



ADDIS ABABA UNIVERSITY
COLLEGE OF HUMANITIES, LANGUAGE STUDIES, JOURNALISM
AND COMMUNICATION
DEPARTMENT OF FOREIGN LANGUAGE AND LITERATURE

AN EXPLORATION ON STUDENTS' ENGLISH VOCABULARY-LEARNING STRATEGIES AT KOYE FACHE PRIMARY SCHOOL: GRADE EIGHT STUDENTS IN FOCUS.

BY
TARIKU GETACHEW

AUGUST, 2024
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A THESIS SUBMITTED TO THE DEPARTMENT OF FOREIGN LANGUAGE AND LITERATURE IN PARTIAL FULFILLMENT FOR THE REQUIREMENT OF THE DEGREE OF MASTERS OF ARTS IN ENGLISH LANGUAGE TEACHING (ELT)

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**A Thesis Submitted to Department of Foreign Language and Literature in
Fulfillment of Master's Degree in English Language Teaching**

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DECLARATION

I, the undersigned, declare that the thesis comprises of my own work. In compliance with internationally accepted practice, I have dully acknowledged and referenced all materials used in this work. I understand that non-adherence to the principles of academic honesty and integrity, misinterpretation/fabrication of idea/data/fact/source will constitute sufficient ground for disciplinary action by the university and can also evoke penal action from the source which have not been properly acknowledged or cited.

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List of Abbreviation and Acronyms

EFL- English Foreign Language

ESL - English Second Language

L2 – Second Language

VLS - Vocabulary Learning Strategies

ELT- English Language Teaching

ELL- English Language Learning

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Abstract

This study aimed to explore Students' English Vocabulary-Learning Strategies at Koye Fache Primary School: Grade Eight Students in Focus. Three basic questions were raised to achieve the objectives of the study. A descriptive survey research method was employed to answer these basic research questions. Grade eight students were the target population of this study. Top ten students and four English teachers were the sample size of the study. 80 students and 4 English teachers were selected by using purposive sampling method for this study. The main findings of this study were: problem of students to analyze parts of speech while they are guessing the meanings of new words and they clearly knew nouns effectively but they did not know which words were adverbs, verbs and adjectives properly, lack of awareness to implement VLS during vocabulary learning in English classes or they could not have awareness tend to choose or select the right strategies (such as contextual guessing, dictionary strategies, by using synonyms and antonyms, by using word classes such as nouns, verbs, adjectives and adverbs) while they are studying English vocabulary in English language, inappropriate use of social strategies to ask classmates or teachers in order to guess the meaning of new words in the target language. A large number of students did not try to apply tending to repeat words in speaking or writing and write new words by taking down notes on a piece of paper to review them afterwards in cognitive strategies respectively. The students could not have a schedule to study English vocabularies in meta cognitive, less interested of students in vocabulary learning strategies and bilingual dictionaries were commonly used to guess the meaning of new words in L2 vocabulary learning strategies. Based on the research findings, the researcher tried to put a solution for this study by: giving special attention on VLS and advising students effectively how they use varieties of strategies such as: antonyms, synonyms, using dictionary, analyzing its parts of speech, etc while they are guessing the meanings of new words, motivating or encouraging the students in social strategies by giving rewards such as pen, a piece of paper, exercise book and by adding bonus marks on their results while they are asking their teachers and classmates in the target language and helping the students how they use monolingual dictionary while they implemented determination strategies or VL strategies. Based on the conclusions of this study, the researcher forwarded the recommendations for this study in general.

Keywords: *Vocabulary learning strategies, determination, social, memory, cognitive, meta-cognitive, bilingual dictionary, monolingual dictionary*

CHAPTER ONE

INTRODUCTION

1.1 Background of the Study

Language learning strategies are the most indispensable and general topics in the language learning. Studies on language learning strategies became prominent by the early 1990's (O'Malley & Chamot, 1990; Oxford, 1990 as cited in Mizumoto, 2010). Since late 1970s and early 1980s, in the field of Second Language Acquisition, there has been a steadily growing interest in considering the task from the learner's point of view and in changing the focus of classrooms from a teacher-centered one to a learner-centered one with the explosion of methodologies. Accordingly, there has also been marked shift in the focus of language instruction and research, from research on teachers and teaching methodologies to research on learners and learning methods (Yue, 2019).

Nevertheless, in earlier periods of ELT or ELL, vocabulary learning or teaching was overshadowed by a focus on grammar because it was thought that vocabulary could simply be left to take care of itself. The wave of change came along with the body of research which demonstrated the necessity of including vocabulary instruction in ELL or ELT programs. There is now general agreement that lexical competence is at the heart of communicative competence and learners must systematically build up an efficient knowledge of vocabulary (Coady and Huckin, 1997 as cited in Decarrico, 2001).

In Vocabulary too, mastering vocabulary is a difficult task in language learning, whether it is in the EFL context or ESL environment. Inadequacy in vocabulary knowledge is also thought to be result in various challenges among which poor reading comprehension and the inability to establish a natural conversation (Alzahrani et al., 2021; Fan, 2003). A good knowledge of vocabulary is essential for communication. Although grammar and vocabulary are complementary, he argued that without grammar very little can be conveyed, without vocabulary nothing can be conveyed (Wilkins, 1972).

One of the most important challenges that learners will face during the process of second language learning is learning vocabulary. Indeed, vocabulary is viewed as a major part of language proficiency as it allows learners to use four language skills such as listening, speaking, reading, and writing. Vocabulary has been recognized as a crucial to language use in which insufficient vocabulary knowledge of the learners led to difficulties in L2 learning. Even though students' motivation have been traditionally recognized as one of the key factors related to vocabulary or language learning, and one which has a paramount role in foreign language achievement by mediating the actual impact of other affective and attitudinal constructs. Acquiring L2 involves different areas such as students' motivation, students' needs, learning environment, learning strategies and language awareness (Chamot & Kupper, 1989; Gardner, 2007; Kim, 2008).

Similarly, the students' motivation is very mandatory to determine the role of motivation in vocabulary learning strategies. Students start learning new vocabulary through teachers in class, through classmates, or through teaching material. Students sometimes do not try to find new vocabulary through independent learning, and this phenomenon can be considered as a learning constraint of students in vocabulary learning strategies (Cameron, 2001).

Moreover, students need to acquire vocabulary learning strategies in order to discover the meanings of new words. The vocabulary learning strategies should also help the students to acquire (develop) new vocabulary words that they hear, read, see, encounter or meet new (unfamiliar) words on their own learning. As a result, having the knowledge of vocabulary learning strategies are essential for the students in foreign language learning because without vocabulary, it is impossible to be effective in Second Language (L2) learning (Hatch and Brown, 1995; Asafew, 2021).

In Ethiopia, although English is the medium of instruction starting from grades 7 and 9 up to well-advanced levels, no particular attention has been paid to help students develop their vocabulary learning strategies which truly enable them to perform well in their learning process into practice. This is to mean that students use limited range of vocabulary learning strategies inappropriately while they are communicating with their teachers and each other's. Regarding to this, grade eight at Koye Fache Primary School students are the main area of this study.

Therefore, having all these in considerations, the researcher tries to conduct a study on “explorations on students’ vocabulary-learning strategies at Koye Fache Primary School particularly grade eight students in focus.” This is the underlying rational that initiates me to embark upon this study.

1.2 Statement of the Study

As discussed above, vocabulary learning strategies play a central part in language learning strategies because it assists students in becoming independent and confident learners as well as it helps them to be more active and take more responsibility on their own learning. More importantly, “Vocabulary learning strategies are certainly of critical importance to language acquisition, whether the language is first or second or foreign” (Decarrico, 2001 as cited in Siriwan, 2007, p.1). In short, it is suggested that vocabulary-learning strategies have a good place in language learning strategies since it is a key part from language learning strategies. It is understood; however, vocabulary-learning strategies have been undervalued and neglected in the field of second language learning (Atkins, et al, 1996).

It is understood that from the researcher experience in teaching and pre-observation before the study begin, Koye Fache Primary School of grade eight students have serious problems in English vocabulary learning strategies (See section 1.1). Based on this, the researcher tries to conduct a study on the title ‘an exploration on students’ English vocabulary-learning strategies at Koye Fache Primary School particularly grade eight top ten students in focus. In line with this, some scholars carried out regarding to the researcher’s title.

For instance, one was a study conducted by Gashaw (2008) on The Effectiveness of Teaching-Learning Vocabulary in Three Second Cycle Elementary Schools in Addis Ababa, Grade Eight in focus. His finding indicates that vocabulary teaching was found to be ineffective in the sample schools because no variety of techniques of instructions were used as well as from determination strategies (guessing from context and using dictionary) seem to be practiced better than social strategies (asking teachers and classmates) from the selected schools. It is understood; however, this local researcher did not focus on vocabulary-learning strategies. However, the researcher wanted to fill or focus on vocabulary-learning strategies not on teaching-learning vocabulary in his study

Similarly, Getinet (2008) made a study on Vocabulary-Learning Strategy use: The case of high and low achiever students in Gonder College of Teachers Education through comparative study. His finding indicates that high achiever students frequently use more wide range of vocabulary learning strategies than low achiever students. It is understood; however, this local researcher did not focus on the ‘medium achiever students’ while they learn English vocabulary learning strategies. It is suggested that he only compared high and low achiever students in his study.

Furthermore, Dereje (2013) conducted a study on “Practices of students’ English vocabulary-learning strategies at Koye Feche Primary School: Grade eight in focus.” His finding indicated that bilingual dictionaries were more frequently used by the sample students than monolingual dictionary as well as the sample students frequently used L1 to ask their teachers and classmates than target language tends to learn the meanings of words in English vocabulary learning strategies during social strategies. It is understood; however, this local researcher did not focus on the ‘Elementary Schools of students while they learn English vocabulary learning strategies. It is suggested that if he includes Elementary Schools of students in his paper, he will get ample information on students’ English vocabulary-learning strategies in his study.

With this in mind, although some scholars have stressed on the importance of vocabulary learning strategies, little research has been carried out regarding to the practices of vocabulary learning strategies. As a result, more evidence appears to be needed to incorporate the benefit that vocabulary learning strategies are learned to provide the students to be effective in foreign language learning.

However, the present study, therefore, basically differs from the above studies in that the study focuses on students’ vocabulary-learning strategies at grade eight students at Koye Feche Primary School in the light of: focusing on students of grade eight at Koye Feche Primary School in 2016 and 2016. Thus, the researcher intends to fill the gaps and to explore on students’ English vocabulary learning strategies particularly grade eight students at Koye Fache Primary School.

As a result, the researcher tries to design the basic research questions to meet the objective of this study. In this regard, Maxwell (2005) describes, “Research questions state what the researcher wants to study in the research” (cited in Dereje, 2013, p.4). Therefore, this thesis tried to cover the following specific research questions:

1. Do grade eight students at Koye Fache Primary School have motivation to learn vocabulary-learning strategies during guessing the meaning of new words?
2. Do grade eight students at Koye Fache Primary School try to apply vocabulary-learning strategies in English classes?
3. What vocabulary-learning strategies are common with Koye Fache Primary School of grade eight students to guess the meaning of new words in English reading passages?

1.3 Objectives of the Study

1.3.1 Main Objective

The main objective of this study was to explore on students' English vocabulary-learning strategies at Koye Fache Primary School: Grade eight students in focus.

1.3.2 Specific Objectives

The specific objectives of this study were:

- To explore whether grade eight students at Koye Fache Primary School have motivation to learn vocabulary-learning strategies during guessing the meaning of new words.
- To determine whether grade eight students at Koye Fache Primary school try to apply vocabulary-learning strategies in English classes.
- To find out the common vocabulary-learning strategies of Koye Fache Primary School of grade eight students while they are learning English vocabulary in the classroom.

1.4 Significance of the Study

Vocabulary learning strategy plays a significant role in L2 learners to acquire vocabulary in English language. Therefore, this study may have the following significances.

- The study may serve as a base or a springboard for other researchers that are going to conduct further studies.
- It may help the curriculum designers and teachers in order to develop helpful guide in preparing materials that facilitate vocabulary-learning strategies.

- It may also serve as a reference material for other researchers who wish to conduct a further study aimed at enhancing students' vocabulary learning strategies.

1.5 Delimitation of the Study

The study would focus on “Students’ Vocabulary Learning Strategies in English Language at Koye Fache Primary School particularly grade eight students in focus.” However, to make the study more manageable and to finish on time, the researcher would try to limit the topic in general. The data were collected from both top ten students and English teachers in the school. The study would be conducted in Shagar City, in Oromia, Koye Fache Primary School in 2016 (2024).

1.6 Organization of the Study

The paper comprised five chapters. The first chapter would be introduction, background, and statement of the study, the research questions, objectives of the study, significance of the study and delimitation of the study. The second chapter would be about a review of related literature of the study. The third chapter would include research design, population of the study, methods of sampling techniques (purposive sampling techniques), instruments of data collection (questionnaire, and unstructured interview), and method of data analysis by using qualitative and quantitative methods and procedures of data collection. The fourth chapter would discuss about presentation and discussion of the data from the sample students and teachers through questionnaires and interviews. The closing chapters would try to deal with summary, conclusion and recommendation of the study. Finally, the references and appendices would be attached next to the last chapter of this study.

CHAPTER TWO

REVIEW OF RELATED LITERATURE

2.1 The Concept of Learning

In learning, when we talk about learning, there is an inherent concept of teaching and when we speak about teaching, there is an implied meaning of learning. This is to mean that learning and teaching are not mutually exclusive. Teaching and learning can be described as “the two sides of a coin” in the context of formal education, and are inseparable phenomenon. In this regard, Verma (2005) states, “Learning is acquiring or getting of knowledge of a subject or skill by study experience or instruction” (pp.11-12). Learning is a relatively permanent change in a behavioral tendency and is the result of reinforced practice (Ibid). Alemu (1994) also states that, “Successful second language learning can achieve when students participate in the learning process” (as cited in Getnet, 2008, p. 7). According to Rubin (1987) views, “Learning as the process by which information is obtained, stored, retrieved, and used” (p.29).

It is indicated that, learning is an acquisition or getting and retention (recall) of information, which implies storage systems memory and cognitive organization. Therefore, learning involves active conscious focus on and acting upon events outside or inside of human beings as well as it is a change in behavior. According to Brown (1994), “Teaching can be defined as showing or helping someone to learn how to do something, giving instruction, guiding in the study of something providing with knowledge, causing to know or understand”(p.7). Verma (2005) also states, “Teaching is guiding and facilitating learning enabling the learner to learn setting the conditions for learner learns will determine our philosophy of education ,our teaching style, our approach, methods and classroom techniques”(p.13).

In general, learning and teaching are very crucial in vocabulary learning strategies and teaching its techniques, because if the teachers teach the techniques of vocabulary teaching and the learners use various strategies in English vocabulary learning appropriately, they will easily understand and remember the meanings of new words/vocabulary of language as well as the learners are active in their communication even they will have a good language command in English classes.

2.2 Definition of Vocabulary

Vocabulary is the collection of words a person knows and uses in human communications and assumed as the stock of words employed by the language group or individual knowledge (The World Book Encyclopedia, 2001).

On the one hand, Zhihong (2001) defines, vocabulary is a vital aspect to guarantee communication between people. It is argued that vocabulary is the basic unit of language forms; therefore, without sufficient vocabulary, students cannot communicate effectively or express their ideas. This means that having limited number of vocabulary is also a barrier that prevents students from learning second language vocabulary (cited in Getnet, 2008, p.14). Bromley (2007) states, “Vocabulary is a principal contributor to comprehension, fluency and achievement in second language” (as cited in McConnell, 2008, p.9). Similarly, Sockmen (1997) also states, “Vocabulary has in fact assumed even as the central role in learning a second language during the 21st century. This scholar also recommended most of second language teachers are facing with the challenges of how best to help students learn and use new words” (p.237).

It is assumed that if the learners have the knowledge of vocabulary as well as if they effectively use the various strategies while studying/learning English vocabulary, they can easily understand the meaning of new words/ vocabulary of the language. As a result, vocabulary knowledge is an essential in second language because it is unable to communicate without knowing words. Hence, the students usually aware of the importance of vocabulary in language learning strategies and it also helps them active participation in vocabulary learning strategies.

2.3 Vocabulary Learning

As discussed above, vocabulary learning is the most important elements in second language. Achieving communicative competence in second language can be enhanced by developing the knowledge of vocabulary learning and realizing sense relations in English vocabulary learning. Nonetheless, problems in vocabulary learning can have negative effects on learner’s success in second language learning. For example, in vocabulary teaching, Nation (1990) describes that, “Some language teachers think that no need to teach vocabulary separately; instead, it is better to teach vocabulary in context” (p.1).

Aalto (1994) also points out, “Vocabulary is often neglected in language learning and teaching even though it is agreed that without words there is no effective communication” (as cited in Marttinen, 2008, p.17). Similarly, in traditional approaches, vocabulary is often learned / taught unsystematically in classroom, and teachers tend to leave their students to learn vocabulary on their own with much instruction and guidance. But, in modern approach, teachers and learners follow new research based approach, they are expected to present the vocabulary of language/new words systematically based on careful consideration of needs analysis. So, vocabulary instruction is personalized according to learners different learning needs, goals and styles (Oxford and Scarcella, 1994, pp.231-243).

Likewise, Nation (2001) describes that, Vocabulary learning is more effective if learners give attention for their learning and responsible for it. In this principle, learners understand what to learn and how to learn vocabulary. Therefore, vocabulary learning or teaching and the actions made by the learners or teachers can have an impact on the learner’s approach towards their learning vocabulary strategies (p.498).

As it indicated above, vocabulary is the most important part in every language skill; it helps to develop communicative competence in second language learning. Although some researchers disagree with the fact, it is obvious that language learners often have serious problem in remembering the large amounts of vocabulary. In this regard, Kamil and Hiebert (2005) explain, Vocabulary learning can never be mastered fully, the expansion and elaboration of it extends (p.2). For instance, Oxford Advanced Learner’s Dictionary contains over 184,500 words, phrases and definitions. Indeed not even native speakers know all the words of their mother tongue or cannot use them appropriately because individual words have different sets of vocabulary and they use them for different purposes according to its context.

As Blessman and Myszczyk (2001) and Schwarz (1999) stated, students need to understand vocabulary of the language before they can do the work and it is an important aspect in second language learning (as cited in McConnell, 2008, pp.12-13). Teachers and students alike need to realize that students need to have strong understanding of English vocabulary in order to be successful English students (Ibid).

In this regard, vocabulary learning is through direct and indirect learning (Nation, 1990, p.2). This scholar stated that direct vocabulary learning is being a situation in which learners do exercise and activities such as word-building exercises, or when it focuses on vocabulary where as in indirect vocabulary learning, the learner's attention focuses on some other features, which is usually the message conveyed(Ibid).

However, there are several features which make difficult the learning of vocabulary or words. As Carter and McCarthy (1988) point out, the difficulty of a word may result from several reasons (p.13). As Nation (1990) among others argued that, three different factors which influence on making a word difficult to learn: The first is the learner's previous experience of English and the mother tongue of the learners that affect the second language vocabulary learning as well as the interference made between first and second languages (p.33-50).

The second factor is, the way a word learned and taught. In fact, problems of organization in the vocabulary-learning situation can cause problems in vocabulary learning strategies such as use of vocabulary inappropriate to a given situation, etc (p.33-50). The third aspect is the intrinsic difficulty of the word. In this context (i.e. in vocabulary learning), some words are harder to learn than others are; for instance, nouns and adjectives are usually easier to learn than verbs and adverbs. In addition, it is easier to learn to recognize a word and recall its meaning than to produce the word at suitable time (Ibid).

2.4 The Importance of Vocabulary Learning

It has been pointed out that vocabulary learning is very important to know the meaning of words in order to perform effective communication in English language. This is to mean that words are the basic unit of language form but without knowing vocabulary in learning, it is difficult to communicate effectively. It also helps learners to expand their knowledge of vocabulary in second language learning. As a result, the researcher thinks that if the learners use various strategies in vocabulary learning as well as if they remember the meaning of new words while they are learning English vocabulary in the classroom, then, the learners can easily recognize the vocabulary of the language.

In this regard, Harmer (1991) states that, the importance of vocabulary in learning is to help the learners to know the meaning of new words and its usage (knowledge of collocations, metaphors, synonyms, idioms, connotations, denotations, etc.). It also helps for word formation (for instance, to know affixes such as prefixes, suffixes, etc) (p.11).

It seems that vocabulary is a basic for communication. If the learners do not recognize the meaning of the key words used by those who address them, they will be unable to participate in the conversation. Also, if they wish to express some ideas or ask information, they should be able to produce lexical items to convey their meaning. As Wallace (1982) states:

It has been remarked how strange it is that comparatively little has been written on the teaching and learning of foreign language vocabulary because there is a sense which learning a foreign language is basically a matter of learning the vocabulary of the language (p.9).

Similarly, “Vocabulary has been considered as a major resource for language use” (Cameron, 2001, p.81). Harmer (1991) and (Krashen, 1998) stated that, language students and teachers need to learn/teach the vocabulary of the language and need to learn/teach what words mean and how they are used (as cited in Getnet, 2008, p.14). The importance of knowing a vocabulary is to know its spelling, pronunciation, collocations which mean words that go together with the correct way, etc in the second language (St. University College, 2006, pp.13-14). Research undertaken at different times indicates that the importance of learning vocabulary in second language is having the ability to recognize it in its spoken and written forms to context and then to the meaning as well as to recall it at the appropriate time and situation in vocabulary learning strategies.

As Nation (1990) also claims, the important part of students’ vocabulary knowing development depends on the ability to use their own strategies in vocabulary learning strategies in order to understand and remember the new vocabulary in written or spoken texts (p.3). Another importance of learning vocabulary in second language as (Nation, 1990) also distinguishes two different answers to the question “What does learner need to know in order to know a vocabulary or word? These are receptive and productive knowledge of a word which referred to as passive and active vocabulary (p.30-33). In this case, it is argued that receptive knowledge means when

the learners know the word while they are listening and reading texts where as productive knowledge means when the learners understand the vocabulary of the language while they are speaking and writing in second language learning.

Similarly, Waring (1997) explains that Productive learning vocabulary is more difficult than receptive learning vocabulary as well as it takes more time. In addition, having the knowledge of productive is faster than the knowledge of receptive in vocabulary learning or knowing (as cited in Marttinen, 2008, pp.13-14). Besides to this, The World Book Encyclopedia (2001) explained, active vocabulary learning contains all the words that the learners understand and use in speaking and writing skills. It also called ‘use vocabulary’ where as passive vocabulary learning contains all the words that learners or people understand the vocabulary of the language while reading and listening and they call it ‘recognition vocabulary’. It also explained that many people have the recognition vocabulary several times larger than their use vocabulary in vocabulary learning (Ibid).

As indicated above, it is possible to say that knowing active/productive and passive/receptive vocabulary in vocabulary learning is very important to understand the meaning of new words in second language because it helps the learners how they use different words in speaking and writing even in conversation as well as how they recognize the words when they hear it. It is assumed that, in language learning, learners use passive vocabulary rather than active vocabulary. As a result, having the knowledge of knowing vocabulary in second language is very important in vocabulary learning strategies. Hence, the next section will explain the vocabulary learning strategies used by the students in second language learning.

2.5 Vocabulary Learning Strategies

In vocabulary learning, there are various strategies that learners use in order to understand/recognize and recall the meaning of new words in second language learning. Based on this, the researcher tries to explain the definition of strategies and definition of vocabulary learning strategies under this topic.

2.5.1 Definition of Strategies

The term strategy defined as, “A particular method of approaching a problem or task, a mode of operation for achieving a particular end, a planned design for controlling and manipulating certain information”(Verma,2005,pp.13-14). Verma (2005) also distinguishes two basic categories of strategies in language learning strategies: Learning strategies and communication strategies (pp.13-14). The former is a method of achieving, perceiving and storing particular items for later recall (Ibid). Likewise, Oxford (1990) describes that:

Learning strategies are steps taken by the students to enhance their learning --- they are tools for active, self-directed involvement, which is essential for developing communicative competence. Appropriate language learning strategies results in improved proficiency and greater self-confidence (p.1).

The second strategy (communication strategy) is, however, a method of achieving communications and encoding or expressing meanings in the language (Verma, 2005, pp.13-14). In general, the two types of strategies are quite different in their manifestation though there is obviously strong relationship between them. Therefore, these two strategies (i.e. learning and communication strategies) can help the learners how to develop their communication, understanding and remembering in vocabulary learning strategies. As a result, the researcher tries to focus on learning strategies in vocabulary learning of second language because there are various strategies in vocabulary learning in order to understand and remember the meaning of new vocabulary in second language learning. In this regard, Schmitt, (1997) establishes taxonomy of vocabulary learning strategies such as determination strategies, social, memory, cognitive and meta cognitive strategies in vocabulary learning (p.204). Hence, the next section is going to discuss the definition of vocabulary learning strategies in second language learning.

2.5.2 Definition of Vocabulary Learning Strategies

Vocabulary learning strategies are very important in second language learning because it helps learners to be more active and take more responsibility on their own learning. Therefore, Learners autonomy can use varieties of vocabulary learning strategies, which helps to use in developing the learning process. As Schmitt (1997) states, “Many learners use vocabulary learning strategies and they agree that vocabulary is an essential part of language” (pp.200-201).

“Vocabulary learning strategies are actions made by the learner in order to help them to understand the meaning of a word as well as to remember them later,” (Sokmen, 1997, p.237). Similarly, Chamot and O’Malley (1990) describe:

Vocabulary learning strategies as special thoughts or behaviors that individual learners use to help them comprehend/understand, to learn new information from any texts because they confirm or show that most language learning strategies are used for vocabulary learning tasks. These scholars also stated as techniques or tactics that students use to understand, store and remember new information in second language learning (p.1).

As indicated above, it is possible to deduce that appropriate various strategies are very crucial in English vocabulary learning because vocabulary touches or has a relation with the whole basic skills such as listening, speaking, reading, and writing as well as it needs various strategies in order to understand and remember the vocabulary of the language in different ways.

Similarly, Cameron (2001) explains that, “Vocabulary learning strategies as actions that learner takes to help them to understand and remember the meaning of vocabulary meanings in second language” (p.92). As O’Malley and Chamot, (1990) point out, “Vocabulary learning strategies are very essential and the most frequently used as well as it is the well-known type of language learning strategies”(p.7).

In brief, the main benefit gained from vocabulary learning strategies is the fact that it enables learners to take more control of their own learning so that learners can take more responsibility for their vocabulary learning strategies. As a result, there are various strategies in English vocabulary learning. So, the next section devoted to mention the taxonomy of vocabulary learning strategies in the following ways.

2.6 Taxonomy of Vocabulary Learning Strategies

As indicated above, vocabulary learning strategies are basically actions made by the students so as to assist them to recognize the meanings of words and to recall it later. It is also argued that students know the importance of words in a language and are aware of the fact that learning strategies can help them to learn vocabulary successfully.

It is assumed that with regard to vocabulary learning strategies, understanding the general concepts of language learning strategies are indispensable aspects in foreign or second language (L2) learning. For instance, “Various language researchers have attempted to develop taxonomy of language learning strategies,” (Gu and Johnson, 1996; Nation, 2001; Oxford, 1990 and Schmitt, 1997 as cited in Getnet, 2008, p.16).

According to Chamot and O’Malley (1990) and Rubin (1987), Language learning strategies are any set of actions, plans, tactics, thoughts/behaviors that the learners employ to facilitate the comprehension, storage, retrieval and use of information in order to recognize and recall the meaning of new words in second language learning (as cited in Getnet, 2008, p.14).

According to the above statements, the strategies that can be employed by the students assist with storage of information to help with the construction of language rules and to help with an appropriate attitude towards the learning situation. As Oxford (1990), Language learning strategies have been classified in various ways. This scholar also states further by indicating that, there are six major groups of second language learning strategies (pp.15-16).

1. Cognitive strategies (Direct) enable the learners to use the language material in direct ways, for example, through reasoning , analysis, and synthesizing.
2. Memory strategies (Direct) include acronyms, images, key words and they help link one L2 item or concept with another but they do not necessarily involve deep understanding.
3. Compensatory strategies (Direct) refers to guessing from context and gestures, help make up for lack of knowledge in some fields of the language.
4. Meta cognitive strategies (indirect) are used to manage the learning process. It includes planning, self-monitoring and self- evaluating the learning process.
5. Affective strategies (Indirect) help the learners manage their emotions and motivation.
Affective strategies include identifying one’s mood and anxiety level, talking about feelings and rewarding oneself.
6. Social strategies (Indirect) refers to learning through interaction and understand target culture since they include asking questions, asking for clarifications, talking with native speakers and exploring culture.

Taking the above conceptual theory in to considerations, it is possible to believe that language learning strategies are the most important to understand second language learning. Based on this, there are several different ways to classify L2 vocabulary learning strategies. For example, vocabulary learning has various strategies by different scholars. According to Cook (2001), the classification of vocabulary learning strategies divided in to two groups: Strategies for understanding the meaning of words and strategies for acquiring words. The former includes guessing from the situation /context, using dictionary, finding the similarities of words in two different languages. The latter (strategies for acquiring words) however, includes repetition, organizing words in the mind, and linking to existing knowledge (pp.66).

Similarly, another classification of vocabulary learning strategies has been proposed by (Nation, 1990). According to this scholar, there are three different vocabulary-learning strategies: guessing word from context, using mnemonic techniques and using prefixes, roots and suffixes and word parts in general (p.159).

It has been pointed out that, various classifications are given by language researchers for vocabulary learning strategies at different time. These various strategies help the students how they understand and remember the meaning of new vocabulary while they are learning English vocabulary. Regarding this, Oxford (1990) stated, “Vocabulary learning strategies as specific actions that are taken by the students to make learning easier, faster, more enjoyable, more self-directed, more effective and more transferable to new situations in different ways”(p.29). According to Gu and Johnson (1996), vocabulary learning strategies classified into eight strategies: Beliefs about vocabulary learning, Meta cognitive regulation, Guessing strategies, Dictionary strategies, Note-taking strategies, Memory strategies (Rehearsal and Encoding) and Activation strategies (as cited in Siriwan, 2007, p. 49).

Similarly, Cohen (1987 and 1990) stated, vocabulary learning strategies classified into: Strategies for dealing with vocabulary items by (Cohen, 1987, p. 43 and 1990, pp. 21-37) were put together and could be grouped under three main categories as follows. Category one: Strategies for remembering words (i.e. using rote-repetition by repeating the words, using mnemonic associations, etc) The second category is semantic strategies (linking the word to the sentence in which it was found) and the last category is vocabulary learning and practicing

strategies (i.e. using dictionary, the use of flash cards, analyzing the words according to its roots, affixes and etc) (as cited in Siriwan, 2007, p. 46). Based on this, current research confirms that, the nature of vocabulary learning strategies leads to difficulty in classifying it. Simply applying a general language learning strategies classification (i.e. Oxford,1990) to the whole vocabulary learning process would be impossible in vocabulary learning strategies (Nyikos and Fan,2007 as cited in Mizumoto,2010,p.13).

For this reason, the researcher focused on the Schmitt (1997) vocabulary learning strategies because this scholar clearly divided vocabulary learning strategies into two major classes. They are strategies that are useful for discovering of a word's meaning and strategies that are useful for consolidating a word once it has been encountered. Supporting the above ideas, Schmitt's (1997) taxonomy of vocabulary learning strategies has been revised in order to function as a useful tool especially when categorizing vocabulary learning strategies since Oxford(1990) has created it for describing learning strategies in general (Marttinen,2008,p.36).

It is understood that Schmitt (1997, pp.207-208) establishes taxonomy of vocabulary learning based on Oxford's (1990, pp.17-21) language learning strategies (see 16 page). However, Schmitt (1997) sets up, "Five classes of vocabulary learning strategies under two principles: Strategies used to discover meanings of words (determination and social strategies) and strategies used for remembering words once meaning is recognized (memory, cognitive and meta cognitive strategies) (as cited in Siriwan, 2007, pp.50-51 and Gashaw, 2008, pp.20-21). Thus, the basic question that inevitably comes to the researcher's mind is, therefore, how students manage to acquire second language vocabulary in spite of these complex strategies in English vocabulary learning. Concerning this, the proceeding section of this chapter deals with the different types of vocabulary learning strategies employed by the students. These strategies are the following.

2.6.1 Determination Strategies

Students use various strategies while they are learning the meaning of new words for the first time in vocabulary learning. In line with this, Schmitt (1997) states:

Determination strategies help the learners how they analyze parts of speech, how they analyze affixes and roots, how they analyze any available pictures, how they guess the meaning of words from contextual, as well as how they use a dictionary (i.e. bilingual or monolingual dictionary) and it is used by the learners when they face with discovering new word's meaning without recourse/support to another person's experienced (pp.207-208).

Similarly, Nation (2001) describes that, some especially advanced learners analyze affixes and roots (word formation), some other learners go for contextual clues to work out meaning of words and others still look up a word in a dictionary for the correct meaning of the given words (as cited in Gashaw,2008, p.21). As mentioned above, it is recommends that students try to discover the meaning of a word by guessing it with the help of structural knowledge of language, context, and reference materials in second language learning.

In such strategies, “The ability of guessing meaning from context is an essential strategy to increase vocabulary learning and commonly used by successful language learners in the field of second language learning” (Beglar and Hunt,2005 cited in Gashaw,2008,p.21). Different writers, for example, Nation (2001) states that:

Guessing is a key vocabulary learning strategies practically and it can be complicated process for number of reasons such as the absence of sufficient clues, level of text difficulty, familiarity of the topic, learners' background Knowledge and interest of the learners(as cited in Gashaw,2008,p.22).

It is understood that guessing from context is considered to be very important in promoting vocabulary retention. Another strategy of vocabulary learning in determination strategies are, the use of dictionary and it is the second major self- learning strategy learners go for discovering the meaning of new words (Gu,2003 cited in Gashaw,2008, p.22). The definition and actual use of a word in a dictionary make students to successfully use new words in their own sentence meaningfully. As a result, a good dictionary provides a lot of information about a word including pronunciation, spelling, synonym, antonym, collocation, etc (Ibid).

2.6.2 Social Strategies

The second way to discover a new meaning of a word is through employing the social strategies in order to ask someone for help with the unknown words in English vocabulary learning. Social strategies help the learners when they learn from their classmates through interaction, from their teachers by asking the synonym of the given word, and by asking the translation of a new word while they are learning the vocabulary of the language (Schmitt, 1997, pp.207-208).

Students use varieties of strategies in social strategies during vocabulary learning because it is a cooperative group of learning through study and practice the meaning of new words as well as when the learners interact with native speakers of the language while they are learning English vocabulary (Ibid).

2.6.3 Memory Strategies/Encoding Strategies

The third strategies in vocabulary learning strategies are memory strategies. According to (Schmitt, 1997), “Memory strategies are traditionally known as mnemonics strategies and it used to support recalling and retrieving words once they are learned” (pp.211-213). In fact, as Gu (2003) states, One of the major problems of foreign language learners encounter is how to make words accessible to memory after they are learned (as cited in Gashaw,2008,p.23).

As Oxford (1990) explained, Memory strategies help learners to store and retrieve new information (p.37). Oxford (1990) also explained, “Though some teachers think vocabulary learning is easy, language learners have a serious problem remembering the large amounts of vocabulary necessary to achieve fluency”(p.39). As it indicated above, therefore, this strategy helps students to reduce such problem in vocabulary learning. In this regard, Schmitt (1997) also explained that:

Memory strategies are used to connect word to a previous personal experience, to use semantic maps which mean strategies range from classifying words in terms of parts of speech such as nouns verbs, adjectives, verbs, adverbs), sense relationship such as synonymy, antonym, and connecting new vocabulary to concepts in memory through visual images to build complex vocabulary network (pp.207-208).

It is recommended that learners should get the appropriate strategies or guidance from memory strategies because words are not stored in the mind in isolated pattern, but in an organized and systematic manner. Schmitt (1997) also stated memory strategies also used to remember the spelling of a word, to speak aloud when studying a new word, to use key word method, to use image word forms, to use group words together to study them and use physical action when learning a word (pp.207-208).

It is assumed that the researcher thought that these are strategies of meaningful manipulation of words and reflect how words can relate to each other in various ways in vocabulary learning strategies. This is to mean that it develops the ability of learners how they remember the previous words learned by using nouns, verbs, adjectives, studying the spelling of words, etc in English vocabulary learning in order to enable them active in foreign or second language learning.

2.6.4 Cognitive Strategies/Rehearsal Strategies

The fourth strategies in vocabulary learning strategies are cognitive strategies (Schmitt, 1997, pp.215-216). These strategies are similar to memory strategies but they cannot concentrate on manipulative mental and processing but they focus on repetition and mechanical means to study vocabulary (Ibid).

Schmitt (1997) also stated that, repetition, a form of practice, is saying or writing new words and their meanings repeatedly until they are easily remembered (pp.207-208). The most popular examples of these are: verbal repetition, written repetition (saying or writing a word over and over again) and using mechanical means such word lists, flash cards, taking notes(note-taking is an act of processing or manipulation of vocabulary items to facilitate conceptualization and organization into a mental lexicon or learners take-notes when they meet a new word) as well as using study aids (put English labels on physical objects) while learning/studying English vocabulary is also classified as cognitive strategies (Ibid). Cognitive strategies are particularly fundamental for language learners because practice and manipulation of the target language, typical language learning and etc are the major components of these strategies(Ibid).

2.6.5 Meta Cognitive Strategies

In vocabulary learning strategies, meta cognitive strategies use English language media such as songs, movies, news, etc, are examples of meta cognitive strategies which provide input to the effectiveness of one's choice of learning strategies and it provides positive reinforcement for

the learners in English vocabulary learning (Schmitt,1997,pp.207-208). Schmitt (2000) also stated, “Meta cognitive strategies “also involves a conscious over view of the learning process and making decisions about planning, monitoring or evaluating the best ways to study” (p. 136).

To support the above ideas, Oxford (1990) states, “Meta cognitive strategies help learners to regulate their own cognition and it focuses on plan and evaluate their progress” (p.81). It also defined as strategies used by learners to control and evaluate their own learning by having an overview of the learning process in general (Ibid).

According to the above statements, the students have to be active and conscious processors of information in vocabulary learning. So, students can develop their vocabulary knowledge through learning and practicing vocabulary strategies in English language appropriately because the above strategies are very crucial in vocabulary learning. However, inappropriate use of vocabulary learning strategies and lack of practicing affect the knowledge or ability of the learners as well as they are also poor in the use of vocabulary context/guessing even in communication. As a result, having a good knowledge of vocabulary learning strategies and the ability to apply appropriate various strategies as well as suitable situations in vocabulary learning strategies should be needed for the learners in English vocabulary learning unless they are ineffective in English vocabulary learning strategies. This is to mean that if the learners use and practice all the above strategies (determination strategies, social, and memory, cognitive and meta-cognitive strategies) in English vocabulary learning appropriately, the strategies make them active in English vocabulary learning. Nevertheless, without understanding and practicing those strategies in English vocabulary learning, learners can never be effective in second language learning. As a result, Koye Feche Primary School of grade eight students has problems of vocabulary learning strategies in English language.

Students increase their vocabulary learning strategies range by using pictures, semantic relationships of words such as synonyms and antonyms, guessing, dictionary meaning, etc in English vocabulary learning. It is very important to use and practice a variety of strategies that hold the students interest so that the students’ skills will improve if they implement appropriately (Schwarz, 1999; Monroe, 1997 and Blessman and Myszczyk, 2001 as cited in McConnell, 2008, pp.13-14). The learners or pupils cannot learn effectively the vocabulary of the language if they

cannot practice and understand the strategies in English vocabulary learning; they cannot understand the explanation of the vocabulary if they do not understand the terminology used in vocabulary learning strategies (Dresher, 1934 cited in McConnell, 2008, p.11). More importantly, in vocabulary learning, different tasks will require different strategies. In this connection, Gu (2003b) summarizes:

Different types of task materials, task purposes, and tasks at various difficulty levels demand different learner strategies. For example, learning words in a word list is different from learning the same words in a passage. Remembering a word meaning is different from learning to use the same words in real life situations (p.2).

Supporting the above statements, learning vocabulary is a vital element of language because it appears in every basic language skill such as listening, speaking, reading, and writing skills. So, if the knowledge of the students in vocabulary learning is limited, they may face difficulties in expressing their ideas as well as they have a problem to understand and remember the new English vocabulary. As a result, mastering vocabulary learning strategies are very important for the students who learn English as a second language because mastering appropriate vocabulary learning strategies can support the learners in speaking, writing, reading and listening the meaning of words. However, if they do not know the meaning of words or vocabulary, they will not be effective in foreign language learning as well as in communication.

2.7 Summary

In this chapter, the researcher tried to refer some books, journals, articles, and unpublished thesis to conduct this study. As a result, the explorations have been made on the appropriate strategies of vocabulary learning as prescribed by different researchers. In addition, the importance's of vocabulary learning, definition of vocabulary as well as definition of vocabulary learning strategies are summarized. Furthermore, the basic important of taxonomy of vocabulary learning strategies that are used by the learners as well as how the students understand and recall the meaning of new words while they are implementing or practicing English vocabulary are discussed. Thus, the following chapter focused on research design and methodology of the study.

CHAPTER THREE

RESEARCH DESIGN AND METHODOLOGY

3.1 Research Design

This study would employ a descriptive survey design with the aim of exploration on students' vocabulary learning strategies at Koye Fache Primary School grade eight students in focus. In this study, a descriptive survey design involving both qualitative and quantitative were employed. Sharma (2000) describes, "A descriptive survey design is helpful to identify present conditions and point to present needs" (cited in Alemayehu, 2008, p. 25). As a result, the researcher applied a descriptive survey design in order to describe the problems of students in vocabulary learning strategies while they are guessing the meaning of new words or practicing English vocabulary in English classes.

3.2 Target Population of the Study

As mentioned above, the researcher conducted a research at Koye Fache Primary School on the exploration of students' on vocabulary learning strategies in English language. The researcher selected this school because he has more experience in teaching English in this school. As a result, he collected enough information needed from this school because he can easily access visiting the school again and again to gather data. Based on this, the target population of the study would be grade eight students.

3.3 Sampling Techniques and Sample Size

3.3.1 Sampling Techniques

Purposive sampling techniques would be used in this study. So, the researcher determined a sample size relevant to the study. In this regard, scholars said that the sample size is determined by the purpose of the study and the nature of the population. Thus, since the nature of the population is attributed to homogenous group, it is also believed that the existing sample size is sufficient (Cohen and Manion, 1994 and Abebeyehu, et al, 1999 as cited in Beyene, 2008). Based on the present study, the researcher implemented purposive sampling techniques to conduct this study.

In this regard, Bailey (1994) stated, the advantages of purposive sampling as follows:

In purposive or judgmental sampling technique, the researcher uses his or her own judgment about which respondent choice and picks only those who best meet the purpose of the study, and the advantages of the purposive sampling that the researcher can use his or her research skills and prior knowledge to choice the respondents (p.42).

3.3.2 Sample size

Based on this, a total number of grade eight students at Koye Fache Primary school were 360. This is to mean that the total numbers of sections were 8 and the total number of students from each section was 45 (i.e. $8 \times 45 = 360$). Out of 360, 80 top ten students from each section (i.e. $8 \times 10 = 80$ students) would select as a sample size by using purposive sampling techniques.

The researcher believed that these students cannot easily understand the meaning of new words and they are poor in communication. In addition, these students cannot be effective and they are also slow learners in vocabulary learning strategies. These students are not such proficient and competent enough in their understanding and even in their communication. This problem still enhances from time to time in this school. Based on this, the researcher tried to focus on top ten students at Koye Fache Primary school to describe their problems in this study. In fact, the information I gathered from these students should achieve the objective of the study.

In addition, out of 7 English teachers, 4 English teachers were selected by using purposive sampling technique because the four English teachers have more classes and experience in teaching than the three English teachers. In addition, the three English teachers did not have class from grade eight classes. Thus, in order to get enough information, the researcher focused on the four English teachers so as to meet the purpose of this study.

To sum up, both the sampled students and English teachers at Koye Fache Primary school were selected through purposive or judgmental sampling techniques. Generally, 84 respondents took part in this study.

3.4 Instruments of Data Collection

3.4.1 Questionnaire

Questionnaire is one of instrument which the researcher used to gather the necessary data from the sampled students (i.e. from top ten students from each section). It would be designed to gather data exploring on students' vocabulary learning strategies in English language at Koye

Fache Primary school particularly grade eight students. It contained both close ended and open ended questions.

The questionnaire consisted of three parts. The first part would be personal information about the sample students (sex, age and language). The second part would try to include about belief and experience of students' in vocabulary learning. The students would try to ask to rate their levels of agreement to the given statements (strongly agree, agree, disagree and strongly disagree). These categories would be assigned numerical values to reflect respondents' instructional practices (4, 3, 2 and 1 respectively). The last part would contain about vocabulary learning strategies in English language.

The students were asked to level of how often they use of the various vocabulary learning strategies explored in the second chapter by saying: 'always, usually, sometimes, rarely and never'. Similarly, these categories would be assigned values of 5,4,3,2 and 1 respectively (see appendix-i). Also, the content of this part contained strategies used to discover the meanings of new words and strategies used to consolidate or remember the learnt items/words. That means, the item of the last part would also be adopted from the review of literature.

3.4.2 Interview

The term interview is regarded as a directed conversation between an investigator and an individual or group of individuals in order to gather information (Nunan, 1989 and Richards et al, 1992 as cited in Siriwan, 2007, p.79). For this reason, 'Unstructured interview' was also used the another instrument which the researcher used for both the sampled English teachers and top one student's from each section (i.e. $1 \times 8 = 8$ students) of Koye Fache Primary school in order to obtain extra information for cross-checking towards exploring on students' English vocabulary learning strategies. The researcher selected unstructured interview because "It does not have strict procedures and it is free flow of information between the interviewer and the subject to be interviewed" (Wudu and Tefera, 2005, pp.105-106). It was believed that, therefore, better evidence would be obtained if the English teachers and top one student from each section invited in the interview questions so as to communicate face to face about what the learners did in English vocabulary learning strategies.

The researcher tried to prepare interview questions for English teachers and top one student's. The teachers' interview would contain eleven questions including their personal information. The top one student's interview also consisted of six questions based on learning

English vocabulary learning strategies. Hence, guided by the checklists, the researcher tried to objectively interview the top one student in order to gather the data on students' vocabulary learning strategies in English lesson by using these scales (very good, good, medium, low and very low). In fact, these categories would be assigned values of 5,4,3,2 and 1 respectively (see appendix-iii). Additionally, the researcher took 45 minutes for each respondent in interview questions.

3.5 Methods of Data Analysis

To achieve the stated objectives of this study, the collected data were analyzed by using both qualitative and quantitative methods of data analysis. The data gathered through questionnaire and unstructured interview would be analyzed using the following procedures. The questionnaire was tried to analyze by using both qualitative (describing or explaining the gathered data through words) and quantitative methods (by using simple statistical techniques such as percentage, frequency, mean scores or grand mean and tables or numerals). Finally, the researcher also presented the data obtained via interviews (of sample English teachers and top one student from each section) by using qualitative method.

3.6 Procedures of Data Collection and Analysis

Firstly, the researcher selected the sample students from grade eight and English teachers by using purposive sampling technique. Secondly, the sample students or respondents would be oriented briefly in the actual version on how to fill in the questionnaires before filling it out. Thirdly, the researcher distributed the questionnaires for the sample students. The researcher started interview questions for both English teachers and top one student from each section the exploration on students' vocabulary learning strategies.

Fourthly, the researcher gathered the necessary information from the respondents for this study. It was also suggested that the mean scores and the grand mean would be analyzed from the students' close ended questionnaire. This was to mean that the collected data would be tabulated, tallied and simple statistical techniques which were percentages, mean values and /grand mean would be applied for the numerical interpretation. The calculation of the mean score would be based on the formula of Likert scales ranked from the most positive to negative behaviors, specific values 5,4,3,2,1 would be given to each alternative and the mean value (\bar{X}) would be calculated as follows:

The mean score (\bar{X}) = $\sum fx / \sum f$, where:

f = Frequency

x = 5-1 (specific values given)

$\sum f$ = Total sample size of the study.

Grand mean, on the other hand, is calculated as: $\sum \bar{x} / n$, where: $\sum \bar{x}$ is the sum of the mean scores and n is the number of items of the respective tables. Moreover, the researcher took 45 minutes for each respondent for interview questions. To sum up, it was also assumed that the researcher analyzed and interpreted the gathered data from the respondents by using both qualitative and quantitative methods in this study.

CHAPTER FOUR

PRESENTATION AND DISCUSSION OF THE DATA

4.1 Background of the Students

As indicated in chapter three, the background information of the sample students are very important in order to determine whether they are matured or not in this study.

Table 1: Personal Information of Sample students

<i>No</i>	<i>Items</i>	<i>Ranges</i>	<i>No of students' Responses</i>	<i>%</i>
1	Age	14-16	29	69.88
		17-19	26	15.67
		20-22	20	8.43
		23- 25	5	4.82
		Above 26	-	-
		Grand Total	80	100
2	Sex	Male	34	42.5
		Female	46	57.5
		Grand Total	80	100
3	First Language (Mother tongue)	Afan Oromo	23	28.75
		Amharic	31	38.75
		English	-	-
		Others	26	32.5
		Grand Total	80	100

As it is indicated in **Table 1** above, item number one depicts that the age of the respondents that found between 14-16 of them were 29 (69.88%) , 17-19 students were 26 (15.67%) whereas 20-22 respondents were 20 (8.43%) and between 23-25 students were 5 (4.82%). From this table, the researcher believed that the majority of the sample students found between 14-16 ages and they are matured to learn vocabulary learning strategies or second language learning (L2).

Concerning sex distribution as shown in the table 1, (i.e. item number 2), 34 (42.5%) and 46 (57.5%) were female and male students respectively. From this item, the researcher showed that the total number of female respondents were greater than male respondents from the given table.

In addition, with regard to first language or mother tongue of the respondents, 23 (28.75%) were Afan Oromo Language, 31 (38.75%) were Amharic Language and 26 (32.5%) were other languages speakers. From the table, the mother tongues of the sample students were Amharic Language (majority). The researcher, therefore, understood that the majority of sampled students' mother tongue or first language was Amharic Language. Perhaps, it may argue that the students cannot be effective in second Language (L2) in vocabulary learning because the mother tongue of the sample students affect the second or foreign language in vocabulary learning strategies. In this regard, Nation (1990) states, the mother tongue of the students' affects the second language (L2) in vocabulary learning (P.33).

4.2 Students' Use of Vocabulary Learning

It is assumed that vocabulary knowledge is an essential in reading in a foreign language. It seems that vocabulary is a part of every language skill and therefore improving vocabulary learning will contribute reaching the goal of communicative competence in the field of foreign language learning. For this reason, if the students learn the meaning of new words from the reading passages effectively, they will easily develop their English vocabulary knowledge in L2 learning. Thus, the following table shows the students' belief and experience of vocabulary learning in English language.

Table 2: Students' belief and experience in English Vocabulary Learning

No	Statements /Items	Scales	No. of students' Responses				\bar{x}
			<i>f</i>	%	<i>fx</i>	Σfx	
1	Learning English is basically a matter of learning its Vocabulary.	Strongly Agree(5)	42	52.5	210	343	4.28
		Agree (4)	26	32.5	104		
		Neutral (3)	6	7.5	18		
		Disagree (2)	5	6.25	10		
		Strongly Disagree (1)	1	1.25	1		
2	In Language Learning, Vocabulary is the most important element to focus on compared to grammar.	Strongly Agree(5)	12	15	60	228	2.85
		Agree (4)	7	8.75	28		
		Neutral (3)	20	25	60		
		Disagree (2)	39	48.75	78		
		Strongly Disagree (1)	2	2.5	2		
3	English vocabulary learning is the most difficult thing in language learning.	Strongly Agree(5)	51	63.75	255	352	4.40
		Agree (4)	20	25	80		
		Neutral (3)	2	2.5	6		
		Disagree (2)	4	5	8		
		Strongly Disagree (1)	3	3.75	3		
4	Vocabulary Learning has to be given prime consideration in English Language.	Strongly Agree(5)	3	3.75	15	125	1.56
		Agree (4)	2	2.5	8		
		Neutral (3)	5	6.25	15		
		Disagree (2)	17	21.25	34		
		Strongly Disagree (1)	53	66.25	53		
Grand Mean						3.27	

As shown in **Table 2** above, item number one reveals, 42 (52.5%) and 26 (32.5%) of the sample students reported **strongly agree** and **agree** respectively. The remaining, 6 (7.5%) of respondents said **neutral**, 5 (6.25%) of them replied **disagree** and 1 (1.25%) of the respondents responded **strongly disagree** with the claim of ‘Learning English is basically a matter of learning its vocabulary’.

As illustrated in the above table, item number one displays that the majority of the sample respondents reported strongly agree on the question raised in this item and the matter of vocabulary learning diminished the student’s ability, knowledge or participation in the field of foreign language learning. In addition to this, the mean scores of the students (4.28) inclined towards ‘strongly agree’ with the claim raised. Supporting this, Wallace (1982) describes that, “Learning a foreign language is basically a matter of learning vocabulary of the language” (P.2).

With regard to item number 2, 12 (15%) of them reported **strongly agree**, 7 (8.75%) of the sample students demonstrated **agree** whereas 20 (25%) and 39 (48.75%) of the sample students respectively responded **neutral** and **disagree**, 2 (2.5) of the students replied **strongly disagree** with the claim of ‘In Language Learning, vocabulary is the most important element to focus on compared to grammar’ or tend to learn vocabulary as other topics like grammar, pronunciation and etc in English language. Similarly, the mean score of item two (2.85) show that the relative inclination of the students’ was towards ‘disagree’ on the importance of vocabulary learning when they compared it to grammar.

The table, therefore, indicates that the majority of the students were disagreed on the importance of vocabulary. However, it is suggested that having the knowledge of vocabulary is very essential in foreign language learning or understanding the reading passages. It is also argued that it is a base for communication. In line with this, Ellis (1985) states, in comparison with other aspects of language such as grammar and etc, “Vocabulary is the area of language that learners seem most conscious of (pp.103-104). Similarly, Juurakko and Airola (2002) explained that, “Vocabulary learning is already one of the central topics of studying from language learning in English language” (as cited in Marttinen, 2008, P.32). It is also argued that “Without grammar very little can be conveyed but without vocabulary nothing can be conveyed” (as Wilkins, 1972 and Carter and McCarthy, 1988 cited in Gashaw, 2008, P.3).

Furthermore, McCarthy (1990) explains that, “The single biggest component of any language course is vocabulary. No matter how well the students learn grammar, no matter how well the sound of L2 is mastered, without words to express a wide range of meanings as well as communication in L2 cannot happen in any meaningful way” (p.81).

In table 2 above, item number 3 depicts that 51 (63.73%) and 20 (25%) **strongly agree** and **agree** respectively. The remaining 2 (2.5%) of the sample students said **neutral**, 4 (5%) of the sample students replied **disagree** and 3 (3.75%) responded to **strongly disagree** with the claim of ‘English vocabulary learning is the most difficult thing in language learning’. The mean score of item three (4.40) shows that the relative inclination of students’ responses was towards ‘strongly agree’ on the difficult of English vocabulary learning. From the data, the researcher suggested that many of the sample students were strongly agree on the difficult of English vocabulary learning. This problem reduces the proficiency of the students and they could not be effective in foreign language learning. In this regard, it is understood that, vocabulary learning is the most complex thing element from language learning (Zhihong, 2001, p.18).

In the same table, item number 4 shows, 3 (3.75%) of them were **strongly agree**, 2 (2.5%) of the respondents said **agree** and 5 (6.25%) of the sampled students replied **neutral** whereas 17 (21.25%) and 53 (66.25%) of the sample respondents demonstrated respectively **disagree** and **strongly disagree** with the claim of ‘Vocabulary Learning has to be given prime consideration in English Language’. As the mean values (1.56) indicate, students inclined towards ‘strongly disagree’ because vocabulary learning should not more emphasize as other language aspects like grammar and so on. From table two, we can observe that the grand mean of the students (3.27) indicate the students’ belief and experience in English vocabulary learning.

The researcher, therefore, thought that the majority of the students were strongly disagreed on the prime consideration of vocabulary learning in the classroom. That means, the foremost attention of the students were not on vocabulary learning and they believed that they took it as an easy topic from language learning. So, such attitude decreases the motivation of the students in second language learning. It is argued; however, vocabulary as a topic to enhance the learning and teaching in the classrooms and it has more important role in learning foreign language today than it had before (Sockmen 1997, P.237).

4.3 Strategies for Discovering Meanings of new Words

In this section, it is assumed that the problems of EFL students are the problems of using discovering strategies while they are learning or studying English vocabulary. It is argued that one of the challenges students encounter in their vocabulary learning experience is the problem of getting the correct meanings of words for the first time. In line with this, the students were asked how they use determination strategies(guessing from context, using dictionary and analyzing its parts of speech) and social strategies(asking teachers and classmates) in L2 vocabulary learning according to the following given table.

Table 3 : Strategies used to discover meanings of new words (Determination and Social Strategies)

No	Questions/Items/	Scales	No. of students' Responses				
			F	%	fx	Σfx	\bar{X}
5	How often do you guess the meanings of new words from the context?	Always (5)	3	3.75	15	204	2.55
		Usually (4)	4	5	16		
		Sometimes (3)	29	36.25	87		
		Rarely (2)	42	52.5	84		
		Never (1)	2	2.5	2		
6	How often do you learn the meaning of new words from a dictionary?	Always (5)	50	62.5	250	349	4.36
		Usually (4)	15	18.75	60		
		Sometimes (3)	9	11.25	27		
		Rarely (2)	6	7.5	12		
		Never (1)	-	-	-		
7	Analyzing parts of speech while they are learning /studying/ guessing the meaning of new words.	Always (5)	2	2.5	10	200	2.5
		Usually (4)	4	5	16		
		Sometimes (3)	29	36.25	87		
		Rarely (2)	42	52.5	84		
		Never (1)	3	3.75	3		
8	Asking their teachers/ classmates tend to learn the meaning of new words from the context.	Always (5)	8	10	40	249	3.11
		Usually (4)	10	12.5	40		
		Sometimes (3)	46	57.5	138		
		Rarely (2)	15	18.75	30		
		Never (1)	1	1.25	1		
Grand Mean							2.88

As indicated in **Table 3** above, 3 (3.75% and 4 (5%) of the respondents respectively confirmed that they **always** and **usually** with the claim of ‘Guessing the meanings of new words from the context’ whereas 29 (36.25%) of them were **sometimes**, 42 (52.5%) and 2 (2.5%) of the sample respondents respectively reported that they were **rarely and never** tend to guess the meaning of new words from the context while they are studying or guessing English vocabulary. As the mean values (2.55) of the sample students realize that the students’ experience of guessing in context in their vocabulary learning practice is insignificant because the mean scores of these sample students incline towards ‘rarely’ with the claim raised.

As illustrated in the same table (i.e. item number six), 50 (62.5%) and 15 (18.75%) of the sample students responded respectively **always** and **usually** tend to learn the meanings from dictionary. The remaining, 9 (11.25%) of the respondents also reported **sometimes** and 6 (7.5%) replied **rarely** with the claim of ‘Learning the meanings of new words from dictionaries’. Similarly, the mean scores of the sample students (4.36) incline towards ‘always’ tend to learn the meanings of new words from dictionary.

As it can be seen from the above table, item number one shows that the majority of the sample students (42 or 52.5%) responded rarely tend to guess the meaning of new words from the context while they are guessing English vocabulary learning. To find out the meaning of new words from the context, they always prefer to dictionary method. In addition, from item number two, almost the majority of the respondents (50 (62.5%)) replied always tend to learn the meaning of new words from dictionary.

Based on this connection, Nyikos and Fan (2007) stated, “The first thing students do when they encounter an unknown word is to guess the word’s meaning from contextual clues” (Mizumoto, 2010, P.17). Some researchers such as Anderson, Herman and Nagy (1985) and Nattinger (1988) also supported that, “Most native speakers of English learn vocabulary by guessing from context” (cited in Mizumoto, 2010, P.17). However, it is recommended that this may not be the case with ESL/EFL learners, but a more convincing reason has been proposed is: “Meanings inferred from context tends to be remembered better than meanings given in a decontextualized list” (Greidanus and Hollander, 1996 and Hulstijn, 1992 as cited in Mizumoto, 2010, P.17).

To sum up, some writers, for instance, Nation (2001) as cited in Gashaw (2008) among others argued /underlined that, “Although guessing is a key vocabulary learning strategy, practically it can be complicated process for a number of reasons such as absence of sufficient clues, level of text difficult, familiarity of the topic and learners’ background knowledge as well as interest” (p.22). It is understood, however, due to these limitation, scholars such as Coady and Huckin (1997); Nation (2001) and Schmitt (2000) and carter and McCarthy (1988) also cited in Gashaw (2008) suggested that additional explicit independent word learning strategy is the use of dictionary.

As illustrated in the same table (i.e. item number eight), 2 (2.5%) and 4 (5%) of them were respectively **rarely** and **sometimes** whereas 29 (36.25%) of them said **usually**, 42 (52.5%) and 3 (3.75%) of the sample students reported respectively **always** and **never** with the claim of ‘Analyzing parts of speech while they are learning /studying/ guessing the meaning of new words’. From item eight, a considerable number of the sample respondents replied rarely tend to identify words in to their parts of speech as an attempt to discover the meaning of new words in English vocabulary learning. According to the mean scores (2.5) of the sample students, it is suggested that the students are ineffective tend to analyze words into their parts of speech while they are guessing its meanings in determination strategies.

From this table (data), the researcher suggested that a large number of sample students had problems of analyzing parts of speech while they are studying the meaning of new words in English vocabulary learning. This limitation affects the learners’ proficiency in foreign or second language (L2) vocabulary learning.

As table three also shows (i.e. item number nine), 8 (10%) of them replied **always**, 10 (12.5%) of the sample respondents reported **usually**, 46 (57.5%) of them said **sometimes** whereas 15 (18.75%) and 1 (1.25%) of the sample respondents responded respectively **rarely** and **never** with the claim of ‘Asking their teachers or classmates tend to learn the meaning of new words from the context in social strategies’. From the table, a considerable number of students said always tend to request their classmates or teachers for meaning while they are guessing English vocabulary. Similarly, the mean score of the students (3.11) inclined towards ‘always’ tend to learn the meanings of words from their teachers and classmates in social strategies.

Based on the above table three, the researcher tried to suggest that the grand mean of the students (2.88) indicate the students' use of determination and social strategies while they are studying English vocabulary learning strategies. It also showed that how the students implement determination strategies (guessing from the context, using dictionary, and analyzing parts of speech etc) and social strategies (asking teachers and classmates) while they are implementing discovering strategies in L2 vocabulary learning.

Similarly, the researcher believed that the mean scores of the students (2.55) and (2.50) also revealed the students were more practiced guessing from context than analyzing its parts of speech in determination strategies respectively. However, guessing from context and analyzing its parts of speech (i.e. nouns, verbs, and so on) were less practiced than learning from dictionary as the mean scores of the students (2.55, 2.50 and 4.36) also showed in table 3 above respectively. In fact, from determination strategies, a large number of sample students frequently used bilingual dictionaries (62.5%) than monolingual dictionary (12.5%) to learn the meanings of new words as the data illustrated in table 3 above.

4.4 Strategies for consolidating a word encountered

As indicated in section 4.4, the students also have problems of consolidating strategies while they are learning or practicing English VLS in the school. However, it is argued that these strategies help the students how they remember the meanings of words when encountered again in the field of foreign language learning. For this reason, the students were asked how they implement or use memory, cognitive and meta cognitive strategies in L2 VLS according to the following table.

Table 4: Strategies used to consolidate meaning of words (Memory, Cognitive and Meta cognitive Strategies)

No	Questions/Items/	Scales	No. of students' Responses				
			F	%	fx	Σfx	\bar{X}
10	Memory strategies (i.e. studying words by classifying them into groups in terms of their parts of speech (nouns, verbs, etc), studying the spelling of words and/ using the image of words, etc) to remember them better.	Always (5)	3	3.75	15	168	2.1
		Usually (4)	5	6.25	20		
		Sometimes (3)	10	12.5	30		
		Rarely (2)	41	51.25	82		
		Never (1)	21	26.25	21		
11	Cognitive strategies (i.e. repeating words in speaking or writing to be able to remember newly learned words).	Always (5)	2	2.5	10	204	2.55
		Usually (4)	4	5	16		
		Sometimes (3)	33	41.25	99		
		Rarely (2)	38	47.5	76		
		Never (1)	3	3.75	3		
12	Cognitive strategies (i.e. taking down notes about the new words).	Always (5)	10	12.5	50	263	2.87
		Usually (4)	19	23.75	76		
		Sometimes (3)	37	46.25	111		
		Rarely (2)	12	15	24		
		Never (1)	2	2.5	2		
13	Meta cognitive strategies (i.e. developing the vocabulary of knowledge by planning, monitoring, choosing the words they need, testing and evaluating their progress).	Always (5)	2	2.5	10	134	1.67
		Usually (4)	4	5	16		
		Sometimes (3)	8	10	24		
		Rarely (2)	18	22.5	36		
		Never(1)	48	60	48		
Grand Mean							2.29

As indicated in **Table 4** (i.e. item number ten), 41 (51.25%) and 21 (26.25%) of the sample respondents replied **rarely** and **never** respectively. The remaining, 10 (12.5%) of them were **sometimes** whereas 5 (6.5%) and 3 (3.75%) of the sample respondents reported respectively **usually** and **always** with the claim of ‘Memory strategies (i.e. studying words by classifying them into groups in terms of their parts of speech (nouns, verbs, etc), studying the spelling of words and/ using the image of words, etc) to remember them better’ as a vocabulary learning strategies. Besides to this, the mean scores of the students (2.1) show that how the students use consolidating strategies particularly memory strategies tend to remember the meanings of words in vocabulary learning strategies. From this table, a substantial number of students inclined towards ‘rarely’ tend to study words while they are implementing this strategy.

As illustrated in the same table, item number 11 reveals, 38 (47.5%) of the respondents reported **rarely**, 33 (41.25%) of them were **sometimes**, 4 (5%) of the sample students said **usually** whereas 3 (3.75%) and 2 (2.5%) of the sample respondents responded respectively **never** and **always** with the claim of ‘Cognitive strategies (i.e. repeating words in speaking or writing to be able to remember newly learned words or tend to repeat words in speaking or writing to be able to remember new words’.

From this table, we can observe that the majority of sample students inclined ‘rarely’ to consolidate the meaning of new words in speaking or writing while they are studying English vocabulary learning. From the same table, item number 12 also shows that 37 (46.25%) and 19 (23.75%) of the students reported respectively **sometimes** and **usually** whereas 12 (15%) of them were **rarely** as well as 10 (12.5%) and 2 (2.5%) of the sample respondents replied respectively **always** and **never** with the claim of ‘Cognitive strategies (i.e. taking down notes about the new words or tend to write new words by taking down notes on a piece of paper to review or remember them afterwards’.

As the mean values (2.55) and (2.87) indicate, the majority students inclined ‘rarely’ and ‘sometimes’ tend to repeat the meanings of words in speaking and/writing and write the meanings of words on a piece of paper to remember them later in cognitive strategies respectively.

From table 4, the study showed that the students did not write new words on a piece of paper and they did not practice words in speaking or writing so as to recall them in English vocabulary learning strategies.

As illustrated in the same table (i.e. item number 13) revealed, 48 (60%) of them were **never**, 18 (22.5%) of the sample students reported **rarely**, 8 (10%) of them said **sometimes** whereas 4 (5%) and 2 (2.5%) of the sample students replied respectively **usually** and **always** with the claim of 'Meta cognitive strategies (i.e. developing the vocabulary of knowledge by planning, monitoring, choosing the words they need, testing and evaluating their progress tend to control and evaluate their own learning in English vocabulary learning'. Furthermore, the mean scores of the students (1.67) reveal that how the students implement meta cognitive strategies while they are learning English vocabulary learning strategies.

From item thirteen, the majority of the sample students do not test and evaluate themselves to check their vocabulary knowledge because the mean score of the students inclined towards 'never' to learn vocabulary learning strategies by planning in English language learning. It is also possible to say that a considerable number of students responded never to use meta cognitive strategies in the school. For this reason, the researcher thought that the students should not have a plan or schedule to study English vocabulary learning strategies since they are basic unit of a language.

Focusing on table 4, the grand mean of the students (2.29) show that how the students' use or practice consolidating strategies while they are studying L2 vocabulary learning in the field of foreign language learning. It is understood, however, Oxford (1990) stated, "Meta cognitive strategies help the students to regulate their own learning or cognition and focus on planning and evaluating their progress" (p.8). Cohen (1998) stated, "Higher-proficiency students are more likely to use meta cognitive strategies and they use them more effectively than the lower-proficiency students" (p.8).

As it is indicated in table 4 above, it was assumed that consolidating strategies were less concerned because students did not have experience of these strategies in the school. For instance, as the mean values (2.1) and (2.55) and (2.87) of students indicated in table 4, students

were less practiced memory strategies than cognitive strategies while they were learning English VLS in the school.

In addition, it was argued that as the mean scores of students showed in table 4, the students were more practiced the meanings of new words by taking down notes (2.87) than repeating words in speaking and/writing to be able to remember new learned words (2.55) in cognitive strategies. It was understood; however, meta cognitive strategies were less concerned or practiced than memory and cognitive strategies as indicated in table 4. That means, as the mean scores of the students (1.67) indicated, they inclined towards ‘never’ tend to have a schedule or plan to study VLS in general.

4.5 Kinds of Dictionaries used in VLS

Dictionary strategy is the other strategy from determination strategies during guessing English vocabulary learning strategies. The following table showed that how the learners implemented different types of dictionaries that they used in vocabulary learning strategies.

Table 5: Strategies used to discover meanings of new words by using dictionary strategy (Determination)

No.	Questions/Items/	Scales	No. of students' Responses				
			<i>f</i>	%	<i>fx</i>	Σfx	\bar{X}
1	Types of dictionaries that learners' use in Vocabulary learning.	Monolingual Dictionary(3)	10	12.5	30	150	1.87
		Bilingual Dictionaries(2)	50	62.5	100		
		Multilingual Dictionaries(1)	20	25	20		
Grand Mean							1.87

In Table 3 (i.e. item number seven) above shows, 10 (12.5%) of them were **monolingual dictionary**, 50 (62.5%) of the respondents reported that they used **bilingual dictionaries** whereas 20 (25%) of them replied **multilingual dictionaries** with the claim of ‘Types of dictionaries that students used in English vocabulary learning’. In addition to this, the mean score

of the students (1.87) implies that students prefer bilingual dictionaries while they are inferring the meanings of words from the reading passages. From the data (table), the majority of the respondents used bilingual dictionaries while they are studying or guessing English vocabulary.

In this regard, some scholars such as Gu, (2003) and Laufer and Hadar (1997) recommended that, “Monolingual dictionary is more useful than bilingual dictionaries to discover the meaning of new words in second language vocabulary learning” (as cited in Gashaw, 2008, P.22). For this reason, it is recommended that students should be trained how to use a monolingual dictionary effectively in order to improve their vocabulary learning strategies in English language.

4.6 Level of Students’ Interest in Vocabulary Learning

It has been pointed out that the interest of the students in vocabulary learning strategies may influence their knowledge and participation in L2 vocabulary learning. It is assumed that having negative attitude towards L2 vocabulary learning diminished the motivation, interest and knowledge of the students in English VLS. It is also suggested that the students’ ability of using a range of vocabulary learning strategies is a fundamental function of effective and successful vocabulary acquisition. Therefore, an attempt was made to know the students’ interest from the perspective of themselves according to the following table.

Table 6: Level of Students’ Interest in English VLS

No.	Question(s)/Item(s)	Scales	No. of students’ Responses				
			f	%	fx	$\sum fx$	\bar{X}
14	Level of students’ interest in English vocabulary learning strategies	Very highly interested(5)	3	3.75	15	188	2.35
		Highly interested(4)	5	6.25	20		
		Averagely interested(3)	23	28.75	69		
		Less interested(2)	35	43.75	70		
		Not interested(1)	14	17.5	14		
Grand Mean						2.35	

As **Table 5** shows, 35 (43.75%) and 23 (28.75%) of the sample students replied **less interested** and **averagely interested** respectively. The remaining, 14 (17.5%) of them were **not interested** whereas 5 (6.25%) and 3 (3.75%) of the respondents also reported respectively **highly interested** and **very highly interested** with the claim of ‘Level of students’ interest in English vocabulary learning strategies’. As the mean value of the students (2.35) indicates, the students inclined ‘less interested’ in vocabulary learning strategies.

From table 5, the researcher claimed that a large number of students confirmed less interested in English vocabulary learning strategies. This limitation reduces the knowledge and participation of the students in English vocabulary learning strategies and it enables them slow learners in second language (L2) learning. In this connection, Schmitt (1997) states, Learners’ interest is the most important and it should be needed in foreign or second language learning strategies.

4.7 Analysis of Students’ Open ended Questionnaire

As mentioned above, the information gathered from open ended questionnaire (i.e. from the sample students) claimed that the students only used dictionary strategy with the claim of ‘What kinds of vocabulary-learning strategies do the students use while they are guessing the meaning of new words in English vocabulary? As indicated above in table 3 (i.e. item number 7), the students have the experience of using dictionaries (i.e. bilingual dictionaries) tend to guess the meanings of new words in L2 vocabulary learning. It is argued that the data from open ended questionnaire also reported that the students frequently prefer dictionary strategies or limited strategy while they are inferring the meanings of new words or vocabulary in the reading passages. This habit influence their knowledge and participation in L2 vocabulary learning strategies. However, current researcher such as Takeuchi (2003b) recommended that successful learners in Japan first guess the word meaning and then they check it later in a dictionary to make sure the guess it correct (cited in Mizumoto, 2010).

4.8 Analysis of Teachers’ Interviews

It has been pointed out that the purpose of this interview question was to collect data from the sampled English teachers at Koye Fache Primary School. It was used to gather additional information for cross-checking towards exploring the practice of students’ vocabulary learning strategies in English language learning. As indicated in chapter three, the teachers involved in

this study were 4 in number (see section 3.3). Therefore, the researcher tried to present the background information or profile of teachers according to the following table.

Table 7 : Teachers' Profile

No.	Items	Ranges	f	%
1	Age	27-30	1	25
		31-35	3	75
		36 years and above	-	-
		Total	4	100
2	Sex	Male	3	100
		Female	1	25
		Total	4	75
3	Qualification	Diploma	-	-
		B.Ed	4	100
		MA/MSc	-	-
		Total	4	100
4	Area of Qualification	English Major	4	100
		English Minor	-	-
		Total	4	100
5	Total years in teaching English language.	1-5 years	1	25
		6-10 years	1	25
		11-15 years	1	25
		16 and above years	1	25
		Total	4	100

As age wise, **Table 6** above shows that 1(25%) of the teacher fell in the age range between 25 to 30 years; whereas 3 (75%) of them were in the 31 to 35 years range from the collected data. Likewise, in replaying to item two, all the sample teachers 3 (75%) of teachers were male and 1 (25%) teacher female in this study. In so far as the teachers' qualification is concerned, 1 (25%) of them was degree without PGDT holder; whereas 3 (75%) of them were B.Ed graduated.

From qualification point of view, on the other hand, the researcher suggested that all number of the sample teachers 4 (100%) graduated in majoring English from governmental universities. As to the teachers' experience in teaching English, 1 (25%) of the teacher taught 1 up to 5 years, 1 (25%), 1(25%) of them taught from 6 to 10 years, 1 (25%) of them taught 11 to 15 years whereas 1(25%) of them taught 16 and above years.

From the data collected from the teachers (i.e. from the above table 6), it can be concluded that the majority of teachers had B.Ed holders from this table. It is also assumed that all the sample teachers (i.e. 4 or 100%) were English major with the claim of 'Area of qualification'.

Based on the interview questions (see appendix-ii), the data from interviews (4 or 100% of sampled English teachers) reported that the students use dictionary strategy to guess the meaning of new words for the first time when they encounter the meaning of new words by using dictionary method. So, the major or common VLS that the students use to guess the meaning of new words in English language was using dictionary strategy. It is suggested that data from sampled teachers also depicted that the students prefer bilingual dictionaries because they believed that it was not difficult as monolingual dictionary to understand new words with the claim of 'Types of dictionaries that students' used in English vocabulary learning strategies.

However, the researcher deduced that since using monolingual dictionary requires being able to interpret definitions, synonyms, antonyms and pronunciations in the foreign/second language; many students might ignore using it to discover the meaning of new words. It is also argued that the sample teachers explained that the students did not request their teachers and classmates for meaning of new words in the target language with the claim of 'How do the students work and practice with their friends or teachers to learn and develop their vocabulary knowledge in social strategies?' It is assumed that such strategy used for a short period of time to recall the meaning of new words and it did not use for a long period of time in L2 vocabulary learning.

In fact, the information also depicts that the students could not be effective in cognitive strategies to write words with their meaning on a piece of paper and to repeat new words in speaking or writing in order to review or remember them when they have a free time or moment in classroom. The students could not have the knowledge of VLS. For example, when they guess the meaning of new words, they did not focus on their parts of speech. They only emphasized on

knowing or writing its meanings. During guessing its meaning, the students did not know which was adverb or verb or noun or adjective with the claim of “ Analyzing parts of speech while the students guess the meaning of new words.” From this data, the researcher believed that such this limitation may make the students poor in VLS particularly in English language.

Furthermore, the information taken from the sampled teachers revealed that the students did not practice this strategy in order to test themselves with words tests tend to implement meta cognitive strategies. Among the four (4) sample English teachers, the two (2) English teachers also added that they did not use English media, listen to radio, and watch TVs, read magazines or fictions via English to develop their vocabulary knowledge in the target language with the claim of “Do the students have a schedule or plan to study English vocabulary to develop their vocabulary knowledge?” Cohen (1998) stated, “Meta cognitive strategies deal with pre-assessment, pre-planning, pre-evaluation, and post evaluation of language learning activities and of language use events from vocabulary learning strategies”(p.7).

4.9 Analysis of Top one Student’s

Interview was also implemented to gather extra information about the exploration on students’ English vocabulary-learning strategies at Koye Fache Primary School from top one student from each section particularly grade eight in focus. Regarding to this, in discovering strategies, the students were **low** tend to analyze parts of speech while they are guessing the meanings of new words from the contextual clues in the classroom. It was understood that the students knew nouns effectively but they did not know which words were adverbs, verbs and adjectives properly with the claim of ‘The students analyze parts of speech while they are guessing the meaning of new words from contextual clues in English language learning’. It also added that they sometimes take an adjective as a verb, an adverb as a verb and so on. It is understood, however, the researcher thought that to know the meaning of new words firstly and to be effective in second language vocabulary learning, guessing from the context and analyzing its parts of speech are indispensable strategies in English vocabulary learning.

The data from interview depicted that students were **very low** tending to implement VLS to guess the meanings of new words in English vocabulary learning with the claim of ‘Having awareness of VLS during guessing the meaning of new words in English language’. The data showed the students did not have awareness to implement VLS during vocabulary learning in

English classes. The data also confirmed that the students could not have awareness tend to choose or select the right strategies (such as contextual guessing, dictionary strategies, by using synonyms and antonyms, by using word classes such as nouns, verbs, adjectives and adverbs) while they are studying English vocabulary in English language. For instance, they use dictionary strategy instead of guessing strategy. But, most of the time, using direct dictionary tend to guess the meaning of new words cannot be supported in vocabulary learning strategies.

Based on the above ideas, Vann and Abraham (1990) cited in Lockhart and Richards (1994) stated that:

What distinguished unsuccessful learners was not only the lack of appropriate strategies but also the inability to choose the right strategy for the task. Unsuccessful learners appear to be active strategy users, but they often failed to apply strategies appropriate to the task at hand. Apparently, they lacked certain necessary high order processes, what often called Meta cognitive strategies or self-regulatory skills, which would enable them to assess the task/ the vocabulary of the language and bring to bear the necessary strategies for its completion (P.65).

In addition, the information taken from interview also demonstrated that students were **low** to ask each other (teachers or classmates) in order to explore the meaning of new words with the claim of ‘The students learn the meaning of new words from their classmates and teachers or through interaction in English language learning’. However, they did not ask their classmates and teachers in the target language. The students did not use L1 to ask classmates or teachers for guessing the meaning in the target language. It is understood, however, Social strategies facilitate learning through interaction and learning with others in the target language (Oxford, 1990).

Furthermore, the data explained that the students could not remember effectively words by classifying them into groups in terms of parts of speech (verbs, nouns, adjectives and so on). It is assumed that the students were **low** tending to implement memory strategies in the classroom with the claim of ‘The students study or remember words by using semantic maps (classifying them in terms of parts of speech such as nouns, verbs, adjectives and adverbs), other sense relationship (synonyms, antonyms, etc)’ while they are studying English vocabulary learning strategies in the reading passages.

Based on the data collected from interview, the study investigated that the students have problems of memory strategies while they are studying English vocabulary. That means, the researcher thought that the students use ‘working memory’ while they are implementing memory strategies in English vocabulary learning. So, one of the major problems associated with foreign language vocabulary learning is that words always get lost from memory after short periods of time. It is understood that ‘working memory’ helps the learners while teaching-learning or studying is going only (i.e. it used for about twenty seconds or one period only). However, Lawson and Hogben (1996) explained, “The successful learner can not only analyze and rehearse the new word and its meaning, but also can elaborate the word-meaning complex and establish it within a suitable network of meaning if they use long-term memory or recall” (p.104).

In fact, the researcher suggested that the students were **medium** tend to implement the cognitive strategies while they are studying English vocabulary in the classroom. It also added that almost all of the students did not take short notes about the new words and they could not practice this strategy during the teaching-learning process is going on. Based on the interview questions, the researcher understood that the students did not have experience to use cognitive strategies in the school. In this regard, different researchers with varying degree also claimed that, “On average 5-7 repetitions are need to consolidate words into long-term memory” (Crother and Suppes, 1967; Gu, 2003 and Nation, 2001 as cited in Gashaw, 2008, p.24).

The data from interview also confirmed that they were **very low** tend to implement meta cognitive strategies because they did not have a plan their time to study only vocabulary but they did for their overall study with the claim of ‘The students use meta-cognitive strategies (by planning their vocabulary learning, coordinating themselves in vocabulary learning, evaluating their own learning strategies’. It is understood; however, some scholars such as Siriwan (2007) stated, “Meta cognitive strategies generally involve preparing, planning for learning, selecting, and using learning strategies, monitoring strategy use, orchestrating various kinds of strategies, and evaluating the effectiveness of strategy use and learning.

Lastly, the data from interview explained that the majority of the respondents implemented or used bilingual dictionaries rather than monolingual dictionary while they are guessing English vocabulary with the claim of ‘Using dictionaries strategies in VLS to guess the meaning of new words in English classes?’ In this regard, some scholars such as Gu, (2003) and Laufer and Hadar (1997) recommended that Monolingual dictionary is more useful than bilingual dictionaries to discover the meaning of new words in second language vocabulary learning (cited in Gashaw, 2008). For this reason, it is recommended that students should use monolingual dictionary effectively in L2 learning to improve their vocabulary learning strategies.

CHAPTER FIVE

SUMMARY, CONCLUSIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

5.1 Summary

The major objective of this study was to explore the practice of students' English vocabulary learning strategies at Koye Feche Primary School grade eight students in focus. The researcher used *a* descriptive survey design for this study. Grade eight students were the target population of this study. Top ten students and four English teachers were the sample size of the study. 80 students and 4 English teachers were selected by using purposive sampling method for this study. The researcher used qualitative and quantitative data. Questionnaires and interviews were implemented in this study. The data obtained from questionnaire was tallied, tabulated; using simple statistical techniques (frequency and percentages) were also applied to present the data.

Based on this, the following were the basic research questions of this study. These are: Do grade eight students at Koye Feche Primary School have motivation to learn vocabulary-learning strategies during guessing the meaning of new words? Do grade eight students at Koye Feche Primary School try to apply vocabulary-learning strategies in English classes? What vocabulary-learning strategies are common with Koye Feche Primary School of grade eight students to guess the meaning of new words in English reading passages? Therefore, from the data discussed and presented, the findings of the study were mentioned:

The majority of sampled students 46 (57.5%) were female and the first language or mother tongue of the respondents, 46 (57.5%) were Afan Oromo speakers. A considerable number of sampled students or 42 (52.5%) said strongly agree with the claim of 'Learning English is basically a matter of learning its vocabulary' and the majority of sampled students or 51 (63.73%) said strongly agree with the claim of 'English vocabulary learning is the most difficult thing in language learning'.

A considerable number of students were **very low** tend to analyze parts of speech while they are guessing the meanings of new words from the contextual clues in the classroom and the students clearly knew nouns effectively but they did not know which words were adverbs, verbs and adjectives properly. The data from interview depicted that the majority of students did not have

motivation to implement VLS during vocabulary learning in English classes because the students could not have awareness tend to choose or select the right strategies (such as contextual guessing, dictionary strategies, by using synonyms and antonyms, by using word classes such as nouns, verbs, adjectives and adverbs) while they are studying English vocabulary in English language. For instance, they use dictionary strategy instead of guessing strategy. But, most of the time, using direct dictionary tend to guess the meaning of new words cannot be supported in vocabulary learning strategies. The students did not use L1 to ask classmates or teachers in order to guess the meaning of new words in the target language.

A large number of the sample students did not try to apply tending to repeat words in speaking or writing and write new words by taking down notes on a piece of paper to review them afterwards in cognitive strategies respectively. Data from both interviews from teachers and top ten students also confirmed that the students did not write new words on a piece of paper and they did not practice words in speaking or writing in order to remember them effectively in English VLS. Similarly, the majority of the sample students 48 (60%) inclined towards never tends to control and evaluate their own VLS in meta cognitive strategies. The information taken from both interviews from teachers and top ten students also explained that the students could not have a schedule to study English vocabularies although they are basic unit of a language. In addition, a considerable number of sampled students or 35 (43.75%) reported less interested in vocabulary learning strategies.

The information taken from open ended questionnaire showed that the students commonly used bilingual dictionary strategy while they are guessing the meaning of new words in English vocabulary. In fact, a considerable number of students or 50 (62.5%) of the respondents reported that they used bilingual dictionaries to guess the meaning of new words in English classes. This is to mean that the students have the experience of using bilingual dictionaries tend to guess the meanings of new words in L2 vocabulary learning strategies.

5.2 Conclusions

The major objective of the study was to explore the practice of students' English vocabulary learning strategies at Koye Feche Primary School grade eight students in focus. Therefore, the brief conclusions have been made based on the above summary. These were:

Vocabulary learning strategies were found to be ineffective in the sample school because the students did not have awareness to use English VLS effectively. For example, they could not employ sufficiently strategies of discovering meanings of words for the first time (guessing, analyzing parts of speech, using antonyms or synonyms, learning from dictionary, etc and asking teachers and /classmates in the target language) in English vocabulary learning. In fact, the students always preferred 'dictionary use' instead of guessing strategies. Since dictionary strategy was not allowed to use during exams/tests, students were inactive to be used L2 vocabulary learning.

The study concluded that, for example, "She is too strict but he is too **lenient**" in this sentence, the meaning of the bold word is: First analyze its parts of speech (i.e. if the given word is adjective, then the meaning is also adjective and so on. Second, by using the antonyms of the given word (i.e. what type of conjunction used in this sentence? Then, it was opposing conjunction and the two ideas were contrasting with each other. So, if the students understood the meaning of the familiar word (i.e. too strict), they would recognize the unfamiliar word (i.e. too lenient) easily. Hence, '**Lenient**' means '**not strict**'.

More importantly, successful learners focused on not only the word's meanings but also its proper use in context. These behaviors may constitute the elements of VLS because they intentionally and voluntarily use dictionaries for vocabulary acquisition later on. For this reason, only using dictionary or one/limited strategy to infer the meanings of words always reduce the proficiency of the students in L2 vocabulary learning. In addition to this, the students did not ask their teachers and classmates in the target language in social strategies. For this reason, the study suggested that it was better if they would interact in the target language effectively and efficiently in L2 Vocabulary learning than L1.

Besides to discovering strategies, students did not try implement or apply consolidating strategies while they were studying or learning English VLS. These limitations influenced the students' knowledge, participation and interest of the students in L2 vocabulary learning. It is argued that the students did not have the experience of consolidating strategies in the school. In addition, the study deduced that the foremost attention of the students were not on vocabulary learning strategies since they thought as an easy topic from other aspects or topics of the language. It is understood, however, the researcher assumed that the teachers ought to advise their students how they get the experience of consolidating strategies in the field of FLV learning. It is also recommended that the students ought to have an interest to learn vocabulary learning strategies unless they are ineffective in vocabulary learning strategies particularly in English language learning.

Similarly, the majority of the sample students frequently used bilingual dictionaries to guess the meaning of new words. However, the researcher also argued that using monolingual dictionary is more important than bilingual dictionaries because bilingual dictionaries provide little information on how words are used or learned. It is suggested that the researcher concluded students should be effective in L2 vocabulary learning if they use monolingual dictionary because they learn its pronunciations, synonyms and antonyms of words from it.

5.3 Recommendations

Based on the above results or conclusions of the study, the following recommendations were proposed.

- The teachers should motivate or encourage the students in social strategies by giving rewards such as pen, a piece of paper, exercise book and by adding bonus marks on their results while they are asking their teachers and classmates in the target language.
- A large number of students did not apply or use consolidating strategies in English vocabulary learning. Focusing on these issues, the teachers should help the students on how they use (implement) memory, cognitive and meta cognitive strategies in vocabulary learning strategies particularly in English classes.

- Since vocabulary learning strategies are the basic unit of language learning strategies, the English teachers will be able to advise the students on vocabulary learning strategies as the major component of their language in L2 learning.
- English Teachers should consider the limitation of students in VLS and advise them how they make it a plan to develop their knowledge in VLS in the future.
- Teachers should give special attention on different strategies in VLS and ignore or neglect limited strategy in VLS how the students effectively use varieties of strategies such as remember and study the spelling of words, their parts of speech, etc as a vocabulary learning strategies in VLS in general.
- Above all, it is also recommended that more research is needed to explore on students' vocabulary learning strategies at primary level to arrive at more reliable conclusions.

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APPENDICES

APPENDIX-I

ADDIS ABABA UNIVERSITY

COLLEGE OF HUMANITIES, LANGUAGE STUDIES, JOURNALISM AND COMMUNICATION DEPARTMENT OF FOREIGN LANGUAGE AND LITERATURE MASTERS OF ARTS IN ENGLISH LANGUAGE TEACHING (ELT)

Questionnaire

Dear Students,

This questionnaire is designed for gathering data regarding to explore on students' English vocabulary-learning strategies at Koye Fache Primary School at grade eight students classes. So, the researcher is kindly asked you to fill the questionnaire with honestly, genuinely as well as carefully. In fact, your contribution is highly important for the success of this study. In addition, the information you provide is entirely confidential used by the researcher only.

Note: You do not need to write your name on the questionnaire.

Thank you very much for your help!!

Part-I: Fill the following boxes regarding to your personal information before you begin the next parts. Please put "x" in the appropriate boxes.

1. Age:

14-16 17-19 20-22 23-25 Above 26

2. Sex: Male Female

3. First Language: Afan Oromo Amharic
English Other

Part-II: Indicate to what extent you agree with the following statements based on your belief and experience of vocabulary learning in English language. So, please put an “x” under each number in the table. Each statement has four options and then, chooses from it.

Note that: 4= Strongly Agree 2= Disagree
3= Agree 1= Strongly Disagree

No	Statements	Scales			
		4	3	2	1
1	Learning English is basically a matter of learning its vocabulary.				
2	In language learning, vocabulary is the most important element to focus on compared to grammar.				
3	English vocabulary learning is the most difficult thing in language learning.				
4	Vocabulary learning has to be given prime consideration in English language.				

Part-III: The following questions are based on how often do you use vocabulary learning strategies in English language. Please read the following items carefully and put an “x” under each number in the table. Each statement has five options such as “Always, Usually, Sometimes, Rarely and Never.”

Note that: 5=Always 2= Rarely
4= Usually 1= Never
3= Sometimes

No	Questions/Items	Scales				
		5	4	3	2	1
5	How often do you use different vocabulary learning strategies to enhance your vocabulary knowledge?					
6	In vocabulary learning strategies, how often do you guess the meanings of new words correctly from the context do you use?					
7	To what extents do you learn the meaning of a new word from a dictionary?					
8	In vocabulary learning strategies, how often do you prefer asking your teacher or classmates about the meaning of new words to guess the meaning from the context?					
9	How often do you analyze parts of speech while you are guessing the meaning of new words?					
10	In the process of vocabulary learning strategies, how often do you :					
	10.1 Study words by classifying them into groups in terms of their parts of speech(Nouns,Verbs,Adjectives,and Adverbs), sameness of meaning, oppositeness of meaning etc, to remember them better?					
	10.2 Practice or repeat words to yourself (in speaking and writing) to be able to remember new words while you are learning/studying English vocabulary					
	10.3 Jot down notes about the meaning of new words in your note book to develop your vocabulary knowledge while you are learning/studying English vocabulary?					
	10.4 Enrich and practice your vocabulary knowledge by planning and monitoring your vocabulary learning, choosing the words you need, test and evaluate your progress?					

11 In vocabulary learning strategies, what types of dictionaries do you use while you are guessing or learning English vocabulary?

Monolingual Dictionary (3) Bilingual Dictionary (2)

Multilingual Dictionary (1)

12 To what extent are you interested in English vocabulary learning strategies?

Very highly interested (5) Highly interested (4)

Averagely interested (3) Less interested (2) Not interested (1)

13 What kind of vocabulary-learning strategies do you use while you are guessing the meaning

of new words in English vocabulary? _____

_____.

APPENDIX-II
ADDIS ABABA UNIVERSITY
COLLEGE OF HUMANITIES, LANGUAGE STUDIES, JOURNALISM AND
COMMUNICATION DEPARTMENT OF FOREIGN LANGUAGE AND LITERATURE
MASTERS OF ARTS IN ENGLISH LANGUAGE TEACHING (ELT)

Interview

Dear Teachers,

The following sets of questions are designed to get extra information about the exploration on students' English vocabulary-learning strategies at Koye Feche Primary School from English teachers. Therefore, the researcher designs interview questions according to the following activities.

- 1 Sex wise: Male _____ Female _____
- 2 Would you tell me your status or qualification, please?
- 3 Excuse me, could you tell or add me area of your qualification?
- 4 How long have you been teaching English from this school?
- 5 When the students encounter the meaning of new words, how do they get its meaning for the first time?
- 6 Do the students learn the meaning of new words from a dictionary? If the answer is 'yes', what types of dictionaries do they use while they are learning English vocabulary?
- 7 What are the major or common vocabulary learning strategies that your students use to guess the meaning of new words in English language?
- 8 Do the students use and practice with their friends to develop their vocabulary knowledge? How do they practice with them?
- 9 The students analyze parts of speech while they are guessing the meaning of new words from contextual clues in English language learning.
- 10 Do the students have a schedule or plan to study English vocabulary to develop their vocabulary knowledge?

Really, thank you very much for your cooperation!!

APPENDIX-III
ADDIS ABABA UNIVERSITY
COLLEGE OF HUMANITIES, LANGUAGE STUDIES, JOURNALISM AND
COMMUNICATION
DEPARTMENT OF FOREIGN LANGUAGE AND LITERATURE MASTERS OF ARTS IN
ENGLISH LANGUAGE TEACHING (ELT)

Interview

Dear Students,

The following sets of questions are designed to get extra information about the exploration on students' English vocabulary-learning strategies at Koye Feche Primary School from top one student from each section. Therefore, the researcher tries to design interview questions according to the following activities.

Note that: 5: Very Good, 4: Good, 3: Medium, 2: Low 1: Very Low

No.	Activities to be interviewed	Scales/Degrees of Implementation				
		5	4	3	2	1
1	How do you have awareness to learn Vocabulary learning strategies to analyze parts of speech while you are guessing the meaning of new words in English language learning (i.e. classifying them in terms of parts of speech such as nouns, verbs, adjectives and adverbs, using contextual guessing, dictionary strategies (bilingual dictionary or monolingual dictionary)?					
2	How do you learn the meaning of new words from their classmates and teachers or through interaction in English language learning?					
3	How do you study the meaning of new words (i.e. by using repeating words in writing or speaking to recall newly learned words)?					
4	How do you practise the meaning of new words by taking down notes while you are reading the passages?					
5	How do you use meta-cognitive strategies (i.e. by planning their vocabulary learning, coordinating themselves in vocabulary learning, evaluating their own learning strategies)?					
6	How do you use dictionaries strategies in VLS to guess the meaning of new words in English classes? What types of dictionaries do you use while you are guessing English vocabulary?					

Dear students, really, thank you very much for your cooperation!!