دراسة وعـي الطلبة الليبيين الذين يـدرسون اللغة الإنجليزية كلغة اجنبية و استراتيجيات تعلم مفردات اللغة.

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الملخص باللغة العربية :

تكشــف هـذه الدراسة الوعي بين طلبة الجامعات لاستراتيجيات تعلم مفردات اللغة وهـدفت للتحقق مما إذا كان المتعلمون على دراية بمبادي استراتيجية تعلم مفردات اللغة وما إذا كان أداءهم يتأثر بالاختيار المناسب لاستراتيجيات تعلم مفردات اللغة. تستـخدم الطريقة الكمية (الاستبيان) لجمع المعلومات لهذه الدراسة و المعلومات الكـــمية حُللت عن طريق برنامج (مايكروسفت اكسل) الإحصائي لحساب إحصائيات الحالة الوصفية حسبت النسبة المئوية لتحليل المعلومات ، وتشـــير النتائج أن الاستراتيجية الإدراكية من تكرار الكلمات تحصلت على دراية عالية من مدى فائدتها. وقد أدّى الطـلاب أنشطة توجيهية مطـابقة للفرضيات والمعتقدات ضـــمن تعلم المـفردات وكانوا واعين بمدى أهمية أنشطة تعلّم المُفردات المباشـــرة في منهج اللغة الموازي. كما أن الطلبة الليبيين الذين يـدرسون اللغة الإنجليزية كلغة أجنبية كـانوا واعين لمجموعة من استراتيجيات تعلم مفردات اللغة التي تحــدّد في السياق الأدبي بناءً على خبرتهم الدراسية الشخصية بما في ذلك المنهاج المباشر وغير المباشر لتعلم المفردات وأمكن القول أن الطلبة يحملون نظـرة سلبية تجـاه النسـخة الفـورية لاستراتيجيات تعـلم المفردات ويرجع إلى مستويات اللغة المطلوبة أو الطلاقــة من جانب المعلمين.

A Study of Libyan EFL Students' awareness and Vocabulary Language Learning Strategies

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Abstract

This study explores the awareness among undergraduate students who study English as a foreign language and Vocabulary Language Learning Strategies (VLLs). It aims to investigate whether learners are aware to the principles of VLLs, and whether their performance could be influenced by the appropriate selection of VLLS. A quantitative (questionnaire) method was used to collect

data for this study. The quantitative data is analysed via the Microsoft Excel to compute descriptive state statistics. Percentage is computed for data analyses. The results indicate that cognitive strategy of repeating words obtained high acknowledgement in its usefulness. The students perform instructional practices conforming to their underlying assumptions and beliefs on vocabulary learning. Students are also aware of the significance of direct vocabulary learning activities in a balanced language course.

Moreover, Libyan EFL students involved are aware of a range of vocabulary learning strategies which have been identified in relevant literature based on their personal learning experience, including both direct and indirect vocabulary learning approaches. It can be said that the students held negative views towards the strong version of VLL, due to the levels of the students at the present time and the lack of training and the lack of acceptable or fluent language levels on the part of the teachers.

1.0 Introduction

There was interest in investigating what actually believe about Vocabulary Language Learning Strategies (VLLs) and find out whether EFL students are aware of using effective ways of vocabulary learning. The main reason for conducting this study was to support students' educational aspirations and to encourage them to improve their learning theories and skills related to VLLs.

In this survey, an attempt was done to find out about the awareness of Libyan EFL students towards using the most effective strategies of vocabulary learning. learning vocabulary can be concentrated on useful words and can give students practice in useful skills. Variety of ways for dealing with vocabulary can be preferred by students. This choice should be built on a good understanding of the way of dealing with vocabulary (Nation, 1990: 1-2). So, we cannot ignore that vocabulary learning plays a very important role in second language learning and a large vocabulary will help students improve their language proficiency. Teachers focus on the conceptual meaning of vocabulary, collocation, connotation, denotation, and synonyms.

The purpose of the study was to identify the most popular vocabulary learning strategies adopted by 20 EFL students at the university. The independent variables of the research are students' awareness and beliefs of vocabulary learning strategies. The research was identified to answer these questions:

Q1.To what extend are Libyan English students aware of vocabulary learning strategies based on their personal learning experience?

Q2.How could the performance of EFL students be affected by VLLS?

2.0 Literature Review

Compared with direct vocabulary learning approach, in which students pay their attention to vocabulary exercises, a direct approach to vocabulary learning focuses on messages students are expected to meet. Nation (1990, p.p. 2-6) believed that guessing from the context is the most useful one. Moreover, paraphrasing, using dictionary, and mnemonic techniques help learners to be independent from the teacher. In this approach, decontextualized activities are reduced whereas contextualized activities are more implemented (ibid).

Many teachers try to do their best to help students learn the vocabulary items more effectively. This has been identified by the research on learning strategies that tried to find out the learner's choice of using of the strategy and its role in the language teaching (Cook, 2008:105).

Ellis (1997, p.77) thinks of learning strategies as specific approaches or techniques that students use to learn L2. They can be behavioural or mental and problem-oriented. Oxford (1990, p.8) defined LLS as "operations employed by the learner to aid the acquisition, storage, retrieval, and use of information, specific actions taken by the learner to make learning easier, faster, more enjoyable, more self-directed, more effective, and more transferrable to new situations" (ibid).

Oxford (1990, p. 16) carried out research on LLS and presented detailed classifications about them. Two primarily categories are identified, one of which directly affects learning and the other indirectly. The first category consists of Memory, Cognitive, and Compensation strategies. The second group includes Metacognitive, Affective, and social strategies. However, the earlier study was not grounded in rigorous theories of SLA or cognitive. O'Malley and Chamot (1990) cited in (Mitchell&Myles,2004:105-7) based on cognitive theory to relate learning strategies to cognitive process. In this model a distinction was made between declarative knowledge, which involves the things we know about, and procedural knowledge which refers to the things we know how to do such as language production. The learner has to go through three stages to make the skills moving from the first ruled-

bound declarative knowledge to the automatic procedural knowledge: the cognitive stage, the associative stage, and the autonomous stage. Within the cognitive theory framework, O'Malley and Chamot presented a list of strategies divided into three categories- metacognitive, cognitive and social- by means of studies in the late-1980s. The metacognitive strategies concern "planning and thinking about learning, such as planning one's learning, monitoring one's own speech or writing" (Cook,2008: 115). Cognitive strategies 'involve in the analysis, synthesis or transformation of learning materials'(Ellis,1997:77). The learners may use a dictionary; take notes or connect new information with what they know. Social strategies are those which are involved in the interaction such as working with peers or asking the teacher's help(ibid). They found that cognitive strategies accounted for 53% of the ESL students, while metacognitive strategies accounted for 30%. Social strategies made up the remaining 17% (Cook,2008: 115-116). It would appear that the work by O'Malley and   Chamot has contributed to a theory-based element of LLS in second language acquisition and presented an evidence of learners' active role in language learning as the use of learning strategies is varied according to the task and student's level. Cognitive strategies of resourcing and elaborating, metacognitive strategies of self-monitoring and self-evaluation could go with a vocabulary task (Cook,2008:116).

   In the process of clarifying and classifying LLS, some studies indirectly involve specifying the VLS. Schmitt investigated 600 respondents and asked them "which strategies they used and which they felt were useful'' (2000:136). Bilingual dictionaries, written and spoken repetition, and strategies that focus on form were the most useful ones. However, this study did not correlate high with learners' proficiency or teacher's knowledge. In McDonough's (1995) cited in (Schmitt,2000) study, suggested that improvements come from strategy training is "relatively weak and only shows up on certain measures, is culture-specific, and may be better for beginning students".

   Schmitt (1997) cited in (Schmitt,2000:133- 4) proposed a list of VLS and classified them into two classes: those for the discovery of a new word's meaning, and those for consolidating a word once it has been encountered. The strategies are further classified into five groups. Determination strategies

[DET] used to find out meaning without resourcing to another person's knowledge and experience such as guessing from context. Social strategies [SOC] involve learners use interaction with other people to facilitate learning. Memory strategies [MEM] involve relating new materials to existing knowledge system. Cognitive strategies [COG] refer to the skills that require the L1 transformation or manipulation. Lastly, Metacognitive strategies [MET] "involve a conscious overview of the learning process and making decisions about planning, monitoring, or evaluating the best way to study (ibid: 135-136).

Discovery strategies include several determination and social strategies. The view proposed by Schmitt (1997: 209) guessing from context has been highly promoted since it seems to be used with communicative approach. Nevertheless, the learner's knowledge and background should be taken into account when guessing. Dictionary can be used in all skills, but it is not sufficient in productive skills. The view supported by Coady (1997: 286) using a bilingual dictionary was helpful in vocabulary and reading tasks.

Consolidation strategies consist of social, memory, cognitive, and metacognitive strategies. Memory strategies help learners to commit new words into memory such as study words with pictures, related words (antonyms, synonyms), keyword technique. The study proposed by Schmitt (1997: 215-216) found that cognitive strategies indicate to a word repetition to get a high level of proficiency, taking notes can be used as a study aid. However, the research carried by Gu & Johnson (1996) cited in (Gass & Selinker, 2001: 380) found that metacognitve strategies are positive predictors of vocabulary size and general proficiency.

Borg (2003) pointed out that "teachers are active, thinking decision-makers who make instructional choices by drawing on complex, practically-oriented, personalised, and context-sensitive network of knowledge, thoughts, and beliefs" (p:81). Richards (1998) saw teachers' belief systems as "the information, attitudes, values, expectations, theories, and assumptions about teaching and learning that teachers build up over time and bring with them to the classroom" (p:66). However, teachers' beliefs are recognized to have a powerful influence on their instructional practices, they do not always reflect teachers' stated beliefs, personal theories, and pedagogical principles (Borg ,2003: 81-83). Woods (1991) cited in (Richards ,1998:4) found that "the

decisions made in planning and carrying out the course were internally consistent, and consistent with deeper underlying assumptions and beliefs about language, learning and teaching" (ibid).

Bernat & Gvozdenko (2005) pointed out that learner's awareness could be affected by personal factors such as the emotional aspect, self-concept and aptitude for learning. Moreover, social, cultural, contextual, cognitive, affective, and personal factors have a big role in shaping learners' cognition.

2.1 Key Previous Studies on VLS

In the most recent studies, Amirian. And Heshamatifar. (2013) carried out a study to discover what strategies were the most popular used by Iranian students. They conducted that determination strategies such as guessing from context and using a dictionary were the most popular strategies. However, social strategies were rarely been used by EFL learners. Another more recent research is made by Yunhao (2011) to find out the relationship between VLS and students' levels. The study findings revealed that good students employ learning strategy more frequently than poor students.

Making a good aware learner to VLS according to their needs. Thus, a good strategy should be chosen according to learners' levels and acts successfully with any unfamiliar strategy. (Ghazal, 2007). Moreover, Al Zahrani and Chaudhary (2022) examined the knowledge level and the performance of twenty EFL students studying English for specific purpose (ESP) courses regarding VLLS and found that learner's performance can be affected by the implementation of VLLS. learners also showed a good understanding of VLLS. 'Guessing the meaning and' taking notes were the most used strategies used by students.

3.0 Methodology

English is taught as an obligatory subject in Libyan schools. Learners are exposed to learn English as a foreign language in the grade one at primary school. Consequently, they are expected to learn a lot of vocabulary inductively as the Libyan textbooks based on the Communicative Approach. Twenty learners involved in this survey were recently studied in the Education College at Zawia University. They were all Libyan EFL learners.

The data for this study was collected through questionnaire. The survey was designed to provide various results which could be compared with each other (see appendix 1). The questionnaire was sent to the students via emails or in

hand and they are required to answer the questions according to their individual situation. The survey provided information on the attitude of vocabulary learning, strategies they usually use, and the most effective strategies they assume. The questionnaire divided to four parts. The first part provides some background related to the participants. The second part consists of two open-ended questions. One is designed to get some information according to the experience of English learning, and the another one is about the use of dictionary as this strategy were not conveyed in the next part of the questionnaire. The third part is formed as a scale asked participants to identify to what extent they think that VLL are important for their students in the future.

Because of the potential disadvantages of using closed-ended questionnaires, I included some open-ended questions for respondents to freely express their ideas without the constraints of fixed options. This will provide richness and honesty to some extent (Cohen, et al, 2000:255). The items included in the questionnaire were based on the relevant ideas discussed in the literature review, mainly the taxonomy of vocabulary learning strategies compiled by Schmitt (1997). This study was conducted through an open and closed questionnaire. Data was collected and entered into Microsoft Excel to compute descriptive state statistics. Percentage is computed for data analyses.

4.0 Data Analysis and Findings

Table 1 :   years of L2 learning

strategy	frequency	Percentage (%)	Years of L2 learning
1. Read a word repeatedly.	6	33	5-10
2. Write a word repeatedly.	5	27	5-10
3.Extensive reading	2	11	10-15
4. Learn words by consulting a dictionary	2	11	1-5
5. Guess words in context.	3	16	1-5 5-10 OVER 10

strategy	frequency	Percentage (%)	Years of L2 learning
6. Study the relation between spelling and pronunciation of a word.	1	5	10-15
7. Do a number of vocabulary exercises.	1	5	**Over 10**
8. Use new words in sentences.	2	11	1-5
9. Use pictures to learn a word.	3	16	5-10
10. Use authentic materials.	2	11	1-5 5-10
11. Work with peers to find the meaning of new words.	2	11	5-10

First, we will discuss the information obtained from the questions in part A & B of the questionnaire. As Table 1 shows, the participants involved in the survey referred to a variety of strategies they found helpful to their students to learn vocabulary based on their teaching experience. While two participants find it difficult to give an answer to this question, others reported many more than one strategy. Among the eleven strategies mentioned by the other eighteen students, two strategies were mentioned most frequently with over 5 years' experience— read a word repeatedly and write a word repeatedly (33%, 27% consequently). While guessing words in context and using word in sentences were the next most popular strategies (each was mentioned by 11% of participants). Although the other five strategies were mentioned by one or two of the respondents, they were also important in vocabulary learning.

Table 2 Participants' self-reported vocabulary learning methods or strategies

Statement	Frequency
1. Read a word repeatedly.	**6**
2. Write a word repeatedly.	**5**
3.Extensive reading	**2**
4. Learn words by consulting a dictionary	**2**

Statement	Frequency
5. Guess words in context.	**3**
6. Study the relation between spelling and pronunciation of a word.	**1**
7. Do a number of vocabulary exercises.	**1**
8. Use new words in sentences.	**3**
9. Use pictures to learn a word.	**2**
Total 25	

Using different types of dictionaries were recommended by the students. A monolingual dictionary was the most recommended choice, receiving support from sixteen participants. A bilingual dictionary was proposed by three of the respondents while only one of them encourage learners to use a collection dictionary (see figure 1).

Figure 1: Recommended type of dictionary

5%   15%

□ 1. Bilingual dictionary
■ 2. Monolingual dictionary
□ 3. Collection dictionary

80%
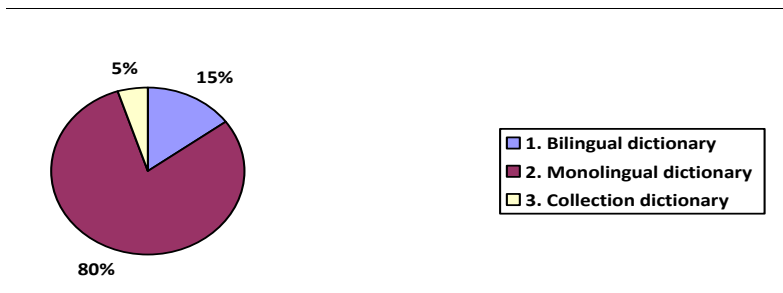
To give an overview of the results from the quantitative survey, we present the graph below. One of listed ranked strategies according to the usefulness degree in classroom practices. All strategies were listed in the same order as in the questionnaire.

To work with peers to find the meaning of an unknown word was considered the most useful strategy accounted to nearly55% (median 3). Studying the parts of a word was also highly recognized. To connect a word to its synonyms and antonyms and to use new words in sentences were assessed to be the second most useful strategies (50%, m=4). To connect a word with a personal experience and write a word repeatedly were considered the least useful strategies nearly 25%. To keep a vocabulary notebook to facilitate vocabulary learning, to test oneself with word tests, to look at the clause or

sentence containing the unknown word to find clues when guessing the meaning and to ask peers for additional explanation or examples to understand a word were ranked in the third place as the most useful strategies nearly 45% (m=4). Other strategies like study a word with a picture of its meaning instead of definition and paraphrase the definition of a word were not considered as useful as the other strategies. (See the graph below).
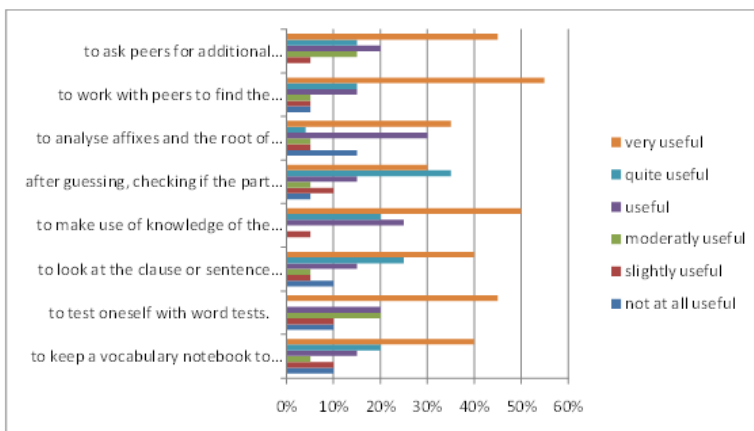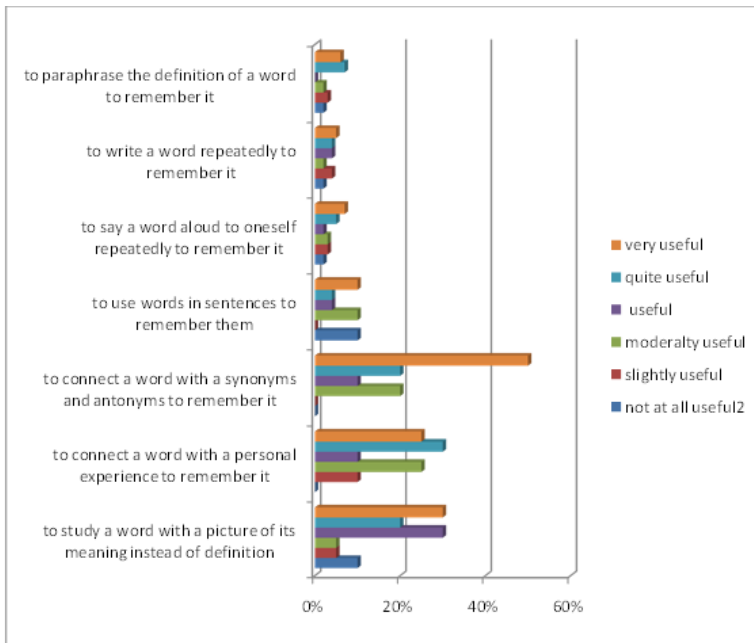

Figure 2: Participants' awareness and beliefs on vocabulary learning strategies

5.0. Discussion

According to the responses expressed in the in Part (B) of the questionnaire, the learners were aware of VLs in a range of aspects. Repetition seemed to be the most readily accessed and an identified strategy in respect of vocabulary learning. In fact, many learners reached high levels of proficiency by means of written and oral repetition; these strategies are established firmly among learners (Schmitt et al. (1997), cited in (Schmitt,2000: 136). However, lexical knowledge has a positive impact on the learner's proficiency with a lot of anxiety about a difficult word (Saengpakdeejit, 2014). Comparing the self-reported results with the findings from the quantitative survey, we can find that cognitive strategy of repeating words obtained high acknowledgement in its usefulness. So, they can be identified as highly recognized). Oral repetition as a vocabulary learning strategy was widely recognized by learners, so it would be commonly practiced among learners.

Guessing words in context was also identified as useful approaches to learning vocabulary in the survey. Owing to the fact that teachers use the indirect vocabulary learning focusing on messages students are expected to meet. Mnemonic techniques help learners to be independent from the teacher. In this approach, decontextualized activities are reduced whereas contextualized activities are more implemented (Nation, 1990: 2-6). In addition, teachers should make their less successful students more aware of the more beneficial strategy. As a result, students will be more dependent from the teacher. (Ghazal, 2017:90). Similarly, Libyan English learners involved in the survey were aware of a variety of vocabulary learning strategies commonly employed and proposed in language acquisition based on their learning experience. Moreover, a monolingual dictionary was the highly recommended, so it would be helpful in vocabulary learning.

To work with peers to find the meaning of an unknown word was identified as the most useful strategy. Studying the parts of a word was also recognized. This suggests that learners were also aware of the significance of direct vocabulary learning activities in a balanced language course. The relatively high proportion of implementation of the social strategies has to some extent corroborated the learners' beliefs. So, the teacher performed instructional practices conforming to their underlying assumptions and beliefs on vocabulary learning.

Many other factors could affect on their awareness and beliefs as well as on their language proficiency. Prior experience of language learning and teaching, type of professional training and involvements in professional associations could significantly influence leaners' beliefs (Aleen, 2002; Flores, 2001; Richards el al. ,1992) cited in (Borg, 2006: 86). Moreover, Ghazal (2017) claimed that teachers should consider students' needs, learning style, proficiency level and the task's requirements to choose the appropriate VLLS .

To sum up, it seemed to be clear that the Libyan EFL students involved were aware of a range of vocabulary learning strategies which have been identified in relevant literature based on their personal learning experience, including both direct and indirect vocabulary learning approaches.

6.0 Conclusion

The results show that Libyan EFL students hold an active attitude about English vocabulary learning and usually employ a large variety of learning strategies when they learn vocabulary, either to discover the meanings of the new words or to consolidate the words but did not form effective vocabulary learning strategies. Therefore, students should be encouraged to seek ways they find most helpful for expanding and maintaining their vocabulary store. Now, the present research has identified some vocabulary strategies but the study could be limited in several aspects. We need further studies to investigate the related effectiveness and importance of each particular strategy in a more actual and systematic way. It will be useful for teachers to help students use the strategy that fits their own capabilities and to connect what they've learned with practice and to use as much as possible. More effective skills can be gained from the practice of VLS under the guide of the teacher. As a teacher should focus on vocabulary teaching, consciously try to seek successful learning strategies. The teacher must help students to use a strategy that suited them and let them connect what they've learned with practice and actual use as much as possible.

61 Recomenation

Due to certain circumstances, it was not possible to involve teachers teaching English in the college. It is believed that if this was possible, more significant results could have been be gained. It will be useful for teachers to help students use the strategy that fits their own capabilities and to connect

what they've learned with practice and to use as much as possible. More effective skills can be gained from the practice of VLS under the guide of the teacher.

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APENDIX

Questionnair

Dear participant

This questionnaire is a part of a study on EFL student' attitude towards vocabulary learning strategies. Your ideas are highly valued and you cooperation genuinely appreciated. The data serves this particular research and will remain confidential.

Part A : personal information

A:what is your gender? Male( )   Female( )

B:How many years have you learnt English in Libyan schools?

…… years.

Part B

Open-ended questions

1-From your learning experience, what strategies do you consider helpful to you vocabulary learning?

………………………………………………………

2What type of dictionary do you recommend your students to use?

□ a bilingual dictionary □ a monolingual dictionary   □ others

From my experience I thing using real materials and posts can help students to learn new words.

Part C: Close-ended questions

For each statement, there is a scale for you to place a tick (√). The scale is to specify how

useful you consider the strategy is for you students.

The scale

Not at all useful		Slightly useful	Moderately useful	useful	Quijñte useful	Very useful
1	2		3	4	5	6

No	Strategy description	Scale	1	2	3	4	5	6
		(1)	Not at all useful	………….→………←				Very useful
		(2)	Never or almost never	………….→………←				Always or almost always
	To study a word with a picture of its meaning instead of definition.	(1)						
	To connect a word with a personal experience to remember it.	(1)						
	to connect a word to its synonyms and antonyms to remember it.	(1)						
	To use words in sentences to remember them.	(1)						
	To say a word aloud to oneself repeatedly to remember it.	(1)						
	To write a word repeatedly to remember it.	(1)						
	To paraphrase the definition of a word to remember it.	(1)						
	To keep a vocabulary notebook to	(1)						

No	Strategy description	Scale	1	2	3	4	5	6
	facilitate vocabulary learning.							
	To test oneself with word tests.	**(1)**						
	To look at the clause or sentence containing the unknown word to find clues when guessing the meaning.	**(1)**						
	To make use of knowledge of the topic when guessing the meaning of an unknown word .	**(1)**						
	After guessing, check if the part of speech of the guessed meaning is the same as the part of speech of the unknown word.	**(1)**						
	To analyse affixes and the root of an unknown word in an early stage when guessing.	**(1)**						
	To work with peers to find the meaning of an unknown word.	**(1)**						
	To ask peers for additional explanation or examples to understand a word.	**(1)**						

Part D

1-If you consider certain strategies as useful, but you didn't include them in the class, please explain why

Thank you for your time and cooperation☺