deleted. For instance, a dictionary strategy, "When I get interested in another new word in the definitions of the word I look up, I look up this word as well," was excluded because most of the students preferred to use a bilingual

dictionary. Occasions in which they become interested in another word in the "definitions" of the word that they look up would not happen unless they were using a monolingual dictionary. Furthermore, typical examples of certain strategies were provided when necessary. For instance, "peace/peach/pearl/peasant" were given in parentheses for item 43, "I remember a group of new words that share a similar part in spelling." Finally, the shortened revised version of the questionnaire included two sections. Section 1, Beliefs about Vocabulary Learning, consisted of 10 items investigating three dimensions of beliefs: word memorization, bottom-up processing, and top-down processing. The participants were asked to rate each item on a five-point Likert Scale: Strongly agree (5), Agree (4), Neutral/Undecided (3), Disagree (2), and Strongly disagree (1). On the other hand, Section 2 (items 11–63), Vocabulary Learning Strategies, consisted of seven categories: metacognitive regulation, guessing strategies, dictionary strategies, note-taking strategies, rehearsal strategies, encoding strategies, and activation strategies. Again, the participants were asked to rate each item on a five-point Likert Scale: Always (5), Usually (4), Sometimes (3), Rarely (2), and Never (1).

3) Data Analysis

Descriptive statistics (percentages, mean scores, and standard deviations) were computed for all the quantitative items on the questionnaire. For the sake of easy data interpretation, the participants' responses to items 1–10 were collapsed into three types: P (Positive: Strongly agree [5] & Agree [4]), U (Undecided/Neutral [3]), and N (Negative: Disagree [2] & Strongly disagree [1]). Likewise, the participants' responses to items 11–63 were combined into another three types: A/U (Always [5] & Usually [4]), S (Sometimes [3]), and R/N (Rarely [2] & Never [1]). Responses for all the items from high-level and low-level learners were tabulated together and comparisons were drawn to investigate similarities and differences. T-tests were run afterwards to examine the relationship between EFL students' beliefs and vocabulary proficiency and between their vocabulary learning strategies and vocabulary proficiency.

IV. RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

1. EFL Students' Beliefs about Vocabulary Learning

As shown in Table 1, items 1–4 examined word memorization. Regarding item 1, many of the participants (53.7% vs. 46.4%) agreed that once the English equivalents of all Korean words have been remembered, English is learned. In other words, they appear to

believe that vocabulary has a crucial impact on acquiring English. Only around a third of both groups, however, endorsed the statement that the best way to remember words is to memorize word lists or dictionaries (35.2% vs. 33.9%). This finding indicates that regardless of vocabulary proficiency, most of the participants do not strongly believe in rote memorization. In response to items 3 and 4, the majority of both groups disagreed that it is only necessary to remember one dictionary definition (90.7% vs. 87.5%), but agreed that repetition is the best way to remember words (90.7% vs. 94.5%). Thus, we can see that the participants predominantly understood that a word can carry multiple meanings while placing great emphasis on repetition for remembering words.

Items 5–7 referred to acquiring vocabulary in context (i.e. bottom-up processing). Surprisingly, a considerable number of the participants disagreed that learners can expand their vocabulary simply by reading a lot (40.7% vs. 48.2%), but agreed that guessing words in context is one of the best ways to learn vocabulary (46.3% vs. 42.9%). These findings could be interpreted as meaning that by and large, both groups believe that contextual guessing is more effective than extensive reading for vocabulary development. On the other hand, a large number of the participants agreed with the statement that when you come across a word several times in different contexts, you will know what it means (86.8% vs. 78.6%). This outcome seems to reflect their belief regarding item 4, which emphasized repetition. In other words, the majority of both groups understand that repeated exposure in context could lead to picking up words naturally.

Items 8–10 referred to studying and using vocabulary (i.e. top-down processing). A large number of the participants felt that using the language (listening, speaking, reading, and writing) is more important than memorizing words (88.9% vs. 85.7%); a learner should at least know about the form of a word, its meaning, and its basic usage (81.5% vs. 80.4%); and words are learned after they use them (94.1% vs. 83.9%). In short, the participants predominantly believe that words should be carefully studied and utilized before they are finally learned, although many of them also believe that vocabulary could be acquired in context, as demonstrated in the responses to items 5–7. These findings are compatible with Gu and Johnson's (1996) observations.

TABLE 1

Beliefs about Vocabulary Learning

Item	Content	Group	P %	U %	N %	Mean	SD
1	Once the English equivalents of all Korean words have been remembered, English is learned.	H	53.7	25.9	20.4	3.44	1.00
		L	46.4	33.9	19.6	3.27	0.90
2	The best way to remember words is to memorize word lists or dictionaries.	H	35.2	35.2	29.6	3.02	1.00
		L	33.9	41.1	25.0	3.13	1.06

3	It is only necessary to remember one dictionary definition.	H	0.0	9.3	90.7	1.70	0.63
		L	3.6	8.9	87.5	1.89	0.78
4	Repetition is the best way to remember words.	H	90.7	9.3	0.0	4.48	0.67
		L	94.5	5.5	0.0	4.36	0.59
5	Learners can expand their vocabulary simply by reading a lot.	H	29.6	29.6	40.7	2.91	1.05
		L	21.4	30.4	48.2	2.70	0.97
6	Guessing words in context is one of the best ways to learn vocabulary.	H	46.3	33.3	20.4	3.37	0.94
		L	42.9	37.5	19.6	3.32	0.90
7	When you come across a word several times in different contexts, you will know what it means.	H	86.8	9.4	3.8	4.15	0.74
		L	78.6	17.9	3.6	3.96	0.74
8	Using the language (listening, speaking, reading, and writing) is more important than memorizing words.	H	88.9	11.1	0.0	4.28	0.66
		L	85.7	10.7	3.6	4.27	0.80
9	A learner should at least know about the form of a word, its meaning, and its basic usage.	H	81.5	13.0	5.6	3.93	0.80
		L	80.4	19.6	0.0	3.88	0.51
10	Words are learned after you use them.	H	94.1	5.9	0.0	4.33	0.59
		L	83.9	16.1	0.0	4.16	0.68

H= High-level learners, L= Low-level learners

2. EFL Students' Vocabulary Learning Strategies

1) Metacognitive Regulation

As shown in Table 2, items 11–13 addressed regulating vocabulary learning with selective attention. Many of the high-level learners (53.7%) said that they always or usually determine which words are important for them to learn, while only 37.5% of the low-level learners claimed to do so. A possible interpretation of this outcome might be that the low-level learners are more likely to perceive all the unknown words to be equally important than the high-level learners. The majority of both groups reported always or usually looking up words that they are interested in (57.4% vs. 58.9%). This finding shows that interest is a motivating factor that the participants take into account in choosing what vocabulary to look up, which supports the result of Haggard's (1986) study. Furthermore, 38.9% of the high-level learners indicated that they always or usually know what cues they should use in guessing the meaning of a particular word, while only 21.8% of the low-level learners mentioned this. Thus, it can be conjectured that high-level learners are better able

to determine what cues to use in guessing the meaning of an unknown vocabulary item than their counterparts.

Items 14–16 addressed regulating vocabulary learning with self-initiation. It is important to note that a large number of the low-level learners (62.5%) reported that besides textbooks, they rarely or never look for other texts that fall under their interests, while 40.7% of the high-level learners said they did. This finding could be interpreted as meaning that many of the low-level learners are not likely to be involved in incidental vocabulary learning on their own. On the other hand, the majority of both groups mentioned that they always or usually focus only on things that are directly related to examinations (53.7% vs. 64.3%). In other words, regardless of vocabulary proficiency, the participants predominantly perceive the vocabulary related to examinations as a learning priority. Notably, 50% of the low-level learners mentioned that they always or usually do not care much about vocabulary items that their teacher does not explain in class, while only 24.1% of the high-level learners said this. A possible interpretation for this outcome might be that many of the low-level learners are likely to rely on their teacher in vocabulary learning, which reflects an authority-oriented learning style (Richards & Lockhart, 1996).

TABLE 2

Metacognitive Regulation

Item	Content	Group	A/U %	S %	R/N %	Mean	SD
11	I determine which words are important for me to learn.	H	53.7	25.9	20.4	3.41	0.94
		L	37.5	37.5	25.0	3.07	0.85
12	I look up words that I am interested in.	H	57.4	35.2	7.4	3.80	1.02
		L	58.9	30.4	10.7	3.70	0.99
13	I know what cues I should use in guessing the meaning of a particular word.	H	38.9	33.3	27.8	3.13	0.91
		L	21.8	45.5	32.7	2.87	0.96
14	Besides textbooks, I look for other texts that fall under my interests.	H	24.1	35.2	40.7	2.81	1.07
		L	10.7	26.8	62.5	2.36	0.96
15	I focus only on things that are directly related to examinations.	H	53.7	31.5	14.8	3.39	0.94
		L	64.3	14.3	21.4	3.50	1.08
16	I do not care much about vocabulary items that my teacher does not explain in class.	H	24.1	33.3	42.6	2.72	0.94
		L	50.0	19.6	30.4	3.20	1.05

H= High-level learners, L= Low-level learners

2) Guessing Strategies

As shown in Table 3, items 17–19 explored the participants' use of background knowledge/wider context for guessing vocabulary meaning. A large number of the participants mentioned that they always or usually make use of their own sense and knowledge of the world when guessing the meaning of a word (81.5% vs. 67.9%). In response to item 18, more or less than 50% of the participants said that they always or usually check their guessed meaning against the wider context to see if it fits. Additionally, around half of the participants reported always or usually looking for other words or expressions in the passage that support their guessed meaning of a new word (50.0% vs. 48.2%). Thus, we can see that regardless of vocabulary proficiency, the participants frequently take the wider context into account and apply their background knowledge.

Items 20–22 examined the participants' use of linguistic cues/immediate context for guessing vocabulary meaning. The majority of participants indicated that they always or usually make use of the grammatical structure of a sentence when guessing the meaning of a new word (68.5% vs. 67.9%). Furthermore, a large number of both groups reported always or usually making use of the part of speech of a new word when guessing its meaning (74.1% vs. 66.1%). This result is in contrast with C. Chin's (2008) observations that only around a third of the proficient and less proficient readers utilized the part of speech to unlock the meaning of unknown vocabulary. In response to item 22, the majority of both groups mentioned that they always or usually check their guessed meaning against the immediate context to see if it fits (68.5% vs. 66.1%). Compared with the outcome of item 18, this outcome showed that on the whole, the participants consider the immediate context more frequently than the wider context in checking their guessed meaning, which concurs with the findings of previous studies (Nation, 1990; Schmitt, 2000).

TABLE 3

Guessing Strategies

Item	Content	Group	A/U %	S %	R/N %	Mean	SD
17	I make use of my common sense and knowledge of the world when guessing the meaning of a word.	H	81.5	16.7	1.9	4.00	0.67
		L	67.9	25.0	7.1	3.93	0.93
18	I check my guessed meaning against the wider context to see if it fits.	H	46.3	31.5	22.2	3.31	1.13
		L	51.8	16.1	32.1	3.32	1.11
19	I look for other words or expressions in the passage that support my guessed meaning of a new word.	H	50.0	33.3	16.7	3.43	0.88
		L	48.2	30.4	21.4	3.34	1.07

20	I make use of the grammatical structure of a sentence when guessing the meaning of a new word.	H	68.5	16.7	14.8	3.85	1.04
		L	67.9	19.6	12.5	3.79	1.00
21	I make use of the part of speech of a new word when guessing its meaning.	H	74.1	14.8	11.1	3.93	0.95
		L	66.1	21.4	12.5	3.75	1.00
22	I check my guessed meaning against the immediate context to see if it fits.	H	68.5	22.2	9.3	3.78	0.92
		L	66.1	19.6	14.3	3.71	1.00

H= High-level learners, L= Low-level learners

3) Dictionary Strategies

As shown in Table 4, items 23–25 assessed dictionary strategies for comprehension. A majority of the participants mentioned that they always or usually look up an unfamiliar word when they see it again and again (88.9% vs. 94.6%); when they want to confirm their guess about the word (83.0% vs. 87.5%); and when the word is crucial to the understanding of the sentence or paragraph in which it appears (87.0% vs. 83.6%). These outcomes corroborate Alexandri's (1995) findings that repeatedly used words as well as important words for understanding were prime dictionary look-up targets.

Items 26 and 27 concerned extended dictionary strategies. More than half of the participants indicated that they always or usually pay attention to the examples of usage when they look up a word in a dictionary (59.3% vs. 51.8%). On the other hand, only around a third of both groups reported always or usually looking for phrases or set expressions that are used with the word they look up (37.0% vs. 32.1%). A possible explanation for this result might be that the participants are interested in sample sentences that simply show how to use the unfamiliar word they look up, but they are not strongly concerned about its extended usage, such as collocations and pragmatic patterns.

Items 28 and 29 examined looked-up words. Strikingly, only a small number of the participants (37.0% vs. 25.0%) indicated that if the new word they try to look up seems to have a prefix or suffix, they will always or usually try to find the entry for the stem. Thus, it was conjectured that many of the participants are not likely to look up the root if an affixed form of a new word is not discovered in the dictionary. On the other hand, a large number of the participants (63.0% vs. 51.8%) indicated that if there are multiple senses or homographic entries, they always or usually use various types of information to reduce them by elimination. A possible explanation for this outcome might be that many of the participants attempt to search for appropriate meanings of a new word based on several clues, such as part of speech, style, and collocations.

TABLE 4

Dictionary Strategies

Item	Content	Group	A/U %	S %	R/N %	Mean	SD
23	When I see an unfamiliar word again and again, I look it up.	H	88.9	11.1	0.0	4.33	0.67
		L	94.6	1.8	3.6	4.39	0.71
24	When I want to confirm my guess about a word, I look it up.	H	83.0	13.2	3.8	4.26	0.84
		L	87.5	10.7	1.8	4.25	0.79
25	I look up a word that is crucial to the understanding of the sentence or paragraph in which it appears.	H	87.0	9.3	3.7	4.20	0.76
		L	83.6	12.7	3.6	4.24	0.88
26	I pay attention to the examples of usage when I look up a word in a dictionary.	H	59.3	22.2	18.5	3.57	1.04
		L	51.8	28.6	19.6	3.48	1.14
27	I look for phrases or set expressions that are used with the word I look up.	H	37.0	35.2	27.8	3.13	1.10
		L	32.1	32.1	35.7	2.96	1.06
28	If the new word I try to look up seems to have a prefix or suffix, I will try to find the entry for the stem.	H	37.0	14.8	48.1	2.89	1.33
		L	25.0	8.9	66.1	2.48	1.04
29	If there are multiple senses or homographic entries, I use various types of information to reduce them by elimination.	H	63.0	20.4	16.7	3.57	1.07
		L	51.8	26.8	21.4	3.48	1.13

H= High-level learners, L= Low-level learners

4) Note-taking Strategies

As shown in Table 5, items 30–32 explored meaning-oriented note-taking strategies. The participants indicated that they always or usually make a note of the meaning of a new word when they think the word they are looking up is commonly used (68.5% vs. 64.3%) or relevant to their personal interests (42.6% vs. 34.5%). Thus, we can see that a word's popularity is a dominant factor over a personal interest when the participants determine which word's meaning to take note of. On the other hand, a significant number of the participants reported rarely or never writing down both the Korean equivalent and the English synonyms of the word they look up (42.6% vs. 53.6%). This outcome shows that many of the participants pay little attention to the English synonyms referring to a target word. All the information that they need might be its Korean equivalent (i.e. definition).

Items 33–35 focused on usage-oriented note-taking strategies. Less than a third of the participants (32.1% vs. 28.6%) reported always or usually taking down grammatical information about a word when they look it up. Strikingly, a large number of both groups disclosed that they rarely or never take down collocations of the word they look up (70.4% vs. 66.1%) and the examples showing its usages (57.4% vs. 62.5%). Thus, we can see that the participants on the whole are not eager to learn more than a new word's meaning. Moreover, both groups are generally less likely to note down a new word's usage-related information than its meaning-related information, a finding that was the opposite of Gu and Johnson's (1996) observations.

TABLE 5

Note-taking Strategies

Item	Content	Group	A/U %	S %	R/N %	Mean	SD
30	I make a note of the meaning of a new word when I think the word I'm looking up is commonly used.	H	68.5	14.8	16.7	3.78	1.13
		L	64.3	23.2	12.5	3.77	1.08
31	I make a note when I think the word I'm looking up is relevant to my personal interests.	H	42.6	35.2	22.2	3.20	0.92
		L	34.5	34.5	30.9	3.11	1.20
32	I write down both the Korean equivalent and the English synonyms of the word I look up.	H	22.2	35.2	42.6	2.76	0.97
		L	26.8	19.6	53.6	2.64	1.14
33	I take down the collocations of the word I look up.	H	9.3	20.4	70.4	2.17	0.88
		L	8.9	25.0	66.1	2.16	0.93
34	I take down grammatical information about a word when I look it up.	H	32.1	22.6	45.3	2.87	1.16
		L	28.6	28.6	42.9	2.79	1.00
35	I note down examples showing the usages of the word I look up.	H	22.2	20.4	57.4	2.56	1.06
		L	14.3	23.2	62.5	2.30	0.97

H= High-level learners, L= Low-level learners

5) Rehearsal Strategies

As shown in Table 6, items 36 and 37 looked at using word lists. Less than half of the participants indicated that they always or usually write the new words on one side of a piece of card and their Korean explanations on the other side (42.6% vs. 44.6%) and go through their vocabulary list several times until they are sure that there are no words on the

list that they still do not understand (42.6% vs. 26.8%). Items 38 and 39 examined oral repetition. It is notable that 55.6% of the high-level learners always or usually felt that repeating the sound of a new word to themselves would be enough for them to remember the word, while only 37.5% of the low-level learners claimed this. A possible interpretation for this outcome is that repeating a word aloud to oneself could be a successful memory strategy that low-level learners should use more frequently. On the other hand, a considerable number of both groups indicated that when they try to remember a word, they rarely or never repeat its pronunciation in their minds (42.6% vs. 46.4%). In short, the participants on the whole appeared to be skeptical of silently repeating a word's pronunciation as a mnemonic device.

Items 40–42 addressed visual repetition. A large number of both groups claimed that in order to remember a word, they always or usually write it repeatedly (58.5% vs. 71.4%) or write both the word and its Korean equivalent repeatedly (51.9% vs. 60.0%). These outcomes seemed to be derived from the outcome of item 4; an overwhelming majority of the participants believed that repetition is the best way to remember words. In response to item 41, however, less than a third of the participants reported always or usually memorizing the spelling of a word letter by letter (20.4% vs. 28.6%). In all, the low-level learners are more likely to use visual repetition strategies than the high-level learners. This finding supports Gu and Johnson's (1996) observation that visual repetition was negatively correlated with vocabulary size.

TABLE 6

Rehearsal Strategies

Item	Content	Group	A/U %	S %	R/N %	Mean	SD
36	I write the new words on one side of a piece of card and their Korean explanations on the other side.	H	42.6	18.5	38.9	3.04	1.36
		L	44.6	17.9	37.5	3.14	1.30
37	I go through my vocabulary list several times until I am sure that there are no words on the list that I still don’t understand.	H	42.6	35.2	22.2	3.19	1.07
		L	26.8	32.1	41.1	2.86	1.10
38	Repeating the sound of a new word to myself is enough for me to remember the word.	H	55.6	29.6	14.8	3.57	1.11
		L	37.5	28.6	33.9	3.05	1.10
39	When I try to remember a word, I repeat its pronunciation in my mind.	H	14.8	42.6	42.6	2.67	0.99
		L	26.8	26.8	46.4	2.61	1.23

40	When I try to remember a word, I write it repeatedly.	H	58.5	18.9	22.6	3.53	1.28
		L	71.4	21.4	7.1	4.02	0.94
41	I memorize the spelling of a word letter by letter.	H	20.4	20.4	59.3	2.37	1.12
		L	28.6	25.0	46.4	2.82	1.22
42	I write both the new word and its Korean equivalent repeatedly to remember it.	H	51.9	14.8	33.3	3.28	1.24
		L	60.0	23.6	16.4	3.76	1.14

H= High-level learners, L= Low-level learners

6) Encoding Strategies

As shown in Table 7, item 43 examined association and item 44 concerned elaboration. A small number of the participants (22.2% vs. 16.1%) indicated that they always or usually remember a group of new words that share a similar part in spelling (e.g. peace, peach, pearl, and peasant). Strikingly, over 70% of both groups reported rarely or never creating a sentence in Korean when they link a new word to a known word. A plausible interpretation for these outcomes is that most of the participants tend not to group new words in terms of spelling or rely on their L1 as a mnemonic device. Items 45 and 46 looked into imagery. The majority of participants (66.7% vs. 55.4%) claimed that they rarely or never act out a new word to remember it better. An explanation for this outcome could be that the participants on the whole are not very inclined towards a kinesthetic learning style. In contrast, a considerable number of the participants (42.6% vs. 46.4%) reported always or usually creating a mental image of the new word to help them remember it. A possible explanation for this outcome may be that the participants in general perceive that physically acting out a new word is more challenging and/or cumbersome than simply creating a mental image.

Items 47 and 48 examined visual encoding. A considerable number of the participants claimed that they always or usually visualize the new word to help them remember it (44.4% vs. 41.1%), but they rarely or never associate a new word with a known English word that looks similar (42.6% vs. 44.6%). Thus, we can see that the participants prefer to make a visual image of an individual word rather than draw visual connections between a new word and a known word. Items 49 and 50 concerned auditory encoding. It is notable that the majority of participants reported rarely or never remembering words that sound similar together (59.3% vs. 57.1%) or associating a new word with a known English word that sounds similar (59.3% vs. 62.5%). These outcomes showed that the participants are generally less likely to implement auditory encoding than visual encoding.

Items 51–53 addressed word structure. More or less than 50% of the participants said that they rarely or never analyze words in terms of prefixes, stems, and suffixes or intend to study word formation rules to remember more words. A considerable number of the participants, however, claimed that they always or usually memorize commonly used stems and prefixes (48.1% vs. 35.7%). Thus, we can see that most of the participants do not frequently analyze word parts. In other words, they do not seem to be highly drawn to an analytical learning style. Richards and Lockhart (1996) specified that learners with an analytical learning style like to study grammar. Stated reversely, it is understandable that these participants are not actively involved in studying word formation rules, which are a part of grammar.

Items 54–56 focused on semantic encoding. The majority of participants claimed that they rarely or never try to create semantic networks in their minds and remember words in meaningful groups (68.5% vs. 82.1%) or group words into categories (e.g. animals, utensils, vegetables) (61.1% vs. 71.4%). In short, the participants pay little attention to semantic mapping, which supports the finding of Schmitt's (1997) experiment with Japanese EFL learners. A possible reason for these outcomes might be that Korean EFL students are not familiar with semantic mapping due to a lack of experience. Moreover, 33.3% of the high-level learners said that when they encounter a new word, they always or usually search their memory and see if they have any synonyms and antonyms in their vocabulary stock, while only 19.6% of the low-level learners claimed to do this. It may be that due to having relatively weak vocabulary, the low-level learners have more difficulty searching for synonyms and antonyms of a new word than their counterparts.

Items 57–59 examined contextual encoding. Many of the participants indicated that when they try to remember a word, they rarely or never remember the sentence in which the word is used (53.7% vs. 58.9%). This outcome seemed to reflect the result of item 35; the majority of participants are not likely to note examples showing the usages of the word they look up. Meanwhile, only a small number of the participants (25.9% vs. 17.9%) mentioned that they rarely or never intend to read books in their areas of interest so that they can find and remember the special terminology that they know in Korean. This outcome seemed to be influenced by their belief referring to item 5. That is, more than 40% of both groups gave a negative answer to the statement: "Learners can expand their vocabulary simply by reading a lot." On the other hand, 66.7% of the high-level learners said that they always or usually learn words better when they put them in context (e.g. phrases, sentences) in contrast with 49.1% of the low-level learners. This outcome appeared to be consistent with their belief referring to item 7. That is, the high-level learners agreed with the statement "When you come across a word several times in different contexts, you will know what it means" more than the low-level learners.

TABLE 7

Encoding Strategies

Item	Content	Group	A/U %	S %	R/N %	Mean	SD
43	I remember a group of new words that share a similar part in spelling.	H	22.2	20.4	57.4	2.57	1.09
		L	16.1	26.8	57.1	2.43	1.01
44	I create a sentence in Korean when I link a new word to a known word.	H	11.1	11.1	77.8	2.02	0.94
		L	8.9	19.6	71.4	2.05	1.05
45	I act out a new word to remember it better.	H	14.8	18.5	66.7	2.24	1.15
		L	14.3	30.4	55.4	2.27	1.12
46	I create a mental image of the new word to help me remember it.	H	42.6	29.6	27.8	3.26	1.15
		L	46.4	30.4	23.2	3.20	1.24
47	I visualize the new word to help me remember it.	H	44.4	25.9	29.6	3.13	1.06
		L	41.1	35.7	23.2	3.25	1.07
48	I associate a new word with a known English word that looks similar.	H	27.8	29.6	42.6	2.76	1.03
		L	16.1	39.3	44.6	2.63	0.98
49	I remember words that sound similar together.	H	14.8	25.9	59.3	2.46	0.93
		L	21.4	21.4	57.1	2.54	0.95
50	I associate a new word with a known English word that sounds similar.	H	11.1	29.6	59.3	2.39	1.04
		L	8.9	28.6	62.5	2.27	0.88
51	I analyze words in terms of prefixes, stems, and suffixes.	H	31.5	24.1	44.4	2.87	1.15
		L	30.4	14.3	55.4	2.57	1.25
52	I intend to study word formation rules to remember more words.	H	18.5	27.8	53.7	2.54	1.04
		L	26.8	25.0	48.2	2.63	1.15
53	I memorize the commonly used stems and prefixes.	H	48.1	25.9	25.9	3.33	1.05
		L	35.7	32.1	32.1	3.04	1.21
54	I try to create semantic networks in my mind and remember words in meaningful groups.	H	14.8	16.7	68.5	2.26	0.96
		L	5.4	12.5	82.1	1.95	0.80

55	When I meet a new word, I search my memory and see if I have any synonyms and antonyms in my vocabulary stock.	H	33.3	44.4	22.2	3.13	0.85
		L	19.6	44.6	35.7	2.84	0.87
56	I group words into categories (e.g. animals, utensils, vegetables).	H	18.5	20.4	61.1	2.39	1.05
		L	7.1	21.4	71.4	2.14	0.90
57	When I try to remember a word, I remember the sentence in which the word is used.	H	20.4	25.9	53.7	2.63	1.03
		L	8.9	32.1	58.9	2.34	0.92
58	I intend to read books in my areas of interest so that I can find and remember the special terminology that I know in Korean.	H	25.9	33.3	40.7	2.80	1.17
		L	17.9	21.4	60.7	2.27	1.18
59	I learn words better when I put them in context (e.g. phrases, sentences).	H	66.7	16.7	16.7	3.78	1.04
		L	49.1	29.1	21.8	3.36	0.99

H= High-level learners, L= Low-level learners

7) Activation Strategies

As shown in Table 8, items 60–63 examined the intentional activation of new words. It is notable that activation strategies ranked relatively low. A minority of the participants (33.3% vs. 23.2%) claimed that they always or usually try to read as much as possible so that they can make use of the words they have tried to remember. Along with the result of item 58, this outcome reveals that the participants on the whole do not strongly rely on extensive reading to enlarge their vocabulary. Contrary to expectations, less than a third of both groups said that they always or usually try to use newly learned words as much as possible in speech and writing (29.6% vs. 28.6%) or use them in real situations (31.5% vs. 32.1%). These outcomes demonstrated an inconsistency. That is, while the majority of participants believe that words are learned after they use them (item 10), many of them do not frequently attempt to use the newly learned words in real-life contexts (items 62 and 63). Thus, we can see that the participants do not always put their belief into practice. Notably, item 61 was shown to be the least popular strategy. Many of the participants (44.4% vs. 64.3%) reported rarely or never making up their own sentences using words they have just learned. In all, the participants seemed to perceive creating their own sentences using newly learned words as a more challenging task than simply using them in speech and/or writing.

TABLE 8

Activation Strategies

Item	Content	Group	A/U %	S %	R/N %	Mean	SD
60	I try to read as much as possible so that I can make use of the words I have tried to remember.	H	33.3	27.8	38.9	2.98	1.04
		L	23.2	30.4	46.4	2.68	0.99
61	I make up my own sentences using words I have just learned.	H	18.5	37.0	44.4	2.67	0.99
		L	14.3	21.4	64.3	2.23	1.06
62	I try to use newly learned words as much as possible in speech and writing.	H	29.6	46.3	24.1	3.06	0.94
		L	28.6	26.8	44.6	2.75	1.13
63	I try to use newly learned words in real situations.	H	31.5	38.9	29.6	3.04	1.06
		L	32.1	26.8	41.1	2.80	1.12

H= High-level learners, L= Low-level learners

3. The Relationship between EFL Students' Beliefs and Vocabulary Proficiency and between their Vocabulary Learning Strategies and Vocabulary Proficiency

The T-test results for the high-level and low-level learners in terms of beliefs and vocabulary learning strategies showed that significant differences were found in the responses to items 11, 14, 16, 28, 38, 40, 41, 42, 54, 55, 58, 59, and 61 (t = 1.99, p < .05; t = 2.37, p < .05; t = -2.49, p < .05; t = 1.99, p < .05; t = 2.47, p < .05; t = -2.26, p < .05; t = -2.01, p < .05; t = -2.14, p < .05; t = 2.46, p < .05; t = 2.32, p < .05; t = 2.35, p < .05; t = 2.13, p < .05; and t = 2.22, p < .05, respectively) (see in the Appendix).

That is, the high-level learners determine which words are important for them to learn; besides textbooks, they look for other texts that fall under their interests; they care about vocabulary items that their teacher does not explain in class; if the new word they try to look up seems to have a prefix or suffix, they try to find the entry for the stem; they feel that repeating the sound of a new word to themselves is enough for them to remember the word; they create semantic networks in their minds and remember words in meaningful groups; they search their memory and see if they have any synonyms and antonyms in their vocabulary stock; they intend to read books in their areas of interest so that they can find and remember the special terminology that they know in Korean; they learn words better when they put them in context; and they make up their own sentences using the words they have just learned more than the low-level learners to a significant degree. On the other

hand, the low-level learners either write the word repeatedly or write both the word and its Korean equivalent repeatedly to remember a word; additionally, they memorize the spelling of a word letter by letter significantly more often than their counterparts. Thus, we can see that the visual repetition of new words had a negative impact on vocabulary proficiency. It is important to note that no significant differences existed between the high-level and low-level learners with regard to beliefs about vocabulary learning, guessing strategies, and note-taking strategies.

V. CONCLUSION

The primary aim of this study was to examine EFL students' beliefs about vocabulary learning. Regardless of vocabulary proficiency, the participants on the whole did not strongly value rote memorization, but relied on repetition for remembering words. Moreover, the majority emphasized the belief that vocabulary ought to be studied and used more than the belief that vocabulary should be acquired in context. In short, they preferred top-down processing to bottom-up processing. A significant relationship between the EFL students' beliefs and vocabulary proficiency, however, was not found. By and large, the high-level and low-level learners appeared to have similar beliefs in regard to learning English vocabulary.

Another aim was to determine what kinds of vocabulary learning strategies EFL students use. The participants appeared to implement a wide range of vocabulary learning strategies. An overwhelming majority of both groups favored using dictionary strategies for comprehension. Moreover, using background knowledge and linguistic cues ranked high among the high-level learners, while visual repetition ranked high among the low-level learners. In contrast, most of the participants reported rarely or never taking down the collocations of the word that they look up, creating a sentence in Korean when they link a new word to a known word, or trying to create semantic networks in their minds and remember words in meaningful groups.

With regard to the relationship between the EFL students' vocabulary learning strategies and vocabulary proficiency, the high-level learners employed partial items of the following variables significantly more often than the low-level learners: selective attention and self-initiation of metacognitive regulation; looking up words in the dictionary strategies; oral repetition of rehearsal strategies; semantic encoding and contextual encoding of encoding strategies; and activation strategies. In other words, these variables emerged as positive predictors of vocabulary proficiency. On the other hand, the low-level learners used visual repetition of rehearsal strategies significantly more often than the high-level learners. In short, this variable appeared to be a negative predictor of vocabulary proficiency.

In all, the value of this study could be defined as giving EFL teachers an overview of students' perceptions about vocabulary learning and preferred vocabulary learning strategies. Nevertheless, limitations should be acknowledged for future explorations. First, the findings of this study were drawn simply from one self-reported questionnaire. Through allowing the participants to interact with authentic texts and perform a think-aloud protocol, the researcher might be able to further examine what types of strategies they employ when determining the meaning of unknown words. Participants of varying vocabulary proficiency levels might implement additional strategies that were not addressed in the questionnaire. Moreover, whether they actually employ the strategies that they claimed to can be verified by this approach. Second, the items on the questionnaire were merely rated on a five-point scale. Thus, the researcher had to infer plausible reasons by referring to the outcomes. Hence, it is essential that the questionnaire is complemented by including open-ended questions according to specific needs. Moreover, follow-up interviews with the participants should be conducted to collect qualitative data to support the questionnaire results. Finally, this study looked into only one dependent variable, vocabulary proficiency. The findings should have been analyzed from various angles. Thus, it is well worth conducting a comparative analysis to see if participants' responses differ in relation to gender and/or major. The findings of such studies might provide more in-depth insights into EFL students' vocabulary learning process.

VI. PEDAGOGICAL IMPLICATIONS

The results of this study suggest the following pedagogical implications for EFL teachers. The participants predominantly employ dictionary strategies. It is, however, a matter of concern that many of them rely on bilingual dictionaries, which often do not contain sufficient information on a word regarding grammatical context, appropriacy, and connotation. As a better alternative, monolingual dictionaries (MLDs) in book form, on CDs, or on the Internet are recommended. MLDs present examples of the words in phrases and sentences so that users are able to discover multiple meanings, collocations, and different usages of the words and learn how to use them appropriately. Learners at lower levels might find MLDs challenging to consult because the language (i.e. English) in the definitions will often be beyond their level of understanding. Such learners may prefer bilingual dictionaries, but learners at around the intermediate level or above will find that MLDs provide invaluable information that can facilitate vocabulary development (Harmer, 2001).

Low-level learners should be encouraged to more actively participate in self-initiation. Especially for the sake of incidental vocabulary learning, they might independently

implement extensive reading, which allows learners to encounter vocabulary repeatedly in natural contexts. All pleasure reading that draws their attention can be extensive. Learning EFL vocabulary involves not only remembering the English equivalents of Korean words, but also learning the syntactic and pragmatic usages of the words. Besides memorizing the form-meaning association, therefore, learners need to learn the language skills to use a word in appropriate contexts. Moreover, they would do well to remember words in semantically meaningful groups while avoiding visual repetition of decontextualized words. Teachers ought to employ materials to teach methodologies, activities, and evaluation policies that promote the development of learning strategies relevant to skill learning (Brown, 1994; Gu & Johnson, 1996).

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APPENDIX

T-test Results on Beliefs about Vocabulary Learning

Item	Group	N	Mean	SD	t Value	p-value
1	H	54	3.44	1.00	0.97	0.3340
	L	56	3.27	0.90		
2	H	54	3.02	1.00	-0.54	0.5898
	L	56	3.13	1.06		
3	H	54	1.70	0.63	-1.39	0.1660
	L	56	1.89	0.78		
4	H	54	4.48	0.67	0.98	0.3296
	L	56	4.36	0.59		

5	H	54	2.91	1.05	1.09	0.2763
	L	56	2.70	0.97		
6	H	54	3.37	0.94	0.28	0.7801
	L	56	3.32	0.90		
7	H	54	4.15	0.74	1.31	0.1914
	L	56	3.96	0.74		
8	H	54	4.28	0.66	0.07	0.9435
	L	56	4.27	0.80		
9	H	54	3.93	0.80	0.40	0.6915
	L	56	3.88	0.51		
10	H	54	4.33	0.59	1.40	0.1658
	L	56	4.16	0.68		

H = High-level learners, L = Low-level learners

T-test Results on Metacognitive Regulation

Item	Group	N	Mean	SD	t Value	p-value
11	H	54	3.41	0.94	1.99	0.0491**
	L	56	3.07	0.85		
12	H	54	3.80	1.02	0.52	0.6026
	L	56	3.70	0.99		
13	H	54	3.13	0.91	1.43	0.1559
	L	56	2.87	0.96		
14	H	54	2.81	1.07	2.37	0.0197**
	L	56	2.36	0.96		
15	H	54	3.39	0.94	-0.58	0.5664
	L	56	3.50	1.08		
16	H	54	2.72	0.94	-2.49	0.0143**
	L	56	3.20	1.05		

**$p < .05$

H = High-level learners, L = Low-level learners

T-test Results on Guessing Strategies

Item	Group	N	Mean	SD	t Value	p-value
17	H	54	4.00	0.67	0.46	0.6467
	L	56	3.93	0.93		
18	H	54	3.31	1.13	-0.03	0.9754
	L	56	3.32	1.11		
19	H	54	3.43	0.88	0.46	0.6440
	L	56	3.34	1.07		
20	H	54	3.85	1.04	0.34	0.7344
	L	56	3.79	1.00		
21	H	54	3.93	0.95	0.95	0.3451
	L	56	3.75	1.00		
22	H	54	3.78	0.92	0.34	0.7310
	L	56	3.71	1.00		

H = High-level learners, L = Low-level learners

T-test Results on Dictionary Strategies

Item	Group	N	Mean	SD	t Value	p-value
23	H	54	4.33	0.67	-0.45	0.6518
	L	56	4.39	0.71		
24	H	54	4.26	0.84	0.09	0.9278
	L	56	4.25	0.79		
25	H	54	4.20	0.76	-0.21	0.8365
	L	56	4.24	0.88		
26	H	54	3.57	1.04	0.44	0.6603
	L	56	3.48	1.14		
27	H	54	3.13	1.10	0.80	0.4240
	L	56	2.96	1.06		
28	H	54	2.89	1.33	1.99	0.0463**
	L	56	2.48	1.04		
29	H	54	3.57	1.07	0.44	0.6627
	L	56	3.48	1.13		

**$p < .05$

H = High-level learners, L = Low-level learners

T-test Results on Note-taking Strategies

Item	Group	N	Mean	SD	t Value	p-value
30	H	54	3.78	1.13	0.05	0.9625
	L	56	3.77	1.08		
31	H	54	3.20	0.92	0.46	0.6448
	L	56	3.11	1.20		
32	H	54	2.76	0.97	0.58	0.5650
	L	56	2.64	1.14		
33	H	54	2.17	0.88	0.03	0.9726
	L	56	2.16	0.93		
34	H	54	2.87	1.16	0.40	0.6928
	L	56	2.79	1.00		
35	H	54	2.56	1.06	1.30	0.1956
	L	56	2.30	0.97		

H = High-level learners, L = Low-level learners

T-test Results on Rehearsal Strategies

Item	Group	N	Mean	SD	t Value	p-value
36	H	54	3.04	1.36	-0.42	0.6772
	L	56	3.14	1.30		
37	H	54	3.19	1.07	1.59	0.1156
	L	56	2.86	1.10		
38	H	54	3.57	1.11	2.47	0.0152**
	L	56	3.05	1.10		
39	H	54	2.67	0.99	0.28	0.7809
	L	56	2.61	1.23		
40	H	54	3.53	1.28	-2.26	0.0259**
	L	56	4.02	0.94		
41	H	54	2.37	1.12	-2.01	0.0464**
	L	56	2.82	1.22		
42	H	54	3.28	1.24	-2.14	0.0349**
	L	56	3.76	1.14		

**$p < .05$

H = High-level learners, L = Low-level learners

T-test Results on Encoding Strategies

Item	Group	N	Mean	SD	t Value	p-value
43	H	54	2.57	1.09	0.73	0.4688
	L	56	2.43	1.01		
44	H	54	2.02	0.94	-0.18	0.8544
	L	56	2.05	1.05		
45	H	54	2.24	1.15	-0.13	0.9004
	L	56	2.27	1.12		
46	H	54	3.26	1.15	0.27	0.7840
	L	56	3.20	1.24		
47	H	54	3.13	1.06	-0.59	0.5548
	L	56	3.25	1.07		
48	H	54	2.76	1.03	0.70	0.4850
	L	56	2.63	0.98		
49	H	54	2.46	0.93	-0.41	0.6856
	L	56	2.54	0.95		
50	H	54	2.39	1.04	0.66	0.5106
	L	56	2.27	0.88		
51	H	54	2.87	1.15	1.30	0.1947
	L	56	2.57	1.25		
52	H	54	2.54	1.04	-0.42	0.6757
	L	56	2.63	1.15		
53	H	54	3.33	1.05	1.38	0.1702
	L	56	3.04	1.21		
54	H	54	2.26	0.96	2.46	0.0141**
	L	56	1.95	0.80		
55	H	54	3.13	0.84	2.32	0.0291**
	L	56	2.74	0.87		
56	H	54	2.39	1.05	1.32	0.1908
	L	56	2.14	0.90		
57	H	54	2.63	1.03	1.56	0.1222
	L	56	2.34	0.92		

58	H	54	2.80	1.17	2.35	0.0204**
	L	56	2.27	1.18		
59	H	54	3.78	1.04	2.13	0.0353**
	L	56	3.36	0.99		

**p< .05

H = High-level learners, L = Low-level learners

T-test Results on Activation Strategies

Item	Group	N	Mean	SD	t Value	p-value
60	H	54	2.98	1.04	1.57	0.1205
	L	56	2.68	0.99		
61	H	54	2.67	0.99	2.22	0.0287**
	L	56	2.23	1.06		
62	H	54	3.06	0.94	1.54	0.1272
	L	56	2.75	1.13		
63	H	54	3.04	1.06	1.12	0.2647
	L	56	2.80	1.12		

**p< .05

H = High-level learners, L = Low-level learners

Examples: English

Applicable language: English

Applicable Level: College

Cheongsook Chin
School of General Education
Inje University
197 Inje-ro, Gimhae-si
Gyeongsangnam-do
621-749 South Korea
Email: chincs9@hanmail.net

CheongminYook
Department of English
Hallym University
1 Hallymdaehak-gil, Chuncheon
Gangwon-do 200-702, South Korea
Email: cmyook@hallym.ac.kr

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