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บทคัดย่อ

การศึกษานี้มีวัตถุประสงค์เพื่อสำรวจกลยุทธ์การสอนคำศัพท์ (VTS) ที่นักศึกษาระดับอุดมศึกษาของไทยเห็นว่า มีประสิทธิภาพและเพื่อตรวจสอบว่า นักศึกษาชายและหญิง มีการรับรู้ด้านกลยุทธ์การสอนคำศัพท์ที่คล้ายคลึงกันหรือไม่ ผู้เข้าร่วมเป็นนักศึกษา 338 คน จากหลักสูตรต่าง ๆ ที่มหาวิทยาลัยรัฐบาลทางตอนใต้ของประเทศไทย วิจัยนี้เป็น การวิจัยแบบผสมผสาน โดยใช้แบบสอบถามเป็นเครื่องมือ หลักในการรวบรวมข้อมูลเชิงปริมาณเกี่ยวกับการรับรู้ของ นักศึกษาและความแตกต่างระหว่างการรับรู้ กลยุทธ์การสอนคำศัพท์ที่มีประสิทธิภาพของนักศึกษาชายและหญิง จากนั้น ข้อมูลเชิงคุณภาพได้จากการสัมภาษณ์เพื่อให้ได้ข้อมูลเชิงลึก

ผลการวิจัยหลักพบว่านักศึกษาธุรกิจว่ากลยุทธ์การสอนคำศัพท์ทั้งหมดมีประสิทธิภาพ ผลการตอบแบบสอบถามพบร่วมกัน ออกเสียงมีค่าเฉลี่ยสูงสุด ($\bar{X} = 4.03$) และการใช้กระดานเพื่อจดบันทึกการสอนเสียง ($\bar{X} = 3.43$) มีค่าเฉลี่ยต่ำสุด นักศึกษาที่มีความรู้ ($\bar{X} = 3.43$) มีค่าเฉลี่ยต่ำสุด นอกเหนือจากนี้ข้อมูลการสัมภาษณ์สอดคล้องกับข้อมูลจากแบบสอบถามด้านความรู้ (Cognitive VTS) ด้านความเข้าใจอารมณ์ (Affective VTS) และด้านประสิทธิผล (Productive VTS) นักศึกษาที่มีความรู้ ($\bar{X} = 3.43$) มีค่าเฉลี่ยต่ำสุด นักเรียนคือประสบการณ์การเรียนรู้และวัฒนธรรมไทยอย่างไรก็ตามผลการวิจัยพบว่าไม่มีความแตกต่างทางเพศอย่างมีนัยสำคัญทางสถิติในการรับรู้ส่วนใหญ่ ($p < 0.05$) ยกเว้นในส่องกลยุทธ์หลักในการออกเสียง ($t = -2.36, p = 0.02$) และการกำหนดให้ใช้คำในประโยค ($t = -2.41, p = 0.02$) ผลการศึกษาสามารถเป็นแนวทางสำหรับอาจารย์มหาวิทยาลัยในการวางแผนการสอนคำศัพท์

คำสำคัญ: การรับรู้, นักศึกษามหาวิทยาลัย, กลยุทธ์การสอนคำศัพท์, ความแตกต่างทางเพศ

Gender Differences in Perception of Effective Vocabulary Teaching Strategies: An Exploratory Study of Thai University Students

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Abstract

The study aimed to investigate what vocabulary teaching strategies (VTS) Thai tertiary students perceived as effective and to examine if male and female students shared similar perceptions of VTS. The participants were 338 students from different programs at a government university in the south of Thailand. A mixed-method research design was adopted. A questionnaire was the main research instrument to collect the quantitative data concerning students' perception and differences between male and female students' perception of effective VTS. Then to gain an insightful data, the qualitative data derived from a semi-structured

interview was employed. The main findings indicated that the students perceived all of the VTS as effective. The questionnaire results revealed pronouncing words with the highest mean score ($\bar{X} = 4.03$) and using the board to note transcription ($\bar{X} = 3.43$) with the lowest mean score. Concurrently, the interview data are in line with the questionnaire data emphasizing on some particular instructional strategies of cognitive, affective, and productive VTS. Furthermore, the two prime influential factors that have formed students' perception were their learning experience and Thai culture. However, the findings showed no statistically significant gender differences in most of their perceptions ($p < 0.05$) except in the two major strategies of pronouncing words ($t = -2.36$, $p = 0.02$) and setting tasks of using words in sentences ($t = -2.41$, $p = 0.02$). The results of the study could guide university teachers in planning vocabulary instruction.

Keywords: Perception, University students, Vocabulary teaching strategies, Gender differences

1. Introduction

Without vocabulary, learners cannot master in all four language skills of listening, speaking, reading and writing (Bancha, 2019). Focusing on an EFL context where a foreign language learning always takes place in formal education (Kirkpatrick, 2007), one of the factors leading to success is a teacher who plays an important role as a knowledge facilitator in a classroom (Borg, 2015). It is thus widely accepted that explicit instruction facilitates more improvement of vocabulary acquisition than implicit instruction (Schmitt, 2010), and it is very essential for fostering a foreign language, especially for EFL contexts (Kirkpatrick, 2007).

However, vocabulary instruction has been paid less attention than other language skills (Bancha, 2019). Based on the researcher's teaching experience and observation of many language teachers teaching at the same university, only the vocabulary exercises in the textbook with no further emphasis on other aspects of word knowledge have been the main teaching technique implemented in most of their classes throughout the semester. The reason the teachers do not pay sufficient attention might be because they lacked practical skills on how to implement different types of vocabulary teaching strategies in their classes (Terfa, 2017). Thus, investigating VTS students believed fostering their vocabulary acquisition might be helpful and with the hope that the results of the present study will act as a springboard reflecting what teaching strategies were effective or what strategies should be emphasized more in regular class time.

Even though it is prevailingly agreeable that teachers play crucial roles in language learning, a few studies have found investigating VTS teachers have employed in their class. While previous studies

concerning vocabulary have paid attention to vocabulary learning strategies (VLS) (such as Chaisri, 2018; Mokhtar, Rawian, Yahaya, Abdullah & Mohamed, 2017; Nei & Zhou, 2017), only a study conducted by PavičićTakač (2008) surveyed VTS primary school teachers employed. It is quite obvious that scant attention has been paid to VTS.

Furthermore, it seems that no research has been found exploring students' perceptions of effective VTS. Knowing students' perception of VTS that match their learning preferences can show the teachers what vocabulary teaching techniques facilitate better learning to learners. As perceptions and beliefs can have a great influence on learning behavior or students' approaches to their studies (Tudor, Penlington & McDowell, 2010), understanding students' perceptions will potentially contribute to the enhancement of their learning efficiency and to the improvement in vocabulary instruction. Therefore, it was worth investigating what VTS are effective in their language learners' perspectives.

Gender difference exists in SLA and findings are contradictory and inconclusive (Llach & Gallego, 2012). Gender differences have been investigated in several areas, such as second language acquisition (Van Der Slik, Van Hout & Schepens, 2015), reading comprehension (Gabriel, Behne & Gygax, 2017), learning strategies (Ansarin & Khatibi, 2018), and teaching strategies (Naeini & Shahrokhi, 2016). However, the role of learners' gender has had little attention (Gass & Mackey, 2013; Herschensohn & Young-Scholten, 2013), and to the best of the researcher's knowledge, no study has been found relevant to students' perceptions of VTS. Therefore, the results of the study could contribute to this area.

In particular, the results obtained from the study could thus provide some theoretical and practical contributions. In terms of theoretical aspects, it initially attempted to fill some research gaps about VTS and perceptions of genders related to effective VTS which have been little studied. More specifically, the significance of this study consisted of 1) a focus on VTS that have been studied only a little, 2) the unexplored EFL Thai context of which the present study was conducted. Practically, data obtained from the study could increase the understanding of VTS perceived as effective for Thai learners and the results could contribute to the improved quality of vocabulary instructions in a tertiary educational level in the future.

2. Research objectives

There were two main aims of the study.

- 1) The study aimed at exploring what VTS were perceived as effective in students' opinions.
- 2) The study aimed at examining whether both male and female students held similar perceptions of VTS.

3. Literature Review

The literature related to the study consists of the following topics.

3.1 Perceptions

Perception is simply defined as beliefs or opinions that people possess towards someone or something. According to Cambridge Online Dictionary (n.d.), perception refers to “a beliefs or opinion, often held by many people and based on how things see”. Perception involves the organization, identification, and interpretation of sensory information that people hold as a result of their understanding of the presented information or the environment around

them (Schacter, 2011). Perception is not only related to receiving the stimuli but also how to react to the stimuli (Bernstein, 2010).

Perception can be stimulated through the sensory system or stimuli. Perception can be categorized into five types based on the sensory system: visual (seeing), auditory (hearing), haptic (touching), olfactory (smelling), and taste (Rupini & Nandagopal, 2015). In the subsequent time, another category of social perception has been included. Social perception refers to people forming perceptions and making inferences using social cues to make judgement about other people and social situations (Fiske & Tayler, 1991; McCleery, Horan & Green, 2014). Regarding the social perception, perception is stimulated through these senses and other varied factors including learning, memory, expectation, and attention (Gregory, 1987). Moreover, cultural values, needs, beliefs, experiences, involvement, and self-concept influence on how people interpret stimuli (Coon & Mitterer, 2012). Factors influence on perception are presented in Image 1.

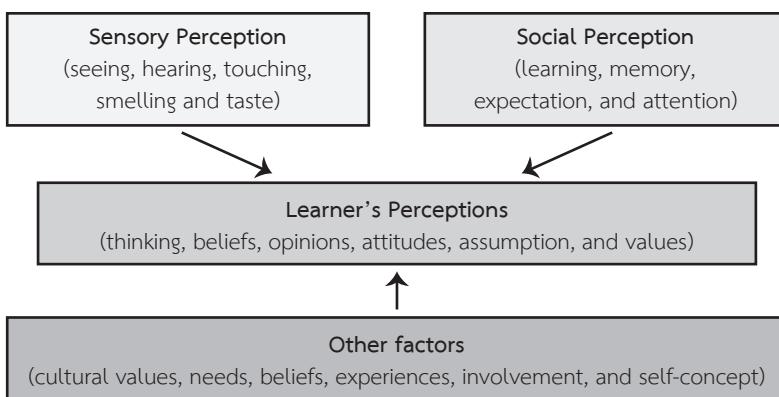


Image 1: Sources of perception adapted from Gregory (1987) and Coon and Mitterer (2012)

Perception plays a pivotal role in the cognitive process which affects learning behavior (Cotterall, 1995). Generally, the perception process occurs through time based on the stimuli and affects how people react to the stimuli whether they are aware or unaware of it (Shinohara, 2016). Following Cotterall (1995, p. 195), perception has “a profound influence on learning behavior”. In language learning, learners’ perception is therefore important because it shapes their experience of stimuli, enables them to understand and shows them how to act to it. As perception, knowledge, and beliefs influence on learning and determine students’ learning behaviors or learning approaches to the target language (Tudor, 1992), understanding their beliefs and perceptions concerning effective VTS students hold can enhance their vocabulary learning and can raise teachers’ awareness of how learners view and feel about teachers’ VTS which could eventually lead to understanding and appropriately facilitating them in the classroom.

3.2 Vocabulary Teaching Strategies (VTS)

Studies of vocabulary teaching techniques have been conducted to investigate what techniques could result in better vocabulary acquisition. Many studies focus on the effectiveness of various teaching techniques that promote vocabulary acquisition, such as games (Akdogan, 2017), pictures (Jazuli, Din & Yunus 2019), songs (KuŚnierenk, 2016), L1 definitions (Joyce, 2018) in which the results show better recognition and memorization than L2 definitions, flashcard (Nadziroh, 2010), and keywords method (Davoudi & Yousefi, 2016). These teaching techniques have been implemented with both young and adult learners.

It is well-accepted that there are many vocabulary teaching

strategies that teachers could implement in teaching a language as there is no best teaching method that suits all learners (Schmitt, 2010). PavičićTakač (2008) surveys several vocabulary teaching strategies including an affective strategy to urge students' motivation, using the board for additional information, such as spellings, transcriptions, L1 meanings, L2 definitions, and sentence examples, supplying additional information to promote word knowledge, games, testing (oral/ written) to promote retrieval to occur and to encourage students to review words from time to time, pronouncing words (presenting spoken form), monitoring of production to prevent their misuse, personalization in which students are required to use the target words to express their feelings or ideas, association with known words, association with experience, and setting tasks to promote the use of words.

A few studies related to VTS have been reviewed. Terfa (2017) used the questionnaire to collect data of teachers' beliefs of VTS in the EFL classroom and then classroom observation was conducted to examine their actual practices. The results show that teachers usually used a contextual strategy and focused on L1 translation, definitions, synonyms and examples of types of context clues. Another related study of VTS conducted by Xiao (2006) investigated teachers' perceptions of VTS through an interview with 17 teachers. The teacher participants reported using exercises in the textbook, context clues, explaining root words, and having students use new vocabulary in their writing.

It seems possible to conclude that previous studies have shown a limited number of strategies teachers implemented in language class through classroom observation and interviews. Moreover,

results show only data from teachers' perspectives of what VTS should be or were implemented in an actual class. This study; therefore, aimed to investigate students' perceptions of effective VTS suitable and preferable for their educational level using a large number of VTS surveyed and gathered by PavičićTakač (2008).

3.3 Aspects of knowing a word

There are two main skills of vocabulary students should learn: receptive and productive skills (Nation, 2001). In order to master a language, it is unavoidable to acquire both receptive and productive vocabulary knowledge. Nation (2013) elaborates three main kinds of form, meaning, and use. Each kind includes both receptive and productive knowledge. The first two aspects mainly involve form (pronunciation and spelling) and meanings. The last part concerns use in relation to grammatical functions (word class, morphology including grammatical inflections, and derivation), collocation (words occur together) and constraints on use. The description of 'word knowledge' aspects is provided in Table 1 below.

Table 1: Aspects of knowing a word(Adapted from Nation, 2013, p. 27)

Aspect	Component	Receptive knowledge	Productive knowledge
Form	spoken	What does the word sound like?	How is the word pronounced?
	written	What does the word look like?	How is the word written and spelled?

Aspect	Component	Receptive knowledge	Productive knowledge
	word parts	What parts are recognizable in this word?	What word parts are needed to express the meaning?
Meaning	form and meaning	What meaning does this word form signal?	What word form can be used to express this meaning?
	concepts and referents	What is included in this concept?	What items can the concept refer to?
	associations	What other words does this make people think of?	What other words could people use instead of this one?
Use	grammatical functions	In what patterns does the word occur?	In what patterns must people use this word?
	collocations	Where, when, and how often would people expect to encounter this word?	What words or types of words must people use with this one?
	constraints on use (register, frequency...)	What words or types of words occur with this one?	Where, when, and how often can people use this word?

It seems impossible to introduce all of the aspects mentioned above in one class. It takes a long lifetime to master all of the word knowledge as vocabulary learning is gained gradually and differently (Schmitt, 2000). However, this vocabulary knowledge is essential for students' vocabulary learning. Thus, it is worth noting that these aspects should be selectively emphasized or introduced in a language classroom, and teachers are the ones who decide what aspects should be presented in their class. In this study, these aspects were included in the questionnaire.

3.4 Gender in second language acquisition (SLA)

Because of individual differences, SLA researchers have investigated the roles of differences in genders, especially factors or variables leading to these differences. Gender in language learning has been studied in many areas, such as attitudes, motivation, teachers' perceptions, and learning strategies. Even though the role of learners' gender on second language acquisition has received little attention as shown in a lack of this topic reviewed in contemporary books such as Gass and Mackey (2013), and Herschensohn and Young-Scholten (2013), some examples of the previous studies have been reviewed as shown below.

Kobayashi (2002) studied high-school Japanese students' attitudes toward current and long-term English learning. The data were mainly collected from a questionnaire. The findings show that female students' attitudes towards English learning are better than those of male students. Japanese social elements, such as the status of English as feminised academic and professional choices were found to be the main factor influencing students' attitudes.

Van Der Slik, Van Hout, and Schepens (2015) examined

gender differences of 27,119 adult learners of Dutch as a second language regarding productive skills of speaking and writing. This large-scale study used a questionnaire as the main tool to collect data across countries. The findings indicated that there was no gender gap in terms of productive skills because of environmental factors including motivation, orientation, education, and learner strategies.

Zoghi, Kazemi, and Kalani (2013) compared the effect of gender on English as a foreign language (EFL) achievement test. The subjects were 100 guidance school students, 50 males and 50 females. The pair t-test shows a significant effect on the achievement test as female students outscored male students in the test. Even though the number of participants in the study is small, it is worth noting that there is an effect between genders in terms of language learning.

It is obvious that gender issue is still inconclusive depending on areas of study and contexts. Furthermore, gender's perception of VTS has had little attention. Therefore, this study aimed to investigate university students' perceptions as suggested by Kobayashi (2002) that the issues of gender differences involve a particular context.

In this study, perception was the main concept used to understand the students' perception. However, other literature concerning vocabulary teaching strategies and word knowledge was also combined in interpreting the data in order to confirm understanding and to validate the interpretation of the data before building up new knowledge.

4. Research methodology

This exploration study was conducted with students in a Thai

university context in order to investigate what vocabulary teaching strategies were perceived as effective by students and to examine whether male and female students shared similar perceptions of vocabulary teaching strategies by applying mixed method research.

4.1 Participants

The population of the study included 2,164 university students from the first year to the fourth year at Prince of Songkla University, Phuket Campus based on the registration data of the university (Registra office of PSU, 2020). The samples were 338 students following Yamane's formula (1973) as shown in Table 2 below.

Table 2: Sampling size

Academic Year 2020	N	n
Faculty of International Studies (FIS) (4 years)	700	109
Faculty of Hospitality and Tourism Management (FHT) (4 years)	831	130
Faculty of Technology and Environment (FTE) (4 years)	205	32
Computing College (COC) (4 years)	428	67
All	2,164	(n = 338)

Their demographic data were presented in Table 3 below.

Table 3: Demographic data

Demographic Data				
Gender	Female	Male		
	153%	47%		
Nationality	Thai	Non-Thai		
	93%	7%		
Year	Year 1	Year 2	Year 3	Year 4
	43%	26%	15%	16%
Faculty	FIS	COC	FHT	TE
	32%	20%	39%	9%

The majority of the students were female (53%) and the rest were male (47%). Ninety-three percent (93%) were Thai and the rest were non-Thai (7%). The highest numbers of the participants were the first-year students (43%), the second (26%), the third (16%), and the fourth (15%) respectively. The participants were students from FIS (32%), COC (20%), FHT (39%), and FTE (9%).

After they completed the questionnaire part, 35 students from the four faculties volunteered to participate in the semi-structured interviews.

4.2 Research instrument

Two research instruments in the study were the online questionnaire of students' perceptions of VTS and a semi-structured interview. The questionnaire was adopted and adapted from PavičićTakač (2008)'s VTS which were collected with primary school teachers. It was designed to address the concepts of perceptions. Even though the educational level in her study was different from the

current study, her study gathered many practical strategies employed in natural classroom settings.

The questionnaire was the main source of data. It consisted of three main parts: demographic information, VTS, and open-ended questions. Findings derived from the close-ended questionnaire provided the data of students' perceptions concerning VTS and the same set of data were used to clarify whether perceptions of VTS held by male and female students were similar. Then, the additional part of open-ended questions could help confirm the data gained from the closed-ended part. To substantiate the results, the findings derived from the semi-structured interview was employed to support the quantitative data of research question I investigating their perception of VTS. The questions in the interview mainly included what VTS were perceived as effective in their opinions, why they thought so, and what source of belief about effective VTS originated from.

4.3 Research Procedures

In conducting this study, some procedures of methodology were done as follows:

4.3.1. A questionnaire was constructed by adopting and adapting PavičićTakač (2008)'s questionnaire of vocabulary teaching strategies. There were two main parts: the open-ended and close-ended questions. The questionnaire items were checked by two university lecturers of English (Thai and English) for validity or clarity of the questionnaire items. The Five-Point Likert Scale items were employed to cover VTS.

4.3.2. A pilot questionnaire was administered with 30 students to examine the reliability of the test with Cronbach's alpha ($\alpha = .992$).

4.3.3. A semi-structured interview was constructed and checked for clarity by a Thai teacher of English.

4.3.4. A consent letter and an information sheet were shown to the participants to inform about the purposes of the study and to ask for cooperation. Other students who were not in the pilot group were asked to read the information sheet and signed the consent form before completing the online questionnaire.

4.3.5. The interview was individually held with 35 students who were willing to participate in this part.

4.3.6. Spoken data derived from the semi-structured interview were translated from Thai into English. After that a Thai teacher of English was asked to translate English into Thai. Then both translated versions were compared and checked if they conveyed the same meanings. Back-translation was applied to confirm validity of the translated transcripts.

4.4 Data Analysis

The results derived from the close-ended questionnaire were analyzed using mean and percentage for research question I. In this study, the mean scores were interpreted as follows:

4.05 – 5.0 means the most effective

3.05 – 4.0 means effective

2.05 – 3.0 means quite effective

1.05 – 2.0 means rarely effective

0.05 – 1.0 means not effective at all

The results obtained from the open-ended questionnaire were analyzed and described through a descriptive method.

Spoken data were analyzed using thematic approach to search, analyze, and report themes that emerge from the data (Braun

& Clarke, 2006; Fereday & Muir-Cochrane, 2006). Thematic analysis was adopted as ‘thematic analysis is not wedded to any pre-existing theoretical framework, and therefore it can be used within different theoretical frameworks’ (Braun & Clarke, 2006, p. 81). Thematic analysis in this study was conducted following suggestion by Braun and Clarke (2006). To confirm the reliability of themes, inter-rater technique was applied. Two English teachers were asked to check codes, sub-themes, and themes. After negotiating for the coding and sub-theme agreement, adjustment was made to reconcile the differences.

Then T-Test independent data analysis was applied to answer research question II asking if female and male students held similar perceptions of VTS.

5. Findings and Discussions

The study aimed to answer two research questions as follows.

5.1 Students’ perception of VTS

Closed-ended responses were employed to answer the research question relating to their perceptions of effective VTS. The main VTS included 1) exercises in the book, 2) board, 3) presentation of words, 4) supply of additional information, 5) games, 6) pronunciation, 7) personalization, 8) association with known words, 9) association with experience and knowledge, 10) association with pictures, 11) setting tasks, 12) social strategies, 13) monitoring of production, 14) monitoring of comprehension, 15) assistance in retrieval, and 16) testing.

To respond to research question I, the following data were presented based on the top chosen mean scores of all VTS.

Table 4: Effective VTS perceived by students

Major Vocabulary Teaching Strategies	Mean Scores	SD
Pronouncing words	4.03	0.92
Personalization	3.94	0.95
Setting tasks of using words in sentences	3.91	0.94
Games	3.91	1.05
Association with known words	3.89	0.91
Association with experience or knowledge	3.89	0.94
Monitoring (of production) through correcting incorrect pronunciation	3.89	0.95
Using exercises in the books	3.86	0.89
Monitoring (of production) through correcting incorrect usage	3.86	0.96
Presentation of meanings using example sentences	3.86	0.94
Association with pictures	3.84	0.99

Table 4 shows that all the mean scores of VTS most students perceived were effective. These highest mean scores of VTS included pronunciation ($\bar{x} = 4.03$), personalization ($\bar{x} = 3.94$), setting tasks of using words in sentences ($\bar{x} = 3.91$), games ($\bar{x} = 3.91$), association with known words ($\bar{x} = 3.89$), association with experience or knowledge ($\bar{x} = 3.89$), monitoring of production through correcting incorrect pronunciation ($\bar{x} = 3.89$), using exercises in the books ($\bar{x} = 3.86$), monitoring of production through correcting incorrect usage ($\bar{x} = 3.86$), presentation of meanings using example

sentences ($\bar{X} = 3.86$), and association with pictures ($\bar{X} = 3.84$) in sequence. The data clearly show that all VTS were effective; however, the highest mean score was relating to teaching students how to pronounce words accurately.

Considering the highest mean scores shown in Table 3, the findings indicated that students believe in the teaching strategies that can promote their productive skills including writing and speaking (Nation, 2013) as can be seen from pronouncing words ($\bar{X} = 4.03$) and setting tasks of using words in sentences ($\bar{X} = 3.91$). It might be explained that university students are adult learners who would like to focus on communication skills or abilities to express themselves; consequently, being able to pronounce words correctly and to use words in sentences are highly effective in their opinions. The results of the present study are in line with de la Fuente (2002) whose findings indicate that practicing pronunciation could lead to vocabulary acquisition. Additionally, the findings are in line with Zárate (2016) whose study shows that through intense practices of sentence writing, students' vocabulary learning is improved.

Besides, the findings from the open-ended part confirms the data of the closed-ended part regarding the opportunities of word use. The findings show that students would like teachers to implement some activities that allow them to employ the target words in use including in sentence writing, speaking or use of the target words in a variety of in-class activities. The data suggests that students prefer the activities or teaching techniques which allow them to produce the language; therefore, the teachers may focus more on productive skills (writing and speaking) to help students enhance vocabulary skills (Nation, 2013).

Furthermore, the findings show that monitoring of production through correcting incorrect pronunciation ($\bar{X} = 3.89$) and usage ($\bar{X} = 3.86$) were highly rated as effective by the participants. It can be interpreted that students are concerned about the quality of the output or the language they produce. Moreover, the data seems to suggest that students believe that their mistakes could be eliminated if the teachers correct them when they mispronounce, misspell and misuse it. Therefore, the results of the present study support the role of feedback given to correct students' errors to avoid fossilization (Petchprasert, 2012).

In addition, data reveals that the participants perceived that teaching techniques of personalization ($\bar{X} = 3.95$), association with known words ($\bar{X} = 3.90$), and association with experience or knowledge ($\bar{X} = 3.89$) were highly effective. The data suggest that the strategies that are related to their life (personalization and association with experience) and background knowledge (association with known words and with experience or knowledge) could facilitate better vocabulary learning as experience or background knowledge connect the previous word knowledge and the new one (Perfetti, Wlotko & Hart, 2005).

Beside of those aforementioned VTS, data indicated that using games ($\bar{X} = 3.92$) was an effective teaching technique in their opinions. Data suggests that promoting vocabulary learning in a fun and relaxing atmosphere in games is a preferred teaching technique not only for young learner but also for university students. A possible explanation might be that Thai culture influences on their perception as the feelings of fun or enjoyment are embedded in Thai people and culture (Holmes, Tangtongtavy & Tomizawa, 1995). The results of the

present study were concurrent with Jakobsson and Ullman (2017), Sulaiman (2019), and Yusuf, Mustafa and Alqinda (2017) whose studies show that students' vocabulary learning achievement has been increased through the implementation of games. Furthermore, the data derived from the closed-ended part revealed students' opinions that vocabulary learning could be promoted through movies, songs, and games. The data clearly suggests that students prefer learning in a fun atmosphere (Lucardie, 2014) and engaging students' interest through games or activities makes them more motivated which enables them to learn more about words and beneficial for their vocabulary learning process (Tseng & Schmitt, 2008).

Apart from the questionnaire, semi-structured interview data was used to gain insight of their perception. Analyzing the qualitative data reveals five major themes. When interviewed the individual students about their opinions of the effective VTS, their responses were categorized into cognitive, affective, productive, visual (image) and technological VTS.

In contrast to quantitative data indicating productive skill (pronunciation) as the most preferable VTS, the results from the semi-structured interview show that the majority viewed cognitive VTS as the most effective technique. The excerpts below illustrate their opinions.

Excerpt 1

I think recitations. My high-school teacher asked students to recite words 3-5 times. Students repeated after the teacher until they could

correctly pronounce words and memorize words. (S22)

Excerpt 2

The technique that makes me memorize vocabulary quickly is dictation.

The teacher asked students to memorize words of each chapter. He had us write 5 words every class. For me, it works well because when I see the words, I can recognize them. I remember that the teacher already dictated those words in class. (S13)

The excerpts above share similar responses that rote learning seems to facilitate quick vocabulary memorization ('Students repeated after the teacher until they could correctly pronounce words and memorize words' (S22) and 'the teacher asked students to memorize words of each chapter' (S13)). These results reflect those of Liu and Todd (2016) who also found that several times of repeated reading were beneficial for vocabulary acquisition. Furthermore, the data indicate that students' learning experience ('For me, it works well because when I see the words, I can recognize them. I remember that the teacher already dictated those words in class.' (S13)) has formed their perceptions that through repetition, it helps them acquire vocabulary.

Apart from cognitive VTS, affective VTS was found to be the second techniques most of them perceived as effective teaching strategies. Many students mentioned that learning in a fun atmosphere facilitated vocabulary learning. Illustration was provided below.

Excerpt 3

I like when teachers used vocabulary games. It is not rote learning. It is fun and I can gradually memorize words. It is not boring. (S24)

Excerpt 4

I like to learn from songs or movies. The teacher had us listen and sing along. It is something I am interested in and I feel motivated. It is fun. (S12)

The findings indicate that vocabulary learning occurs when students are stress free ('It is fun' (S24 and S12). Data suggests that cultural value or the Thai concept of fun seem to influence on their perception pertaining to their learning approach (Coon & Mitterer, 2012; Holmes, Tangtongtavy & Tomizawa, 1995).

The third preferred VTS that some students perceived effective was productive VTS. Some respondents preferred the use of target words in writing or speaking. For instance,

Excerpt 5

I think the effective teaching technique is to have students use the target words to form sentences. Because it makes me memorize words and enables me to use it in my daily life. (S14)

Excerpt 6

Role-play. It is interesting. It has something to do with listening and speaking. It is more than just seeing pictures. It is not stress like taking the exam (dictation). (S5)

Excerpt 7

Pronounce words first and then use the words with others I enjoy it and finally I can memorize words. (S9)

The results indicate that some students believed in the opportunities of vocabulary use ('Because it makes me memorize words and enables me to use it in my daily life' (14)). The findings suggest that their social expectation or social perception might have an influence on their learning perception (Fiske & Tayler, 1991; McCleery, Horan & Green, 2014). Data seems to reflect their belief that using the target words in communication is an interesting way which eventually facilitates vocabulary acquisition.

Besides, a few participants indicated using pictures in teaching vocabulary. A few of them mentioned the advantages of images. As S20 stated, "I remember the teacher presented new words with pictures. With pictures, it aids memory. When I see the picture, I know how to call it in English." Similarly, S30 put it this way, "I like to learn through pictures. I remember words through images. I think about the images and how to call them. When I speak, I just think of those images, it helps me remember words better." Findings show that the use of visual aids (pictures) promotes better vocabulary memoriza-

tion ('With pictures, it aids memory. When I see the picture, I know how to call it in English' (S20) and 'When I speak, I just think of those images, it helps me remember words better' (S30)). Obviously, the learning experience shapes students' beliefs of what VTS aids vocabulary learning.

An equal small number of the participants suggest technology as an effective technique of vocabulary instruction. As S1 put it, "Using applications. The teacher at a private school used the Quizlet application. Words the teacher would like to teach were added in the application. Students could study whenever they were free. With a mobile phone, students could learn new words whenever they would like to." With a similar response, S2 suggested another application. In his word, "... The other way was to use an Memorado application. It helps me learn vocabulary well." The findings show students' beliefs that technology is an effective VTS for teachers to promote vocabulary learning. Data indicates that their learning experience has formed their perception of effective VTS ('The teacher at the private school used the Quizlet application.' (S1). Moreover, data suggests that the convenience of use ('Students could study whenever they were free and ... whenever they would like to' (S1) was the main reason that influenced their perceptions of the effective ways of vocabulary learning.

As a whole, these results confirm the pivotal role of perception in language learning as it shapes learners' experience and how they response to it (Cotterall, 1995). The findings suggest that learning experience (Gregory, 1987) and Thai culture (Coon & Mitterer, 2012) have formed their perception of what VTS facilitate effective vocabulary learning. The findings confirm the results of Kuhl (2000) showing that language learning experiences alter learners' perceptions and those of Licorish, Owen, Daniel, and George (2018) whose study

indicating that teacher's teaching techniques influence classroom dynamics, motivation and the students' learning process. Even though the sequences of effective VTS from the quantitative data were not the same as those of the qualitative data, the results from the semi-structured interview confirm the findings of the quantitative data, especially some strategies of games, use of target words in communication, and pictures.

5.2 Comparison between male and female students' perception of effective VTS

Data obtained from the same questionnaire were employed to answer the second research question pertaining to the comparison between male and female students' perception of effective VTS.

T-Test independent data analysis reveals both differences and similarities between the male and female students' perceptions of VTS. The hypothesis of the study was that there were differences between male and female students' perceptions of VTS.

The questionnaire data shows that there were no statistically significant differences in most of their perceptions regarding the effectiveness of VTS. Therefore, only strategies that revealed statistically significant differences were shown in Table 5 below.

Table 5: Differences between gender by independent t-test

VTS	N	\bar{X}	SD	t	Sig
Presentation of meanings through drawing on board					
Female	180	3.51	1.06	1.94	0.05
Male	158	3.73	1.06		

VTS	N	\bar{X}	SD	t	Sig
Pronouncing words					
Female	180	3.92	0.95	-2.36	0.02
Male	158	4.16	0.87		
Personalization					
Female	180	3.85	0.99	-1.95	0.05
Male	158	4.05	0.87		
Setting tasks of using words in sentences					
Female	180	3.80	0.97	-2.41	0.02
Male	158	4.04	0.89		
Monitoring of production through asking for peer correction					
Female	180	3.51	1.06	-1.99	0.05
Male	158	3.73	1.00		
Monitoring of comprehension through translating into L1					
Female	180	3.69	0.99	-1.95	0.05
Male	158	3.89	0.86		
Assistance in retrieval by using L1					
Female	180	3.61	0.97	-2.34	0.02
Male	158	3.85	0.94		

Note: $P < 0.05$

Table 5 reveals different perceptions between male and female university students at the statistically significant level of 0.05. The findings indicate that both male and female shared similar perceptions about VTS except the seven strategies shown in Table 5 including presentation of meanings through drawing on board ($t = 1.94, p = 0.05$), pronouncing words ($t = -2.36, p = 0.02$), personalization ($t = -1.95, p = 0.05$), setting tasks of using words in sentences ($t =$

-2.41, $p = 0.02$), monitoring of production through asking for peer correction ($t = -1.99, p = 0.05$), monitoring of comprehension through translating into L1 ($t = -1.95, p = 0.05$), and assistance in retrieval by using L1 ($t = -2.34, p = 0.02$). It might be interpreted that male students prefer some teaching strategies that are simple and easy to understand, such as drawing pictures to present meanings of words, peer correction, and L1. The findings of the study are concurrent with Schmitt (2008) and Nation (2013) who point out that clear and simple ways of vocabulary teaching lead to vocabulary learning.

The data also show that the top two most statistically significant vocabulary teaching strategies that both male and female students perceived differently were pronouncing words and setting tasks of using words in sentences ($p = 0.02$) and these two techniques were more preferable by men based on the higher means cores ($M = 4.16, SD = 0.87$) than women ($M = 3.92, SD = 0.95$). Data suggest that male students are likely to be more impulsive than female students which makes them highly prefer the strategies focusing on pronunciation and word use. However, the findings of the current study do not support the previous research of Van Der Slik, Van Hout, and Schepens (2015) whose findings indicated that there was no gender gap in terms of productive skills. Therefore, the results confirm Kobayashi (2002) indicating that the issues of gender differences involve a particular context.

6. Implications of the study

Some suggestions derived from the findings are provided to improve some vocabulary instruction.

1. How words are correctly pronounced should be

emphasised the most. The findings of the present study indicate that pronouncing words was rated as effective with the highest mean scores, especially for male students. Therefore, opportunities for students to see the transcription, hear how words are pronounced, and pronounce the words themselves are essential (Nation, 2013).

2. New words should be introduced in a way relating to students' life and schema. The results of the current study show that association with known words, association with experience and personalization is an effective teaching technique for university students. The more students engage with the target words and their life or background knowledge, vocabulary acquisition is more likely to improve (Anderson & Pearson, 1984).

3. Activities or tasks of the target language in actual use should be promoted. The findings of the present study revealed that university students value the opportunities to employ the words in actual use. Hence, teachers may always show them sentence examples and encourage them to produce sentences through speaking (role-play) or writing activities (Schmitt, 2008). Communicative tasks can be one of the options as tasks allow students to engage in the cognitive process, promote the real-world process of language use and focus on the communicative outcomes (Ellis, 2017). Additionally, some simple tasks, such as jigsaw and information gap task which promote vocabulary retention (Song, 2011) can be beneficial for students.

4. A variety of activities promoting fun atmosphere should be implemented, such as games, music and movies. The findings from both the questionnaires and the interviews concurrently indicate that vocabulary games are perceived as an effective vocabulary teaching technique. Games are useful and effective for

university students. Many word games have been investigated for vocabulary acquisition, such as Bingo (Silsüpür, 2017), Pictionary (Peterson, 2017) and Spelling Bee (Yusuf, Mustafa & Alqinda, 2017). Vocabulary games are beneficial because they can create a fun atmosphere in language learning and enhance memory of word items (Akdogan, 2017). Motivation is a powerful factor in language learning (Anderman & Dawson, 2011); therefore, teachers may consider using games that suit students' educational value and interest.

5. Providing feedback or correcting errors should be emphasized to avoid fossilization and to provide opportunities for students to develop their learning skills. The findings of the present study revealed that monitoring of their production through correcting incorrect usage and pronunciation is highly rated as effective. It may be essential to give students immediate feedback to make them aware of the mistakes they have produced (Shaofeng, Ellis & Shu, 2016).

6. Some teaching techniques related to cognitive load can enhance vocabulary learning. The interview results show that university students believe in rote learning techniques including dictation and recitation. As repetition promotes vocabulary learning (Liu & Todd, 2016), asking students to repeat after the teacher several times and having them take dictation are effective in students' opinions which leads to their vocabulary span.

7. Technology should be incorporated in vocabulary instruction. The results of the present study show that some students preferred applications in which they could self-study anywhere and anytime. Technology promotes motivation in learning (Mustafa, Assiry, Bustari & Nuryasmin, 2019), and it has shown the benefits on

second language acquisition (Novitasari, Aprianto & Heriyawati, 2018). Therefore, integrating technology and vocabulary learning can enhance vocabulary knowledge for university students (Mustafa et al., 2019).

8. More implementation of some techniques suits different genders. The findings of the present study revealed no statistically significant differences in most of the strategies except some strategies of presenting meanings through drawing on the board, pronouncing words, personalization, setting tasks of using words in sentences, monitoring of production through asking for peer correction, monitoring of comprehension through translating into L1, and assistance in retrieval by using L1. It is worth noting that male and female students have different perceptions of how vocabulary should be introduced in the classroom in the aforementioned techniques. Thus, in a class where there is a greater majority of male students than female students, these techniques are more preferable and can be implemented more. However, language teachers may need to look at students' individual differences and provide a variety of vocabulary teaching techniques to help promote vocabulary learning for both male and female students.

7. Limitations of the study

The study included only students in higher education. The data obtained were limited to only the university where the study was conducted. Therefore, the data represented only a group of learners which might be insufficient to generalize to other groups of students. Additionally, even though the main results from the questionnaire were supported by the semi-structured interview, a sample was just

a small group of university students. Other data collection research tool such as focus-group might be employed to enhance understanding and to gain insightful data of students' perceptions of effective VTS.

8. Recommendation for further study

The results of the present study were mainly derived from the questionnaire. In a further study, a qualitative method of focus groups should be incorporated in order to gain a better understanding of the data concerning their choices of the strategies teachers employed. Furthermore, the present study focuses on the vocabulary teaching strategies employed by university lecturers. Further study may include students at other educational levels in order to gain a clearer picture of the vocabulary teaching situations in Thai classrooms and students' perceptions of effective VTS.

9. Conclusion

This study expands the understanding of perceptions held by Thai university students in an EFL context in relation to VTS and uncover whether there are any differences between male and female students' perception in this regard. Their perception seems to be largely influenced by their learning experience and cultural value which they have been embedded in since they were young. These two main factors impact their perceptions about learning. Understanding of their perception can raise teachers' awareness of what vocabulary teaching strategies should be emphasized in class. Furthermore, these findings may be of interest to SLA researchers to investigate more about gender differences in this regard.

It seems inconclusive and difficult to identify the most effective

vocabulary teaching strategies. The main findings revealed that for university students, teaching strategies that promote productive skills are highly value. The findings showed that they preferred opportunities to practice pronunciation and communicative use in both writing and speaking. Setting a variety of vocabulary tasks seemed to be effective techniques in their opinions, too. Moreover, they were found to value schemata that activated and enhanced their vocabulary learnings. However, the results revealed that both male and female students shared similar perceptions of effective vocabulary teaching strategies in general. Therefore, teachers may vary their vocabulary teaching techniques from time to time.

Even though the study drew the data only from students in a university in southern Thailand, the results of study could uncover some practical implications that may impact teachers' awareness of effective vocabulary teaching strategies based on students' perceptions. To provide more well-rounded findings on Thai students' perceptions with regard to effective VTS, it is recommended that conducting a study with other groups of students could offer a more comprehensive understanding of their perceptions and gender differences and to compare if the further study could provide similar results.

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11. Conflict of interest disclosure

The author hereby declares no personal or professional

conflicts of interest relating to any aspect of this study.

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