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VOCABULARY LEARNING STRATEGIES (VLS) USED BY STUDENTS OF PHILOLOGY

INTRODUCTION

The present paper presents the problem of vocabulary learning strategies (VLS) used by philology students. To date there have been few research studies that have explored what vocabulary learning strategies are used by philology students and what role they play in the whole process of studying. The first part of the paper describes theoretical issues referring to VLS providing information on the role of vocabulary in teaching and the learning process and its place in the Common European Framework of Reference. It also deals with different concepts and taxonomies of VLS.

The second part of the paper reports findings of a survey conducted at one of the state universities in Poland, aiming at investigating students' attitudes toward learning vocabulary and a description of selected strategies along with the factors influencing the choice.

Results indicate what types of VLS are most frequently selected by philology students and show the students' opinions on different aspects of vocabulary teaching and learning.

VOCABULARY AND ITS IMPORTANCE IN TEACHING AND THE LEARNING PROCESS 1°

Though vocabulary has finally been recognized as crucial for language learning the problem received little or no attention in the 1950s and 60s.

Now it is widely believed that learning vocabulary is basic for learning a language because, as Wilkins (1972: 111) stated, "...while without grammar very little can be conveyed, without vocabulary nothing can be conveyed".

According to Nation (1990), to acquire a word means getting acquainted with different aspects of knowledge of a very complex nature. Thus he lists:

- The meaning of the word;
- The written form of the word (its correct spelling);
- The spoken form of the word (both productively and receptively);
- The word parts;
- The grammatical behavior of the word (what part of speech it is and in what patterns it can be used);
- The collocations of the word;
- The register of the word;
- The associations of the word (semantic relationships between words);
- The frequency of the word.

In Nation's model (2001) a word is formed by three areas composed of three aspects. To know a word is to know at least one aspect from each of the areas. Spoken form, written form and word parts represent the form area; form and meaning, concept, referents, and associations represent the area of meaning, whereas the area of use is represented by collocations and constraints on the use.

Schmitt (2000) argues that a user's ability to use words productively grows with time, so sometimes being able to use a word in oral discourse does not necessarily mean being able to spell it.

It is noteworthy that this opinion is conversant with the very origin of the distinction between passive and active vocabulary which according to Baruah (1991) lies in the fact that when children acquire their first language, they begin to recognize the spoken forms of words and subsequently, when they feel the need to communicate, they begin to produce sounds to utter words. Reading and writing is provided later by formal education. Thus, researchers have come to the conclusion that listening and speaking skills require less brain activity; conversely, writing and speaking skills require more brain activity.

It may also be added (Corson 1995) that passive vocabulary consists of partly-known words, low-frequency words, and words that are avoided in active use for different reasons (e.g. they belong to too formal or informal a register).

LEXICAL COMPETENCE AND VOCABULARY LEARNING IN CEFR 2°

According to the Common European Framework of Reference (2003: 108–112) for the realisation of communicative intentions, users/learners bring to bear their general language capacities with a more specifically related communicative competence, which in this narrower sense consists of linguistic competences, sociolinguistic competences, and pragmatic competences. Lexical competence along with grammatical competence, semantic competence, phonological competence, orthographic competence, and orthoepic competence are the constituents of linguistic competence. The authors of CEFR stress that there are many ways in which modern languages are currently learnt and taught. They add that “for many years the Council of Europe has promoted an approach based on the communicative needs of learners and the use of materials and methods that will enable learners to satisfy these needs and which are appropriate to their characteristics as learners”. Still they clearly state that CEFR does not aim at advocating one particular language–teaching methodology, but presents options instead (ibid: 142). In the case of vocabulary, the options derive from existing practice and the gaps should be filled by the users of CEFR on the basis of their own knowledge and experience. The question is in which ways learners should be expected or required to learn new vocabulary:

- a) by simple exposure to words and fixed expressions used in authentic spoken and written texts?
- b) by learner elicitation or dictionary, etc. look-up as needed for specific tasks and activities?
- c) through inclusion in context, e.g. in course-book texts and subsequent recycling in exercises, exploitation activities, etc.?
- d) by presenting words accompanied by visuals (pictures, gestures and miming, demonstrative actions, realia, etc.)?
- e) by the memorisation of word-lists, etc. with translation equivalents?
- f) by exploring semantic fields and constructing ‘mind-maps’, etc.?
- g) by training in the use of monolingual and bilingual dictionaries, thesauruses and other works of reference?
- h) by explanation and training in the application of lexical structure (e.g. word formation, compounding, collocations, phrasal verbs, idioms, etc.)?
- i) by a more or less systematic study of the different distribution of semantic features in L1 and L2 (contrastive semantics)?” (ibid: 150)

The authors of CEFR notice that size, range and control of vocabulary are major parameters of language acquisition; thus, the users of CEFR may wish to consider and where appropriate state the number of words and fixed expressions the learner will need, the range of vocabulary, the distinction between learning for recognition and understanding, in other words learning for recall and productive use. (ibid: 151).

It may be assumed that the authors of CEFR are of the opinion that the users need to define both the final aims of the process of teaching and learning as far as the development of vocabulary is concerned and at the same time they need to define the strategies serving to achieve the expected learning outcomes in this field.

Strategies of learning vocabulary are strictly connected with its expected size and range. As it has been pointed out it is also crucial for the process of learning at a certain level to decide to what extent the distinction will be made between learning for recall and productive use. In the case of students of philology, according to the recommendations of the Ministry of Science and Higher Education BA and MA graduates are expected to learn vocabulary on level C1 and C2 respectively. Thus it is important to realize what strategies they use to meet the above requirements and what role their teachers' recommendations in this respect play in the process.

THE CONCEPT OF LEARNING STRATEGIES 1°

Though the concept of learning strategies is widely used, there is no single definition of it. The term "strategy" is derived from the Greek word *strategia* which means steps or actions taken for the purpose of winning a war. It thus can be stated that strategies are all actions and behaviours taken by learners to make language learning more successful, self-directed, and enjoyable (Oxford 2003: 8)/Cohen 2012: 136). Cohen additionally stresses (2011) that strategies are processes which are consciously selected by learners to enhance the learning or use of the L2.

THE DIVISION OF LANGUAGE LEARNING STRATEGIES 2°

There exist various classifications regarding language learning strategies with regard to language skills, function, or use (Cohen 2011). One of the proposed divisions is presented by Oxford (1990):

TABLE 1. Language learning strategies

Direct strategies	Indirect strategies
Memory-related strategies	Metacognitive strategies
Cognitive strategies	Affective strategies
Compensatory strategies	Social strategies

The main distinction in this taxonomy (ibid) is that between **direct strategies** (working with the language itself) and indirect strategies (general management of learning). Within **direct strategies** three subclasses can be distinguished: *memory strategies* (strategies to store and retrieve aspects of the target language), *cognitive strategies* (strategies for using the language and for understanding how it works), and *compensation strategies* (strategies for using the language despite gaps in knowledge).

Memory related strategies help a learner to link concepts but do not require profound understanding. They enable learners to learn and recall information thanks to those techniques of learning which facilitate recognition and memorizing foreign words, expressions, etc. They consist in creating new word groups, memorizing via games, drama, repetitions, learning by sounds, images, movements, or integration of sounds and images.

Cognitive strategies enable the learner to manipulate the language in direct ways such as those which involve actions requiring the use of different sources, e.g. materials for reading or listening. Learners take notes, organize knowledge, summarize, synthesize, outline, and reorganize information to develop knowledge structures, to practice structures, and to sound formal.

Compensatory strategies serve to participate in the communication process regardless of language shortcomings. They include guessing from context (listening and reading), using synonyms and “talking around” a missing word (speaking and writing), using gestures or pause words (speaking). Though by some (Cohen 2012) they are considered to be only communication strategies, they may aid in language learning as well (Oxford 1990).

Indirect strategies include *metacognitive strategies* (strategies for planning, organizing and evaluating learning), *affective strategies* (strategies for approaching the task positively), and *social strategies* (strategies for working with others to get input and practice).

Oxford (ibid) is of the opinion that **metacognitive strategies** are employed for managing the learning process overall. They consist in e.g.: identifying one's own learning style preferences and needs, gathering and organizing materials, arranging a study space, monitoring mistakes, and evaluating the success of the undertaken task.

Affective strategies influence abilities to learn languages and help control emotions (Drożdżał-Szelest 2004). They involve identifying one's mood, rewarding oneself for good performance, using deep breathing or positive talk. Nevertheless, some studies show that the need for affective strategies decreases over time as students progress towards proficiency (Oxford 1990).

Social strategies like asking questions to get verification, asking for clarification of a confusing point, asking for help in doing the language task, talking with a native speaking conversation partner also provide a significant opportunity to improve learning as they help both to understand the target culture and the language.

Schmitt (2000), who based on Oxford's classification divides VLS into two basic groups: the ones to determine the meaning of new words when encountered for the first time (*discovery strategies*) and the ones to consolidate (*consolidation strategies*) the meaning when encountered again.

Discovery strategies contain *determination* and *social* strategies. The former facilitate gaining knowledge of a new word through guessing from any information, such as part of speech, affixes and roots, pictures, gestures, and textual context. Another possible way of finding a word's meaning through determination strategies is using both bilingual and monolingual dictionaries or other aids, like word lists, semantic maps, flash cards etc. As formerly quoted, Oxford states that social strategies consist in using other people's help to develop lexical competence. Schmitt's concept of **consolidation strategies** covering *memory strategies*, *cognitive strategies* and *metacognitive strategies* are fully based on Oxford's description.

Schmitt's classification has been used as the basis for data collection in the present study.

THE REASONS WHY LANGUAGE LEARNING STRATEGIES ARE USED 2°

With the emergence of the concept of language learning strategies, scholars have attempted to link these strategies to language learning skills

believing that each strategy enhances the learning of vocabulary, pronunciation, or improves reading and speaking skills. Studies such as those conducted by O'Malley and Chamot (1990), or O'Malley et al (1985) confirm that most language learning strategies are used for vocabulary (followed by pronunciation tasks). The importance and popularity of vocabulary learning within the framework of 49 strategies of language learning lies in the fact that all language learning strategies, including taxonomies such as that of Oxford (1990) or Schmitt (2000), can be used for vocabulary learning tasks.

Thanks to learning strategies the effectiveness of learning is increased, which in turn leads to the development of motivation and self-confidence. Selected strategies can make the process of learning easier for students. The selection of strategies made by the learners often happens without teacher involvement, though the teacher's role in the process may also be significant.

TEACHERS' ROLE IN THE CHOICE OF LEARNING STRATEGIES 2°

Teachers help students find proper strategies and facilitate their use. According to Pawlak (2011) they may develop a student's memory-related strategies by preparing activities that stimulate memorizing (e.g making word groups referring to different categories, putting a new word in context, making word associations). Pawlak adds (ibid) that they can enhance the development of cognitive strategies by encouraging students to use monolingual and bilingual dictionaries; they can also prepare materials which trigger information searching and students' individual interpretation. As far as compensation strategies are concerned, teachers exert significant influence on their use by the very fact of using them themselves while using L2 as the language of instruction. Teachers may also prepare exercises consisting in writing definitions of words or using alternative forms to express meaning. They also play an important role in students' development of affective strategies by talking with students about their feelings connected with the process of teaching and learning, or providing them with such effective methods of eliminating stress as listening to music, meditation, or relaxation. To enable their students to use social strategies, teachers may introduce exercises triggering cooperation and interaction between students and groups of students. They may even be helpful in the development of the stu-

dents' use of metacognitive cognitive strategies, as by asking students how they study they can make them aware of the very existence of strategies; moreover, they can later offer them some advice regarding learning.

RESEARCH 1°

The purpose of the research is to reveal a new understanding of the problem of vocabulary learning strategies used by philology students and, in so doing, contributing new knowledge to what is already known from previous studies.

Vocabulary learning strategies used by students of philology are inseparably connected with the process of teaching and learning the language; they to some extent result from the ways it is taught. The present research may become a contribution to a large scale study in this field which in turn could lead to conclusions resulting in a more effective process of teaching and learning the language being the major of studies.

QUESTIONNAIRE

The aim of the questionnaire was to check the hypothesis assuming that learning vocabulary is crucial for philology students and that in the process of learning they apply the strategies described by Schmitt (1997) in his taxonomy. Thus the aim of the study is to find the answers to the following questions:

1. What role does vocabulary learning play in the process of language learning?
2. Does vocabulary acquisition seem more difficult to students than developing grammar competence and developing language skills?
3. How do they interpret the meaning of a word?
4. What VLS do they use?
5. Do academic teachers influence the choice of the strategies selected by the students?
6. Does the fact of undertaking philology studies have an impact on the selected strategies?
7. How important to them are VLS?

8. What factors influence most the choice of the applied strategies?
9. Is there any correlation between the applied strategies and other variables included in the questionnaire?

METHODS OF RESEARCH 2°

The instrument selected to gather necessary data is a questionnaire administered in paper-and-pencil mode.

PARTICIPANTS 3°

The target group consisted of 50 randomly selected BA and MA students of English philology at one of the state universities in Poland. The respondents (20–34 years old) declare that they have been studying English for 10–16 years.

DATA COLLECTION AND PROCEDURES 3°

The data collection instrument was a questionnaire composed of two parts: in the first one students were asked four general, closed questions concerning the role of learning vocabulary in the process of learning, their interpretation of “knowing” a word, the active use of passive vocabulary, and problems connected with its acquisition. The aim of the second part of the study was to determine which strategies (the selection of strategies was based on Schmitt’s taxonomy) students use and how frequently they use them to learn new English words. The scale was “never”, “rarely”, “sometimes”, “often”, and “always”. These categories were assigned values of 0, 1, 2, 3, and 4 respectively. The highest score represented the highest frequency of the strategy being used by students. The study was conducted in-class.

DATA ANALYSIS 3°

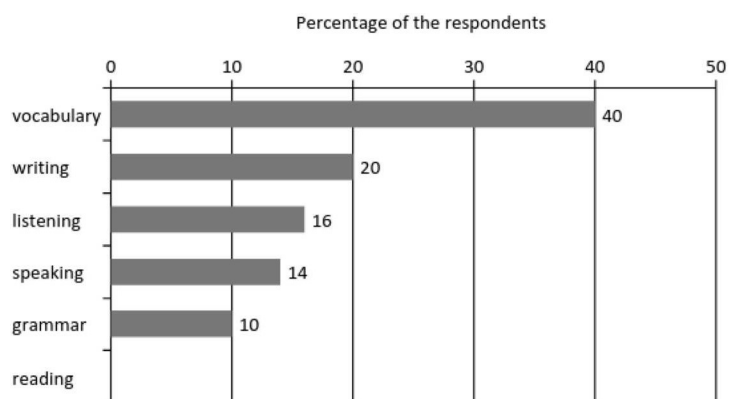
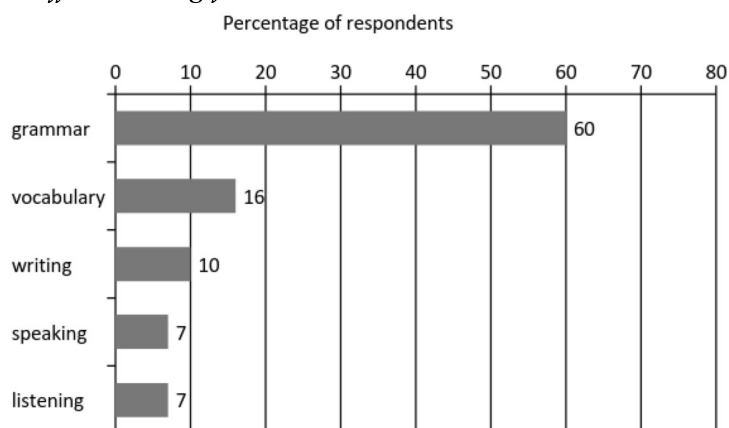
Data were analyzed using Statistica 10.0 (StatSoft Inc., 2011). To verify statistical hypothesis, test t (Student) was used for independent variables and independence test chi square with the level of significance $\alpha = 0,05$. The results were considered statistically important when calculated test probability equals $p < 0,05$.

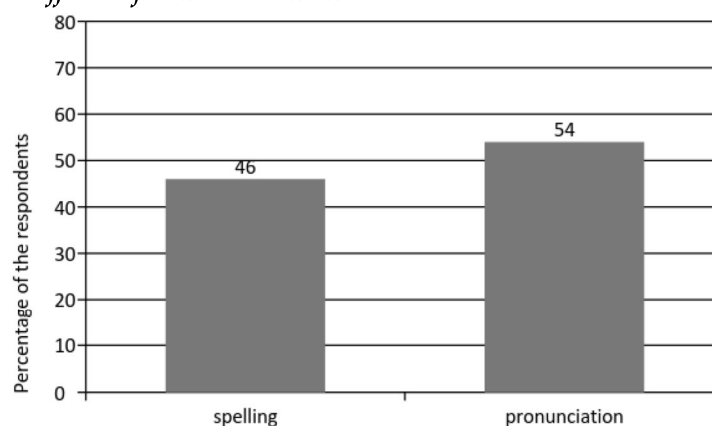
RESULTS 2°

The research results are presented in the diagrams discussed in the chronological order of the questions in the survey. Additionally, correlations between answers to particular questions are presented wherever they are statistically significant.

PRELIMINARY QUESTIONS 3°

Preliminary issues cover questions 1–4 and constitute an important part of Questionnaire findings. The answers may in some cases be correlated with the choice of the students' VLS.

Most of the time I devote to*The most difficult thing for me is*

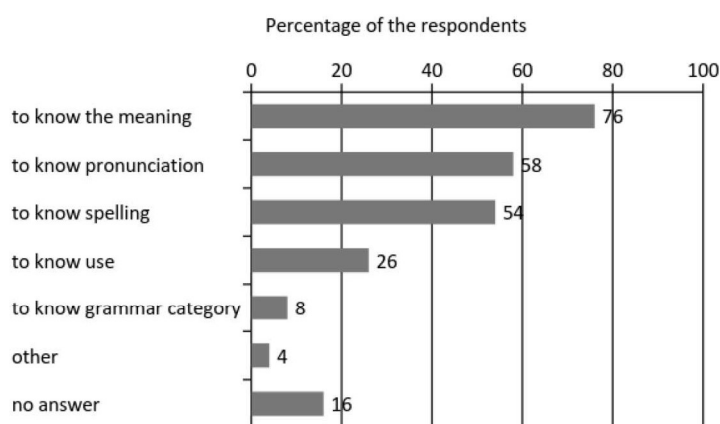
It's more difficult for me to remember

The answers to the questions about the most-time consuming aspects of the process of learning show that the respondents do not always devote most of their time to those elements and language skills which seem to them most difficult as the most difficult thing for them to achieve is grammar competence (60%) to which only 10% of them devote the majority of their learning time. As many as 40% of the respondents devote most of their time to learning vocabulary, through only 16% consider this to be the most difficult aspect of their learning process, whereas writing is the most difficult skill for 10% of the students, to which 20% devote most of their time. This may yet result from the nature of the skill of writing which is obviously time-consuming. It should be noted, however, that learning vocabulary is a process which is inseparably connected with developing skills: rarely does it take place in isolation. The rest of the students devote most of their time to listening and speaking, which seem most difficult to 7% percent of the respondents. Needless to say, active knowledge of vocabulary is both indispensable for the development of these skills and closely connected with the progress made in this area.

Students declare that it is more difficult for them to remember the pronunciation of a word than to learn its spelling, which confirms that they consider the development of speaking fairly difficult. Given the above mentioned statements, it might be said that there is some logical correlation between the time devoted to the development of skills and elements of the language and the level of difficulty with acquiring

them. The analysis made by chi-square test shows a statistically important correlation between variables ($p = 0.0342$). It turns out that students for whom it is more difficult to remember the spelling of a word, get to know the word in interaction with the group more frequently (52.1%) than those for whom it is more difficult to remember its pronunciation (25.9).

To know a word means



To understand what knowing a word really means is the first step toward understanding how we learn vocabulary. For the respondents asked in the first open question to define what knowing a word really means, it is first of all understanding the meaning of the word (75%), pronunciation (58%), spelling (54%). No correlation between the answers to the question whether the spelling or pronunciation of the word is more important has been observed. Defining 'knowing the word' only 26% of the respondents mentioned use of the word, but these were mainly those students who did not mention the meaning of the word as a constituent of its definition, so it might mean they consider the two to be identical. Still fewer respondents (8%) mentioned the word's structure, and as many as 16% did not answer the question at all. It should be noted that the respondents did not mention such of Nation's categories as the register of the word or its collocation as crucial in this respect.

The frequency of VLS used by the respondents (question 5) 3^o

TABLE 2.

Number/name of The strategy	Description of the strategy	Frequency of the use (%)					The arithmetic average 0 – never, 4 – always
		Never	Rarely	Sometimes	Often	Always	
1/Determination	I determine the part of speech they belong to	18	40	20	16	6	1,5
2/Determination	I guess their meaning	6	6	18	58	12	2,6
3/Determination	I use pictures or gestures to understand their meaning	6	28	30	30	6	2,0
4/Determination	I use a bilingual dictionary to understand their meaning	0	8	10	42	40	3,1
5/Determination	I use a monolingual dictionary to understand their meaning	2	30	22	34	12	2,2
6/Social	I ask the teacher for explanation	8	24	46	20	2	1,8
7/Social	I ask my classmate for explanation	10	8	40	36	6	2,2
8/Social	I get their meaning through group activity	4	20	38	28	10	2,2
9/Social	I try to communicate with native speakers as often as possible to learn new words	20	40	26	12	2	1,4
10/Memory	I try to connect words with their images	12	40	28	16	4	1,6
11/Memory	I try to connect words with my personal experience	8	22	30	30	10	2,1
12/Memory	I organize new words in groups	20	26	38	12	4	1,5
13/Memory	I use new words in my own sentences	14	14	30	36	6	2,1
14/Memory	I analyse the spelling of words	10	16	28	30	16	2,3

Number/name of The strategy	Description of the strategy	Frequency of the use (%)					The arithmetic average 0 – never, 4 – always
		Never	Rarely	Sometimes	Often	Always	
15/Memory	I repeat new words to remember how they should be pronounced	6	26	16	26	26	2,4
16/Memory	I create semantic maps of words	36	38	22	4	0	0,9
17/Memory	I use Keyword Method	20	46	10	22	2	1,4
18/Cognitive	I copy new words many Times to remember them	26	32	20	16	6	1,4
19/Cognitive	I make lists of words	10	26	30	26	8	2,0
20/Cognitive	I use "fiszki"	32	16	26	12	14	1,6
21/Cognitive	I make use of course book dictionaries	18	18	36	20	8	1,8
22/Cognitive	I listen to the recordings with new words	12	28	40	10	10	1,8
23/Cognitive	I make my own dictionaries	24	22	32	12	10	1,6
24/Cognitive	I make use of multimedia (films, podcasts, computer games)	2	14	12	40	32	2,9
25/Metacognitive	I make a new plan according to Which I learn new words later	38	24	30	6	2	1,1
26/Metacognitive	I test my lexical competence using my own tests	40	32	18	6	4	1,0
27/Metacognitive	I do different types of lexical exercises	18	18	40	16	8	1,8
28/Metacognitive	I revise vocabulary I learnt before while learning new portions of words	10	24	36	22	8	1,9

The frequency of using different VLS according to the group to which a particular strategy belongs

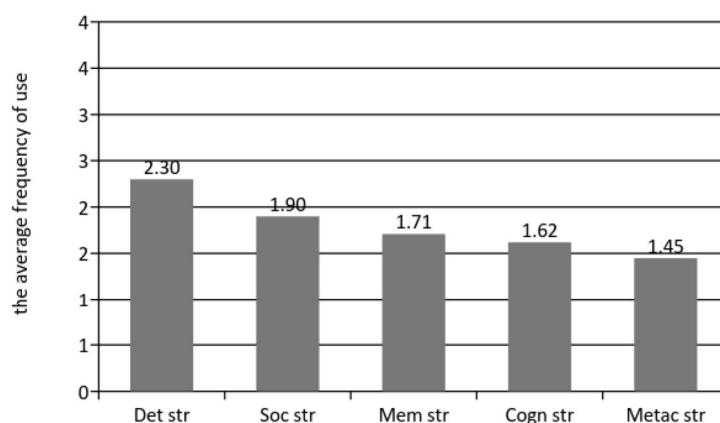


Table 2 and the above diagram clearly show that the respondents use determination strategies most frequently. The most popular strategy is the traditional use of a bilingual Polish-English dictionary (average 3.1); quite frequent is also using monolingual dictionaries (2.2). It is worth noticing that the respondents often try to guess the meaning of a word from the context (2.6). They rather rarely think about the meaning of the word in the context of its grammatical category (1.5). Body language used by the speaker using a new word or pictorial representation of it seem to be more helpful (1.5).

Social strategies (asking teachers or friends for explanation or translation of a new word) are also quite often (2.2) used by the respondents. They declare that they ask their teacher (1.8) or a friend (2.2) for explanation of a word or they get to know its meaning during the interaction with the group (2.2). It seems that they do not often communicate with native speakers as they seldom ask them for help in this area (1.4). It may be noted that asking for translation and using dictionaries are practically similar techniques of getting to know new words, as they are based on finding Polish equivalents of English words though they belong to different categories of VLS. Their popularity with students may result from the patterns of learning they have been using since they started learning and have never changed.

The respondents admit that they use quite often one of the most typical memory strategies – they repeat new words aloud and analyse

their pronunciation.. They also often analyse the spelling of new words and try to remember it. The students also try to connect words with their personal experience (2.1) or use it in a new sentence. They less often (1.6) imagine a new word to connect its visual representation with its meaning. The Keyword Method (1.4) or semantic maps (0.9) are even less popular. This also probably results from the acquired learning habits belonging to more traditional VLS.

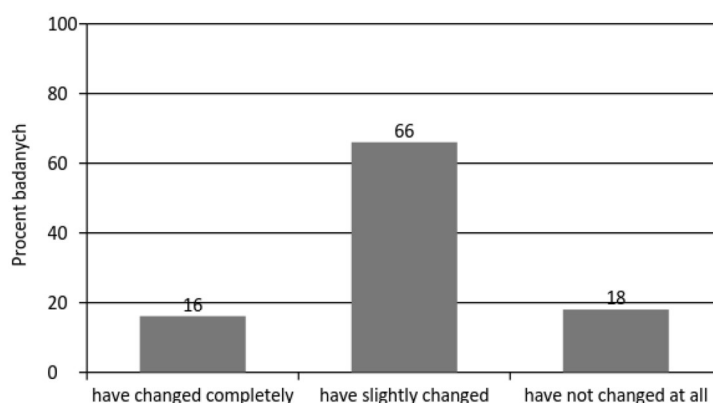
As far as cognitive strategies are concerned, students most often (2.9) use multimedia – films, podcasts, or computer games – which may be interpreted as *signum temporis* and means that the students add new strategies of learning to old ones. They also make lists of words (2.0), use course book dictionaries (1.8) or listen to recordings with the new words (1.8). or index (flash) cards (1.6).

Metacognitive strategies play clearly the least important part in the process of VLS used by the respondents. Most frequently used is the strategy of revising old vocabulary (which is also the traditional way of learning often imposed on students by teachers), and lexical exercises are also sometimes done (11.8), but making plans according to which new vocabulary is acquired (1.1) or testing and self-assessment of lexical competence seems rare (1.0).

It should be noted that while checking the correlation between answers, two statistically important results have been detected. Firstly, students for whom it was more difficult to remember the spelling of a word used determination and social strategies more often than those for whom remembering pronunciation was more problematic.

On the other hand students for whom it was easier to remember the pronunciation of a word asked native speakers for explanation more frequently (43% – sometimes, 13% – often), than those for whom to remember the spelling of the word was more difficult (40% – rarely, 20% – never). This phenomenon may be logically explained, as the students tend to learn in the way which is easiest for them, thus they choose strategies compatible with their preferences.

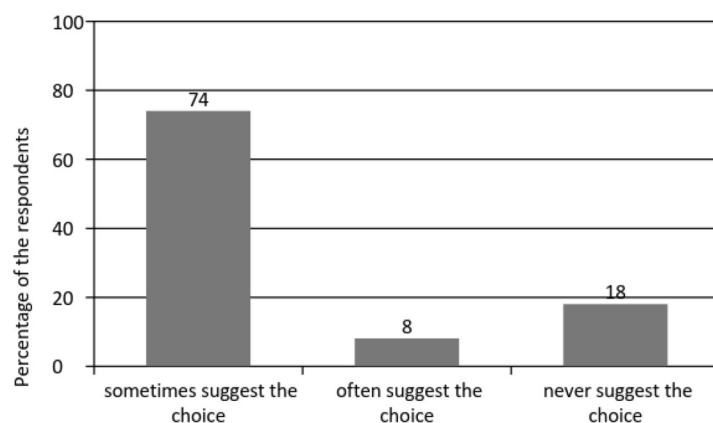
82% of the students admit that their VLS have been modified or slightly modified since they undertook studies; only 18% state that they use the same patterns. Such changes must be connected with changes in the process of learning and the demands of academic teachers. That is why it is worth analysing factors that contributed to the change of VLS.

My VLS....

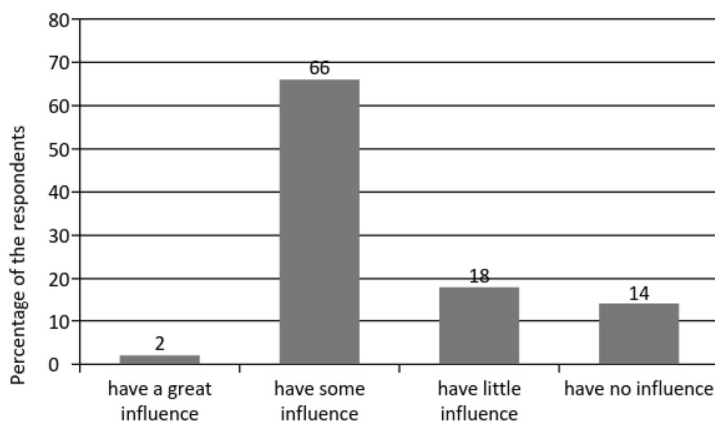
QUESTIONS 6–9 3°

The last part of the analysis is devoted to final research questions 6–10 covering additional aspects of the problem.

It is also worth analyzing whether the academic teachers' advice in this matter does have an impact on the applied strategies. The research shows that in most cases (84%) the teachers' suggestions influence the students' choice moderately or to a very little extent. In the case of 14% of the students, teachers have no impact at all on their choice of strategies, though 2% admit that their lecturers' opinions on this aspect of

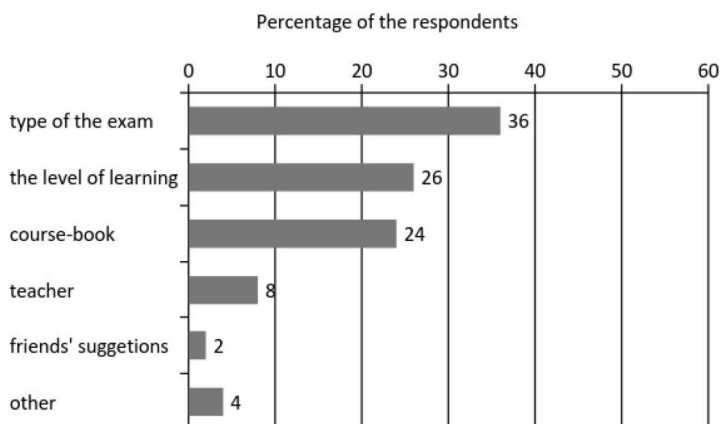
As far as my VLS are concerned, academic teachers...

Academic teachers _____ on VLS I use.



the process do influence the selection of VLS. Such a situation may result from the fact that academic teachers do not put special stress on teaching strategies (though 82% of academic teachers try to have some impact on their students' choice) and thus they cannot have a significant impact on student choices. On the other hand, at this level of learning the students probably either adapt strategies they used to apply earlier or they modify them to fit their educational needs by themselves, as being students of philology they are more experienced and conscious learners. However, analysis of the strategies they select may lead to the conclusion that their knowledge of strategies is not fully developed, as their choice is limited to most traditional VLS.

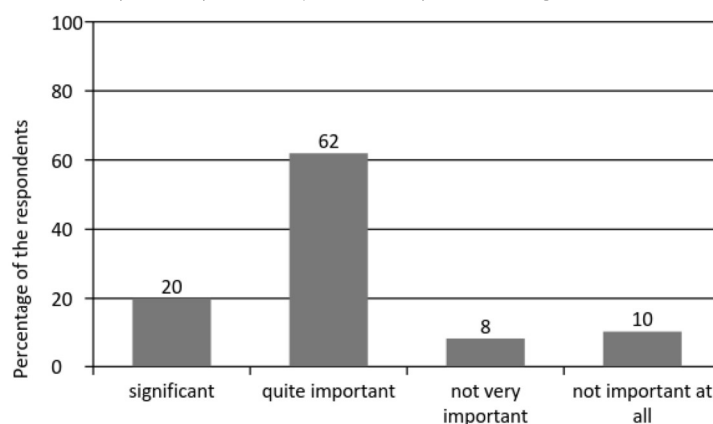
Other factors influencing the choice of VLS



Apart from the influence of academic teachers on the choice of VLS, students were asked to indicate what other factors influence their choice. It turns out that the most important factor influencing VLS selection is the type of exam they are preparing for, which proves the determining role of the washback of exams on the process of teaching and learning. The students also value the role of the level of learning – the very fact that they admit the change of VLS in connection with undertaking studies proves that this is an important factor. As evident from the questionnaire, 24% of them think that course-books are also important. This probably means that students choose strategies which are necessary to complete the tasks included in the books.

The most interesting result is that as compared to other factors, academic teachers have relatively little impact on the choice of strategy although, as discussed earlier, students admit that they influence their decision to some extent. Yet, their peers' suggestions (2%) do not seem important for the choice.

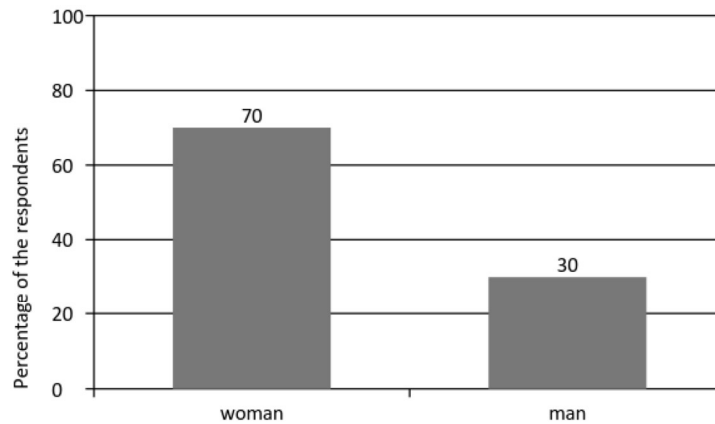
The importance of VLS for the process of teaching and learning



For a majority of the students (82%), VLS are extremely important (20%) or very important (62%) for the process of learning. Only 10% of students cannot see any role of VLS in the process; 8% think that they are not very significant. This result reflects the importance of vocabulary in the process of learning. Strategies are probably treated as a tool to achieve the aim regarded by learners as crucial in the process of studies.

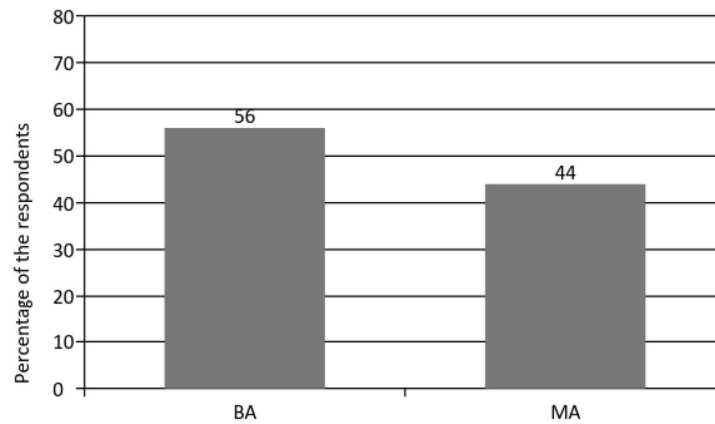
The results in the light of background information; gender, age, type of studies

Gender



The gender of the participants did not influence the results of the survey, the difference between the answers to the questionnaire presented by men and women is not statistically important.

Type of studies



On the basis of the chi-test there is no reason to say that the type of studies influences the choice of particular VLS in a significant way. It is noteworthy, however, that BA students tend to apply social and cognitive strategies more often than MA students, which may result from the fact

they still stick to habits developed at school and have not modified their VLS yet.

CONCLUSIONS 3°

Based on the data gathered and the foregoing analysis, it is possible to draw a number of conclusions and thus answer the questions posed at the beginning. As it turns out, vocabulary learning plays a significant part in the process of studies for both BA and MA students and seems to them less difficult than achieving grammar competence. Generally, students tend to consider getting to know the elements of the language more difficult than making progress at skills. To explain this, however, it would be necessary to analyse the vocabulary range presented in their oral and written productions, which requires a separate study.

On average, students define knowledge of the word as knowing its meaning in the first place, then they mention knowing its pronunciation and spellings.

As far as the major issue of the research is concerned, it must be noted firstly that students regard VLS as important and they actually use all types of strategies, out of which the most popular with them (especially with the group of BA students) are determination strategies and least important are metacognitive strategies. As their choice of strategies is influenced mostly by the type of the exam they are preparing for, the level of learning, the course book, and finally by academic teachers, it may mean that those strategies are most useful and effective for them to fulfill the educational expectations of the university. The use of these strategies is typical of the traditional way of learning as it involves using bilingual dictionaries, determining the parts of speech of unknown words, or asking teachers and peers for explanation. Strategies demanding autonomy, e.g. some memory strategies such as organizing new words in groups, or cognitive strategies like making their own dictionaries are much less frequently used. On the basis of the research it may be stated that students are not used to self-assessment as they very rarely test their lexical competence. Neither do they often plan their own lexical development, which may be a drawback especially for prospective teachers who are supposed to be responsible for the language development of their students, and thus first be able to organize the process for themselves.

Hence, the autonomy of learners interpreted as the ability to organize, plan and monitor their own work needs to be developed, as the ability to act in a creative and responsible way is considered to be one of the most crucial learning outcomes in the area of social competences the students are supposed to achieve during the process of learning.

At the same time it may be argued that it is the task of academic teachers to make students aware of different VLS that may be used in order to develop lexical competence. As it seems the teachers not frequently enough make students familiar with the strategies though they influence to some extent student decisions on their choice. Moreover, it is quite probable that if academic teachers treated teaching VLS as an integral part of their classes they could have a bigger impact on selection. It should also be stressed that the techniques of testing and assessing vocabulary at examinations are of great importance, as this is the factor having the most significant impact on their choice.

The above mentioned conclusions should be taken as tentative at this point. Having larger groups of students from different universities might produce better and stronger results. The opinions of academic teachers also need to be thoroughly examined in the future to look at the problem from their perspective and examine the interplay between the techniques of teaching and strategies of learning.

Thus extending the study and eliciting the above-mentioned data would result in a better understanding of the problem.

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VOCABULARY LEARNING STRATEGIES (VLS) USED BY STUDENTS OF PHILOLOGY

Summary

The aim of the present paper is to explore the problem of Vocabulary Learning Strategies (VLS) used by philology students. In the first part of the paper theoretical issues connected with VLS are analysed, in the second the results of research conducted at one state university is presented to show what VLS are selected by the students and what factors influence the choice. The paper also aims at showing the role of vocabulary learning during the teaching/learning process of the students of philology.

Key words: Vocabulary Learning Strategies (VLS), social strategies, memory strategies, cognitive strategies, metacognitive strategies

STRATEGIE PRZYSWAJANIA SŁOWNICTWA (VLS) PRZEZ STUDENTÓW FILOLOGII

Streszczenie

Celem artykułu jest zaprezentowanie problematyki strategii przyswajania słownictwa przez studentów filologii. W części pierwszej przedstawiono najważniejsze aspekty zagadnienia, w drugim wyniki badań empirycznych, których celem było ustalenie, jakich strategii używają studenci filologii i jakie czynniki determinują ich wybór.

Słowa kluczowe: Strategie przyswajania słownictwa, strategie społeczne, strategie zapamiętywania, strategie kognitywne, strategie metakognitywne