

A Study of Strategy usages in Memorizing Vocabularies by Burmese EFL Students

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Abstract

This study examined how Burmese learners tackle learning new vocabularies and which strategies they use to improve their vocabulary acquisition. This study aimed to promote the concrete understanding of the ways new vocabularies are memorized and to investigate Burmese students learning styles when employing their vocabulary learning strategies. This compares with Oxford (1990) who asked participants their preferred strategies for improving vocabulary acquisition. The data for this study were collected from 100 Burmese EFL learners through two research instruments: a questionnaire and an interview. The results of this study indicate that two main memory strategies for vocabulary learning, rote learning strategies (RL) and creating mental linkage strategies (CML), are used in preference to other memory strategies by Burmese students. Pedagogical implications and recommendations arising from this study are discussed and provided for language learners in EFL contexts.

Keywords: vocabulary learning strategies, memory strategies, EFL learners, vocabulary acquisition

บทคัดย่อ

งานวิจัยนี้ศึกษาวิธีการแก้ปัญหาการเรียนคำศัพท์ใหม่และกลยุทธ์ที่ผู้เรียนชาวพม่าใช้ในการพัฒนาการรับคำศัพท์ งานวิจัยนี้มุ่งที่จะเพิ่มพูนความเข้าใจเกี่ยวกับการใช้วิธีการต่าง ๆ ในการท่องจำคำศัพท์ใหม่ ๆ และรูปแบบการเรียนภาษาของนักศึกษาพม่าขณะที่มีการใช้กลยุทธ์การเรียนรู้คำศัพท์ งานวิจัยนี้ถูกนำไปเปรียบเทียบกับผลการวิจัยของออกซ์ฟอร์ด (1990) ซึ่งสอบถามเกี่ยวกับกลยุทธ์ที่กลุ่มตัวอย่างใช้ในการเพิ่มพูนคำศัพท์เช่นกัน ข้อมูลของงานวิจัยชิ้นนี้เก็บมาจากนักศึกษาพม่าจำนวน 100 คน โดยใช้วิธีการเก็บข้อมูลสองแบบคือ การใช้แบบสอบถามและการสัมภาษณ์ ผลวิจัยแสดงให้เห็นว่ากลุ่มตัวอย่าง ใช้กลยุทธ์การเรียนรู้คำศัพท์สองวิธีคือ กลยุทธ์การท่องจำคำศัพท์ และกลยุทธ์การเชื่อมโยงความหมายของคำศัพท์ ทั้งสองวิธีนี้เป็นวิธีที่กลุ่มตัวอย่างเลือกใช้มากกว่ากลยุทธ์อื่น ๆ งานวิจัยนี้ยังกล่าวถึงนัยยะสำคัญและข้อเสนอแนะในเชิงการเรียนการสอน สำหรับผู้เรียนภาษาอังกฤษในฐานะภาษาต่างประเทศอีกด้วย

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Introduction

As we know, the prominent role of vocabulary knowledge in second language learning has been widely recognized by many researchers, theorists and language learners. In addition, vocabulary learning has also been conducted mainly with an emphasis on the storage and retrieval process because all groups of EFL/ESL learners agreed that the important part of learning a language is learning vocabulary. Wilkins (1972) said, “...*without grammar very little can be conveyed, without vocabulary, nothing can be conveyed*”.

A large body of language learning research indicates that enlarging language vocabularies has been one of the main objectives of many EFL/ESL learners. This research also describes different ways to achieve these objectives. Vocabulary learning strategies (VLS) are undoubtedly required initially for students because using VLS helps them to discover the meaning of a new word and in the consolidation of a word once it has been encountered. Therefore, students tend to learn multiple word meanings, derived forms, spelling, pronunciation, phrases, and proper grammatical uses themselves. The academic and interpersonal vocabulary needs force the learners to improve their ability to learn and integrate newly acquired vocabulary. Learners themselves have recognized that a dearth of vocabularies is the primary factor holding them back from achieving their larger linguistic goals at a satisfactory rate (Nunan, 2004; Cohen, 1998/2007; Nation, 2001).

Currently, vocabulary learning strategies have developed and diversified as the teaching-learning methodology has improved. However, a large proportion of the reviewed research does not deny that memorization strategies play an essential role in EFL and/or ESL context because it is natural for the language learners to focus on memorization as well as repetition, associative strategies, and keyword mnemonic. Therefore, the language learners should know exactly why a memory strategy is needed in vocabulary learning and which types of strategies are effective in their memorization.

Role of memory in vocabulary learning

For the language learners, it is natural to focus on memory strategies when looking at vocabulary learning strategies. Most studies on rote memorization or simple repetition were carried out before the 1970s. According to Thompson (1987), human memory is crucial to the concept of learning. “Memory strategies sometimes called mnemonics, have been used for thousands of years”, observed Oxford (1990).

According to Gray (1997), it was suggested that mnemonics was not considered a skill of simple memorization but requires imagination, effort, and a good mind. According to the above facts, memorizing vocabulary is one of the crucial factors that cannot be ignored in language learning. Word idioms are usually described in special phrases which sometimes are not difficult to guess for the EFL learners. An analysis of cultural contents in English textbooks by Htay (2006) found that Burmese EEL learners understand English proverbs and idioms in the same way when reading and they are also amenable to learning these words by RL in order to support illusions in their writing. Warren (1994) supported that fact in the “*Oxford Learner’s Dictionary of English Idioms*”. Therefore, learners may feel they can only learn by memory strategies. Concerning these types of memorization, Biggs (1998:726-727) claimed:

... learning the thousands of characters in common use obviously requires a good deal more repetitive learning than learning an alphabet system. However, this cannot be mindless rote learning because understanding is assuredly involved. Characters are traditionally learned by the Two Principles. The first Principle involves using the Five Organs: the eyes to see the shape, the ears to hear the sound, and the hand to write the shape, the mouth to speak the sound, the mind to think about the meaning. The Second Principle is to contextualize; each character as it is learned is formed with another into a word and each word is formed into a sentence. Repetitive certainly, but also embedded in meaning, with much use of learner activity in widely different modes.

Thus, Biggs (1997) describes that learning the characters causes learners to consider its meaning in terms of its context. Therefore, the present study aims to point out different types of memorizing strategies in vocabulary learning.

Classification of memory strategies in vocabulary learning

Vocabulary learning strategies are differentiated into many categories, depending on basic distinctions between receptive and productive knowledge (Schmitt 2000). Ahmed (1989) found 38 vocabulary learning strategies used by his Sudanese learners and he grouped these strategies into five-micro strategies of memorization, practice, dictionary use, note taking, and group work. In addition, adapting Oxford's (1990a) SILL classifications, Schmitt (2000) made some distinctions between discovery strategies (to learn an unknown word) and consolidation strategies (to learn and integrate a word's meaning). Thus, Nyikos and Fan (2007) described that VLS classifications combine psycholinguistic categories such as memory, cognitive, metacognitive, and social which are found in Oxford (1990a). They pointed out that a reason for overlapping vocabulary categories is that strategies are classified frequently rather than being specified according to learners' deployed VLS.

However, this current study constructively specified memory strategies (MSs) used in vocabulary learning by adapting Li (2005), based on MS categories of Oxford (1990:39) and RL features of Gairns and Redman (1986:93). Four main MSs categorized by Oxford (1990) were discussed in this study. These MSs are (1) Rote learning, (2) Creating mental linkages, (3) Applying images and sounds, and (4) Structured reviewing which were used to build the questionnaire and analyze Burmese learners' vocabulary learning strategies.

Definitions of four main memory strategies in vocabulary learning

Referencing Oxford (1990:40), Gairns and Redman (1986:93), and Li (2005), the following descriptions are adapted as follows:

Rote Learning

Memorizing any useful vocabularies repeatedly

Repeating reading, speaking or writing what is being learnt again and again

Giving priority to understanding when learning

Practicing varieties of exercises repeated to strengthen memory

Reviewing old materials many times to support learning new

Learning words through reading aloud or silently many times

Writing down vocabulary items again and again

Learning vocabulary in lists/cards many times

Memorizing irregular verbs, synonyms and antonyms

Finding translation equivalents in dictionaries

Creating mental linkages

- Grouping and classifying language materials into meaningful units
- Associating and relating new language information to concepts already in memory
- Placing a word or phrase in a meaningful sentence or conversation in order to remember well
- Phrasing sentences in order to recognize synonyms/antonyms of words and grammatical structures of the sentences

Applying images and sounds

- Using imagery such as relating new language information to concepts in memory by means of images and sounds, visualizing in the mind or in an actual drawing.
- Using semantic mapping, for example: arranging words into a diagram which has a key concept at the center or at the top, linking to related words by means of a line or arrow.
- Using keywords to remember a new word by using auditory and visual links. The first step is to identify a familiar word in one's own language that sounds like the new word---this is the "auditory link". The second step is to generate an image of some relation between the new word and a familiar one---this is the "visual link".
- Representing sounds in memory to remember new language information according to its sounds.

Reviewing well

- 1) Reviewing in carefully spaced intervals, gradually increasing the length of time between reviews.

Research questions

This research investigates the following questions:

1. Which types of memorization strategies are used in English vocabulary learning by Burmese learners?
2. Are there any significant differences among their memory strategy usages when vocabulary learning?
3. To what extent do Burmese learners apply which memory strategies for their vocabulary acquisition?
4. Are there any factors that affect their vocabulary learning strategy usages?

For this study, the main hypothesis is that there would be a common approach in memorizing vocabularies by Burmese students according to their EFL environment or their proficiency level. Thus, the present study aimed to find out Burmese students' strategy preference in English vocabulary learning as well as reveal their perspectives and beliefs regarding their strategies choice.

Participants

This study collected data from 100 Burmese students from Yangon Institute of Education in which the first group (75 undergrad English majors) was selected for the questionnaire and the second group (25 graduate EFL junior teachers) was selected for the interview. As these respondents attend this educational institute, all the respondents have a strong EFL background in both teaching and learning strategies. Additionally, all of them are English teaching majors who are familiar with the terminology of memory strategies in vocabulary teaching-learning situations as they take a course titled English Teaching Methodology.

Research Instruments

A questionnaire and an interview were utilized for data collection in this study. Using both of these two methods together provide the possibility of obtaining both quantitative and qualitative data. Dörnyei (2007) recommended that mixed-method research (i.e., using both questionnaire and interview) can result in a better understanding of a certain field or phenomenon by supporting

both qualitative data, describing specific details, and quantitative data, showing numeric trends.

Firstly, the data of this study were collected by a Vocabulary Learning Strategies Questionnaire (VLSQ) (see in appendix I) which includes three sections. The first two sections, A and B, are skills items rated according to a Likert-type scale, and the third, section C, consists of open-ended questions aimed to analyze the effectiveness and accuracy of the results. The main framework of this questionnaire is based on Oxford (1990) and his Strategy Inventory for Language Learning (SILL) and VLSQ by Li (2005:315-324). After distributing the questionnaire to the undergraduate student group, the researcher interviewed the second master's student group to ascertain their perspectives on their vocabulary learning strategies usages, especially on RL, through other vocabulary memory strategies.

Data analysis

To handle the student questionnaire data of the present study, the statistical software package SPSS version 17 was used for descriptive analysis. Descriptive statistics such as the mean, standard deviation, the range, variance, maximum and minimum values, etc, which are generated by using descriptive analysis method of SPSS software, provide a convenient way of summarizing and interpreting data results (Gray, 1997). Therefore, the researcher used descriptive analysis for organizing and summarizing of the students' questionnaire data of this study.

For the interview data, the specific statements and contents were coded for qualitative data analysis. The researcher applied content analysis for both open-ended questions and interview questions, adopting the content analysis of Wenden (1991) and Li (2005). Bryman (2001) also suggested that content analysis is a systematic way to analyze data through a stepwise process that involves making responses into any distinct content or key point and forming broader categories to compare different kinds of responses. Therefore, content analysis was used to handle many different responses to the open-ended questions and interview questions of this study.

Findings

Questionnaire section A

Questionnaire section A asks the students for their perspectives on vocabulary learning strategies. There are 11 items covering the four main memory strategies in vocabulary learning (rote learning, creating mental

linkage, applying images and songs, and reviewing). The responses (5: strongly agree, 4: agree, 3: no opinion, 2: disagree, and 1: strongly disagree for each section were analyzed in SPSS.

The results of section A show that Burmese learners rated highest two ways of RL strategies among other MSs in vocabulary learning: “No (1) repetition method and No (4) translation equivalent method” as seen in table 1. Mean values of the statements were ranked in descending order for analysis. According to the descriptive analysis, the study was analyzed as high agreement (mean value 3.5 and above), medium agreement (mean value between 2.5 and 3.5) and low agreement (mean value below 2.4), which was suggested by Oxford and Burry-Stock (1995) and also found as Sheorey’s mean classification (1999).

Table 1 Responses to Questionnaire Section A (items 1 to 11)

<i>Categories & short statements of questionnaire items</i>	<i>Rank</i>	<i>Mean</i>	<i>Standard Deviation</i>
RL Vocabulary should be learnt through repetition.(1)	1	4.64	.650
RL The translation equivalents are helpful.(4)	2	4.49	.705
CML Words should be acquired in context.(5)	3	4.45	.664
RW Reviewing often is helpful.(10)	4	4.37	.820
RL Rote learning is effective to memorize words.(2)	5	4.32	.747
CML Organized material is easier to memorize.(6)	6	4.32	.619
RL Cards/note books/word lists are helpful. (3)	7	4.28	.808
AIS Semantic mapping is valuable for memory. (8)	8	3.75	.708
AIS Mentally picturing can quicken memorization.(7)	9	3.43	1.028
RW Structured reviewing is only useful before exam.(11)	10	3.4	.949
AIS Keyword method should be used.(9)	11	2.87	1.380

Note: RL = rote learning, CML = creation mental linkage, AIS = applying images and songs, RW = reviewing.

Table 1 shows that most of the items are accepted as high agreement. Eight of the 11 items (72 % MSs) had mean values above 3.5 (high agreement), 3 of the 11 items (27% MSs) had a mean value under 3.5 (medium agreement), and there was no low agreement statements for this section. Categorizing these items and comparing their means, it was found that RL strategies had the highest agreement (mean = 4.64), followed by CML (mean = 4.45), and RW (4.37); while two items of AIS (mean = 3.43 & 2.87) were sorted in the medium agreement group. Noticeably, item no. 11, one kind of reviewing, also had medium agreement (Mean = 3.4) that is “*Structure reviewing is only useful for exam*”. The overall mean of all items was 4, indicating an overall high agreement for all strategies in the table. The internal consistency reliability of questionnaire section A was $\alpha = .719$.

Questionnaire section B

In section B, the students were asked their preferred vocabulary learning strategies. There are 22 items in section B (item no. 12 to no. 33) which consists of four main categories of MSs in vocabulary learning (RL, CML, AIS and RW) like section A.

As can be seen in table 2, RL strategies are ranked the highest; CML strategies as the second highest; and RW and AIS strategies follow as other preferred strategies. Calculating their descriptive statistics, the overall mean value for section B was 3.4, indicating that the average of all strategies was medium. In detail, there were 11 of 22 statements (50%), as high usage, 10 of 22 statements (approximately 45%) as medium usage, and only one item (approximately 4.5%) as the low usage, which was AIS.

Table 2: Response to Questionnaire: Section B (Item No 12 to 33)

<i>Categories & short statements of questionnaire items</i>	<i>Rank</i>	<i>Mean</i>	<i>Standard Deviation</i>
RL Repeat words aloud to oneself for memorization.(17)	1	4.08	.834
RL Memorize phrases and collocations.(20)	2	3.96	1.019
CML Remember examples of word use in context.(22)	3	3.96	.884
CML Compose sentences with the words being learnt.(28)	4	3.87	.935
RL Write new words repeatedly to remember.(18)	5	3.73	.952
CML Read related topic to be exposed vocabularies.(24)	6	3.72	.882

CML Remember words by words and affixes.(25)	7	3.67	.963
CML Search synonyms and antonyms.(27)	8	3.65	1.072
RL Use notes with two sides of words and meaning.(13)	9	3.60	.930
AIS Visualize the spelling of the word in my head.(30)	10	3.35	1.04
CML Group words by part of speech.(21)	11	3.53	1.40
CML Remember words that share similar letters. (23)	12	3.45	1.057
RL Keep the vocabulary list of new words.(14)	13	3.44	1.155
RL Use words correctly after memorizing.(19)	14	3.4	.990
CML Group words by grammatical class.(26)	15	3.37	.983
RW Recall words by pair checking with someone.(32)	16	3.31	1.134
RL Make vocabulary lists of new words. (12)	17	3.27	1.108
RL Go through vocabulary list repeatedly to understand. (15)	18	3.19	1.137
AIS Associate sounds of words with similar in English.(29)	19	3.11	.990
RL Take vocabulary cards wherever going.(16)	20	2.97	1.073
RW Make regular reviews of new words.(33)	21	2.88	1.013
AIS Associate words with similar in Burmese sound.(31)	22	4	.995

(RL=rote learning, CML =creation mental linkage, AIS = applying images and songs, RW = reviewing)

In contrast, it was found that the rank order of RW (reviewing) in section A and section B was different. This means that most of these students fail to do regular reviewing for their vocabulary learning although they completely agreed RW is helpful in vocabulary learning. In other words, Burmese students are weak at regular reviewing of their study. Moreover, AIS (applying images and sounds) was found as a low usage strategy in both section A and section B of the questionnaire.

Questionnaire section C

In the last part of the questionnaire, section C, Burmese students were asked three open-ended questions. These questions were aimed to obtain more clarified answers about Burmese learners' perspectives on RL.

Q (1): What do you think the most effective strategies that produce better results in vocabulary learning?

Using both RL and CML together was found as the most effective and favorite collaborative strategies for Burmese students. The reason for this was that most of the responses not only focused on the features of RL and CML but also they stated that it was the favorite strategies for vocabulary learning. Therefore, collaborative usage of these two strategies had nearly 100% agreement. They also recommended reviewing more often although they did not do regular reviewing as self-study.

Q (2): How do you think your strategy preference in vocabulary learning strategies?

Most responses stated RL is more essential in the early stages of English learning. Eighty seven percent (87%) of the responses indicated that RL is fully supportive of vocabulary learning. The other 13% revealed that RL is partially supportive in memorizing vocabularies. However, no one responded that RL was a non-supportive strategy in vocabulary learning.

Q (3): Do you have any other effective strategies for learning or memorizing vocabulary?

The majority of the answers was “No” because nearly 92% of the responses were related to different forms of RL. These are repeating, practicing, keeping different dictionaries (such as monolingual, bilingual and pocket-dictionary) and memorizing new words after reading a novel, magazine, or stories and watching movies or news. Apart from these kinds of strategies, these subjects do not have any new effective strategies for vocabulary learning. The remaining 8% of the Burmese students revealed that they use other types of activities such as playing puzzles, playing Scrabble and paraphrasing to create as much exposure to English as possible.

The findings from both closed questions and open-ended questions (sections A, B, C) revealed that Burmese learners' favorite vocabulary learning strategies were RL and CML. Therefore, these two main categories (rote

learning and creating metal linkages) have been clearly applied in the learning of English vocabulary by most of Burmese students.

Interview Results

In the interview section part 1, teachers were asked to rank their favorite items. Ten statements concerning with four main vocabulary learning strategies (RL, CML, AIS, and RW) were ranked by subject. These statements were based on the questionnaire statements in section A and section B as this part of the interview was designed to confirm the information from the questionnaire.

For this section, 25 teachers ranked the statements as their preferences. The data were analyzed in terms of the frequencies of their preferred item and ranked from the highest to lowest frequencies. Strategy no. 4 “*Getting definitions from a dictionary for accuracy*” (RL) was ranked the first among the other statements. The following rank was CML no. 6 “*Guessing the meaning of words in context*”. Ranked third was RL no. 5 “*Memorizing new words, paired words, irregular verbs, etc by reading or writing repeatedly*” and fourth was RW no. 10 “*Remembering words by reviewing often*”.

Overall, RL and CML were ranked as the highly preferred strategies of the four MSs in vocabulary learning. As the next preferred strategy, RW was indicated, and finally AIS was the least preferred strategy.

Content analysis of the interviews

To identify the role of the respondents’ preferred vocabulary learning strategies, the content analysis supported the results by categorizing all responses. The content analysis in this study was based upon the work of Li (2005) and Wenden (1991). According to the statements from the interview responses, five general factors are identified which might impact on the subjects’ preferences in the vocabulary learning. They are: (1) Burmese cultural/educational background, (2) EFL environment, (3) Traditional habit, (4) National situation/examination demand, and (5) Failure to try out “the best” ways.

After analyzing the interview results, the researcher coded the 25 subjects’ responses into two groups: the first group (70% of the subjects) who supported RL strategies, and the second group (30% of the subjects) who do not

really like RL strategies. In order to facilitate the readers' interpretation, the researcher derived summarized statements by condensing the interview results.

In the first group, the ways the subjects favored RL strategy usages are “memorizing idioms, phrases and collocations”, “repeating words aloud to oneself”, “keeping the vocabulary list/dictionary”, and “making vocabulary lists of new words”. In addition, they described some CML strategies together with RL such as “remembering examples of word in context”, “grouping words by part of speech/grammatical classes”, and “acquiring new words by guessing its context. For their strategy choices, they gave the following reasons such as “easy, simple, and effective”, “helpful all the time”, “important as basis to develop advanced methods”, “Burmese educational culture”, and “only way for accuracy”.

The second group viewed RL as a “waste of time/more likely to forget”, “too old fashion”, “just useful for beginners, not advanced learners”, “not very important for developing other methods”, and “disadvantage of EFL environment”. Eventually, this small group criticized RL from different perspectives even though they had also passed their early level of English learning by using RL.

Discussion

The results of the questionnaire indicate RL strategies were mostly used by Burmese learners in vocabulary learning, results confirmed by the interview responses content analysis. Particularly, the present study found that Burmese learners use RL strategies by means of combining memorizing and understanding as they also use the CML strategy as a co-strategy of RL. Thus, RL strategies are collaboratively applied with repetition, memorization, understanding, and practice rather than mere repetition, indicating a similar outcome to those of some previous researchers such as Li (2005) and Biggs (1999).

Burmese students prefer accuracy to fluency in vocabulary learning because they rely on RL as an establishing foundation of accurate knowledge to develop language learning. Therefore, they use RL regularly as it is easy, simple, and effective. Another reason for RL usage is due to the examination-driven system that results in learners focusing on these memory strategies for their exam. Generally, the subjects' responses show that there is no single best strategy for them to learn English vocabulary. Their reaction supposes that all

learner needs are not suited to a single memory strategy, meaning they have failed to innovate the best ways to work efficiently in their vocabulary learning. Moreover, the respondents claim that there are a number of reasons for their high RL usage, including time limited course schedules, exam-oriented educational system, and also the national situation (such as limitation of classroom facilities, lack of educational support, and the learning environment). These criticisms should be taken into account when considering how to improve the teaching-learning system in Myanmar.

Next, the high RL usage of Burmese learners can be seen as a reflection of the Burmese educational culture according the interview results. As described in the literature review and some related researches, the results are consistent in that Burmese learners hold positive perspectives towards using RL due to the influence of traditional culture.

In conclusion, RL strategies will in all probability continue be used as the vocabulary learning strategy of Burmese EFL learners in the foreseeable future according to the content analysis of the study. This interpretation is suggested because of the following factors:

- 1) Burmese cultural/educational background
- 2) EFL environment
- 3) Traditional habit
- 4) National situation/examination demand
- 5) Failure to try out “the best” ways (adapted from Wenden 1991 & Li 2005).

Pedagogical Implications

According to the findings of this study, the researcher pointed out two main implications regarding the Burmese examination system and for EFL teaching in Myanmar.

Some participants in the interview section suggested that Burmese learners particularly used RL strategies for accuracy in exams. This highlights the impact of the Burmese examination system that forces students to learn by heart for accuracy. Thein Lwin (2010) criticized the curricula and examination system of Myanmar for focusing on memorization and accuracy. As a result, Burmese students heavily rely on memorization for examinations that require repeating accurate information rather than problem-solving skills and critical thinking skills. Wang (2000) claimed that this type of accuracy for exam type

learning could not efficiently support fluency in spoken English. The above research findings indicate that the Burmese examination system is unbalanced between knowledge and ability.

This study found high usage of RL strategies with analytical thinking, resulting in examiners realizing what strategies the students are actually using in their learning. This perception may help EFL exam designers to improve the EFL exam system and provide the learners with opportunities to use more effective strategies and more critical thinking skills. The next implication of this study could support the EFL teaching in Myanmar. Liu (2001) suggests the EFL lecturers and teachers should vary their teaching approach according the students' nature. EFL teachers should acknowledge their students' learning styles in order to develop their communicative approach and interactive teaching methods. The findings of the present study may provide teachers with effective information regarding Burmese EFL learners' strategy usage in their vocabulary learning, so that EFL teachers could improve their teaching approaches and serve as more effective teaching.

Conclusion

As mentioned in literature review, Oxford (1990) interpreted a great deal of existing research that synthesized eight influential factors on the preference of L2 learning strategies. They are: motivation, gender, cultural background, attitude and beliefs, type of task, age and L2 stage, learning style, and tolerance of ambiguity which should be considered when conducting further research on Burmese students' learning styles. Of these factors, many previous researchers proved that traditional culture is a major factor affecting learners' strategy usage. Li (2005), Hummel (2010), Thomson (1987), and Watkins and Biggs (2001) who surveyed RL effects on Asian EFL students described that RL is accepted as an effective learning strategy in vocabulary learning. The present study also found similar results. Primarily, the present study suggests that RL strategies in vocabulary learning continue to be widely used in Myanmar as well as in other Asian countries despite being viewed critically in Western countries. Therefore, specific beliefs held by particular cultural groups in SL/FL learning should be investigated by further researchers.

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