



UNIVERSIDAD DE QUINTANA ROO

DIVISIÓN DE CIENCIAS POLÍTICAS Y HUMANIDADES

The importance of vocabulary among students  
of the English Major at the UQROO

TESIS

Para obtener el grado de  
LICENCIADA EN LENGUA INGLESA

PRESENTAN

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LICENCIADA EN LENGUA INGLESA

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## **ABSTRACT**

This study set out to investigate the importance of vocabulary among students of the English Language Major at the University of Quintana Roo, Mexico; i.e., beliefs, attitudes and vocabulary learning strategies and the possible relationship among these three main variables. The participants were 79 students divided into five groups; each one representing one year of language study at university. The instruments were the vocabulary levels test (VLT) by Schmitt (2001); a questionnaire about beliefs, attitudes and vocabulary learning strategies, and selected learner interviews. The results showed that more importance about vocabulary was generally observed in the first years of study at university. Most importantly, a relationship was found between students' beliefs, attitudes and their vocabulary learning strategies. The results from the interviews with poor and good language learners showed a qualitative difference in the use of vocabulary learning strategies, i.e. their beliefs and attitudes towards vocabulary may determine the use of vocabulary strategy use. Also regarding teaching implications, it can be suggested that vocabulary learning strategies should be encouraged inside and outside the language classroom. Last but not least, more research in this realm should be emphasised.



## **Chapter 1 Introduction**

This chapter includes four concise sections designed to provide an overview of the present study. The first section provides the background of the investigation (e.g. the importance of vocabulary among students of the English Language Major) as well as the relevance of the study. In section two, we talked about the context of the investigation (e.g. brief information about the University of Quintana Roo and a background of the English Language Major such as the curriculum. After that, section three is about the purpose and scope of the investigation. Finally, the fourth section describes the organization of the five chapters that comprise this thesis.

### **1.1 Background of the investigation and the relevance of the study**

In our interest of the importance of vocabulary among students of the University of Quintana Roo, we consider that vocabulary is not only essential for communicating but also necessary for explaining concepts and use more words. Therefore, words are exciting, essential, and the lack of them leads to the feeling of insecurity of a foreign language speaker in the foreign language environment. Studies said that some people admire writers and scientists for the range of vocabulary. Although, we all learn words through the whole of our lives and strive for excellence in using as vast number of vocabulary items as possible.

It is relevant to mention that some factors have been found to be related to the importance of vocabulary learning such as attitudes, beliefs and vocabulary learning strategies. Those factors are inevitably involved in learning vocabulary. Furthermore, vocabulary is a component of any language, no matter how well the student learns grammar. Finally, research into the field vocabulary is the central element in the language which links all skills.

### **1.2 Context of the investigation**

Chetumal (Chactemàal which means: "Place of the red wood" Modern Maya) (coordinates: 18°30'N 88°18'W / 18.5, -88.3) is a city on the east coast of

the Yucatán Peninsula in Mexico. It is the capital of the state of Quintana Roo and the municipal seat of the Municipality of Othón P. Blanco. In 2005 it had a population of 136,825 people.

The city is situated on the western side of Chetumal Bay, near the mouth of the Río Hondo. Chetumal is an important port for the region and operates as Mexico's main trading gateway with the neighboring country of Belize. Goods are transported via a road connecting Chetumal with Belize City to the south, and also via coastal merchant ships. Because of its location on the Caribbean coastline, it is vulnerable to tropical cyclones; Hurricane Janet and Hurricane Dean, both Category 5 storms, made landfall near Chetumal in 1955 and 2007 respectively.

The University of Quintana Roo was created pursuant to a decree issued on May 24, 1991. The University's creation was motivated by an old desire that the inhabitants of Quintana Roo had for a higher education centre intended to prepare professionals in the areas of social science, the humanities, basic science and the technological areas that are in greater demand, according to today's high standards of competitiveness.

In order to make this educational centre a reality, it was necessary to broaden the invaluable experience that had been gained in the past seventy years in the sphere of higher education, and some innovative concepts were incorporated with the aim of making this centre a university of excellence in Mexico and the Caribbean basin.

In accordance with the provisions of Article 3 of the University's internal regulations, the objectives of the University of Quintana Roo are the following:

- To provide higher education through bachelor's, master's and doctoral degrees, refresher and specialization courses, with the use of several teaching forms, and with the aim of preparing the professionals, professors and researchers that the State of Quintana Roo, the region and the country need. The above will be achieved by providing individuals with

comprehensive education, who will also have a humanistic, social and scientific attitude, an entrepreneurial and innovative spirit eager to achieve objectives; oriented towards personal growth, committed to the advancement of human beings, to an appreciation of the nation and the awareness of social responsibility.

- To organize, promote and broaden new knowledge by means of research into science, the humanities, social affairs, culture, and technological development, with the aim of meeting the needs of the society of Quintana Roo and the Mexican society at large.
- To organize, promote and undertake programmes and activities connected with artistic creativity, the promotion and extension of the benefits of culture, which result in advancement in knowledge and development.
- To contribute to the preservation, enrichment and promotion of the scientific, cultural, and natural heritage of the State of Quintana Roo, and that of the region and the country, whose especially social nature encourages the participation of society with its social views, demands, and requirements. With a diversified financial system that not only favours the generation of the University's own income, but it also encourages greater social participation with the purpose of providing the University with funds.

#### The BA in English at the UQROO

As we mentioned before the UQROO, located in the Peninsula of Yucatan, was founded in 1991. At that time its main motto was 'the New Mexican University for its learner-centredness Methodology, which was an innovative approach in state universities across the country. The flexibility of the curriculum was supposed to allow learners to move freely through their studies by completing course credits. Nevertheless, problems arose in the BA in English programme in that many learners had limited English proficiency when entering university. Therefore, if they failed, for example, English I, they were not entitled to move on to English II. Nowadays, this problem is still an issue that has not been sorted out as it is necessary to tackle this at earlier educational levels.

The BA programme in English consists of forty-seven courses that are taken over five years of study (see Appendix A). The courses are divided into three main blocks; (1) commoncore courses for all majors at the UQROO, (2) common-core courses for majors in the Humanities, and (3) specific courses for the English-majors. As can be seen from the curriculum, this programme is mostly oriented to prepare teachers of English. Learners can take several optional courses such as French or English-Spanish-English translation and psycholinguistics or morphology. In fact, eighty per percent of graduate students are currently teaching English, whereas ten per cent are employed in tourism services and another ten per cent in translation.

The teaching methodology employed in this English major mostly seems to be framed within the so-called communicative approach (see Littlewood, 1981; Richards and Rodgers,1986), which is also the main approach adopted at secondary and high-school educational levels and approved by the MoEd. Broadly speaking, other methods and techniques include task-based learning (see Willis, 1996), which is usually incorporated into the coursebooks themselves such as the *Tapestry of Language Learning Series* by Scarcella and Oxford (1992), which is theoretically framed within Vygotsky's Zone of Proximate Development. More importantly, instruction in the area of LLS appears to be of great importance for both teachers and learners. Implementation of learning strategy training has taken several forms in this English major.

### **1.3 Purpose and scope of the investigation**

The current study attempts to investigate the importance of vocabulary among students of the English language major at the University of Quintana Roo. In order to investigate this, we explored three important variables as beliefs, attitudes and vocabulary learning strategies. Similarly, we stated four research questions which are the main points to take into account to achieve the purpose of our investigation. These are the following questions that gave us the status of vocabulary; i.e., how the learners perceive the importance of vocabulary while

learning English, the second one is to know the relationship between the lexical proficiency of learners and their perceptions and attitudes towards vocabulary learning. The third one is to look into the relationship between the lexical proficiency of learners and the vocabulary learning strategies they use. Finally, the last one is to know about the most frequently beliefs, attitudes, and vocabulary learning strategies. Most importantly, this study aims to investigate not only the importance of vocabulary among students, but also lexical proficiency, beliefs, attitudes, and vocabulary learning strategies. Besides, we look into the relationship among these four variables.

This study is not intended to measure vocabulary size or lexical proficiency of the students. Since, as we stated before, the main objective is to know the importance of vocabulary related with the beliefs, attitudes, and, vocabulary learning strategies. However, we did not need to explore the effectiveness of vocabulary learning strategies.

#### **1.4 Organization of the thesis**

This thesis aims to present the relevance of vocabulary among students of the English Language Major at the University of Quintana Roo, as well as, the relationship between beliefs, attitudes, and vocabulary learning strategies. This thesis comprises five chapters. The first chapter, the present one, sets up the background and relevance of the study followed by the purpose and scope of the investigation. Also, the organization of the thesis is presented.

Chapter two is concerned with the review of literature. It starts with some definitions about what is vocabulary and the importance of it in L2 teaching and learning. It continues with the definitions of language learning strategies, meanings of attitudes and beliefs. More importantly, at the end of this chapter, the research questions are provided.

Chapter three is designated to provide the method of the study. It begins with a brief description of the subjects' background information. After that, we

continued with the instruments employed. In addition to this, a description of the procedures of the data collection is provided along with data analysis.

Chapter four looks into the results and discussion of the main study. It is divided into five sections. The first section describes the perception of the importance of vocabulary while learning English. Section two presents the relationship between learners' lexical proficiency (LP) and their beliefs (B), attitudes (A), and vocabulary learning strategies (VLS). Section three explains the relationship between the students' beliefs (B), attitudes (A) and vocabulary learning strategies (VLS). Section four is about the most frequently reported beliefs, attitudes and vocabulary learning strategies. At last, section five describes the selected cases of good and poor learners.

Finally, chapter five explains the summary of results of the main study. In addition, this chapter states the limitations of the study along with some recommendations for further research and ends with some pedagogical implications.

## Chapter 2 Review of Literature

In this chapter we present some relevant concepts about L2 vocabulary acquisition/learning. Besides, it provides the importance of vocabulary in L2 learning, definitions of language learning strategies, a classification of the L2 learning strategies, and a description of the students' vocabulary learning strategies. Moreover, we provide some definitions of attitudes, students' attitudes toward vocabulary learning, and definitions of beliefs. Finally, students' beliefs about vocabulary learning are discussed.

### 2.1 What is vocabulary?

First of all, it is important to define the term vocabulary. Bauer (1998, p. viii) mentions that "*Vocabulary is about words- where they come from, how they change, how they relate to each other and how we use them to view the world.*" Thus, knowing a lot of words is very important because in that way students can communicate and they understand readings better, conversations and listening. The more words you know, the better your chance of understanding or making yourself understood. And they will get involved in the world of the English language. Besides, vocabulary can be defined as the words teaching in the foreign language.

It is very important to know that vocabulary is a significant part of a language since it is a cultural phenomenon as well as a linguistic one according to French (1983). The collection of words in a language seems unlimited and the new combinations in which they occur are almost endless. Therefore, Larson (1972) discussed that a good storage of words is crucial for understanding and communication and in L2 learning of vocabulary is not just learning a word once and for all but learning the variety of information that goes with it. Moreover, the vocabulary of a language is related to differences of awareness and thought in several cultures than is grammar or phonology. This means, that in studying vocabulary the learner not only must cope with structural differences between

languages, but also with differences in the way meanings are organized by language and culture, or in effect, in the way life is lived.

To sum up, vocabulary is more than lists of target language words. As a part of the language system vocabulary is strongly interrelated with grammar. In fact, it is possible to divide the lexical system of most languages into “grammatical words”, such as prepositions, articles, adverbs, and so on, and content words (Nunan, p. 101).

It is useful to distinguish to types of vocabulary: receptive vocabulary and productive vocabulary. Receptive vocabulary contains all the words that you understand when you read or listen, but which you do not use (or cannot remember) in your own writing and speaking. Productive vocabulary is all the words you understand, plus all the words that you can use yourself. Your productive vocabulary, in English and your own language, is probably much smaller than your receptive vocabulary. The more you work on learning a word, the more likely it is that it will become part of your productive vocabulary.

Furthermore, it is paramount to mention how receptive and productive vocabulary has been defined since some books still use passive and active vocabulary. In this respect, Waring (1999) states that *“the lack of clear definitions of what constitutes an active or passive vocabulary has led to large variations in interpretations of what these terms mean within assessment. RPV (Receptive and Productive Vocabulary) have been defined in relation to the language skills of reading and listening and speaking and writing. One of the earliest descriptions of active and passive vocabulary was that of Morgan and Oberdeck who said that an individual’s active vocabulary includes words of such familiarity as would allow an understanding of them as would permit their use in speech and writing; his passive vocabulary includes those of only such familiarity as would allow and understanding of them as they occur in reading material or hearing in a lecture.”*

On the other hand, as French (1983) puts it, *“The teacher must provide definitions in English, using words the class can understand. Vocabulary lessons for the first stage of English instruction use pictures for showing meanings. In some classes for beginners, teachers use all three ways to show the meanings of*



*vocabulary words: pictures, explanations in the students` own language, definitions in simple English, using vocabulary that the students already know.”*

Vocabulary is everywhere because its connects to the systems of phonology and orthography through the actual forms of the words, to the systems of morphology and grammar through the ways that the word enters into grammatical structures and grammatical changes to the word’s form and to the systems of meaning through its range of general and specific meanings and uses. (Cook, p. 62)

As we said before it may be difficult to teach vocabulary but there are many different resources that can help teachers to encourage students to learn vocabulary. Sometimes, it may happen that most of the teachers do not know how increase the vocabulary of the students but they can use some examples of vocabulary teaching such as:

***Realia.*** *One way of presenting words is to bring the things they represent into the classroom-by bringing ‘Realia’ into the room. The teacher holds up the object (or points to it) says the word and then get students to repeat it.*

***Pictures.*** *This can be board drawings, wall pictures and charts, flash cards, magazine pictures, and any other non-technical visual representation. Pictures can be used to explain the meaning of vocabulary items. They can illustrate concepts such as above and opposite just as easily as hats, coats, walking sticks, cars, smiles etc.*

***Mime, action, and gesture.*** *It is often impossible to explain the meaning of words and grammar either through the use of realia or in pictures. Actions, in particular, are probably better explained by mime.*

**Contrast.** *We saw how words exist because of the sense relation and this can be used to teach meaning. We can present the meaning of empty by contrasting it with full, cold by contrasting it with hot, etc. We may present these concepts with pictures or mime, and by drawing attention to the contrasts in meaning we ensure our students' understanding.*" (Harmer 1991, p. 23)

## **2.2. The importance of vocabulary in L2 teaching and learning.**

The importance of vocabulary in language teaching and learning has varied according to the trends in applied and general linguistics. Paul Meara is the most cited researcher as he stated that vocabulary was a neglected area in language teaching. However, more recently vocabulary has become an essential part in this process. Harmer (1991) also pointed out that if grammar is the skeleton of language, then vocabulary should be its flesh. What follows is a brief discussion of importance of vocabulary in L2 learning, followed by a look at the role of vocabulary in the different teaching methods.

### **2.2.1 The role of vocabulary in L2 learning.**

Vocabulary is a vital aspect in language, because it appears in every skill of language listening, speaking, reading and writing skill. Many people realize that their vocabulary is limited so that they have difficulties in expressing their idea. Mastering vocabulary is very important for the students who learn English as a foreign language. That is why everybody who learns English or a certain language should know the words. The mastery of vocabulary can support them in speaking when they are communicating to people can write and translate the meaning of words when they definite English. If they do not know the meaning of words, they will not be able to speak, write and translate anything English. The students can be said gaining progress in English, the mastery of vocabulary. <sup>1</sup>

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<sup>1</sup> FARISKA, H. (2010) Teaching and education faculty. English education program.. Retrieved October 12, 2012, from <http://universityofibnkhaldunbogor-indonesia.blogspot.mx/2010/01/importance-of-vocabulary-in-english.htm>

Learning vocabulary is one of the first steps of learning a second language, yet one never reaches the last step of vocabulary acquisition. Whether in one's native language or a second language, the acquisition of new vocabulary is a continuous process, Read (2000) also claimed that for native speakers, although the most rapid growth occurs in childhood, vocabulary knowledge continues to develop naturally in adult life in response to new experiences, inventions, concepts, social trends and opportunities for learning. For learners on the other hand, acquisition of vocabulary is typically a more conscious and demanding process. Even, at an advanced level learners are aware of limitations in their knowledge of second language or (L2) words.

Furthermore, L2 learning of vocabulary is not just learning a word once and for all but learning the range of information that goes with it. It is unlikely that everything about a word is learnt simultaneously; we might not know its spelling; we might be missing some of the components of its meaning; we certainly will not know all the word combination in which it can occur. (Cook, p. 71)

### **2.2.2 The role of vocabulary in the different language teaching methods**

In this part we mention about the role of the vocabulary and its relation to the different language teaching methods. The most important thing is that the vocabulary is essential in all the methods. It is relevant to say that each method use the vocabulary in a different way according to Larsen-Freeman (2000).

#### ***The Grammar-Translation Method***

The use of the grammar translation method has a relation with vocabulary because students need to know many words of the target language. Thus, students memorize native language equivalents for foreign language vocabulary words. In this method vocabulary and grammar are emphasized. What follows are some techniques related to vocabulary.

Fill in the blanks. Students are given a series of sentences with words missing. They fill in the blanks with the new vocabulary items or with items of particular grammar type, such as prepositions or verbs with different tenses.

Memorization. Students are given a list of target language vocabulary words and their native language equivalents and are asked to memorize them.

Use words in sentences. In order to show that students understand the meaning and use of a new vocabulary item, they make up sentences in which they use the new words.

### ***The Direct Method***

The direct method aims to have students learn how to communicate in the target language and vocabulary is a necessary tool. When teacher introduces a new target language word or phrase, he uses realia, pictures, pantomime and never translates. Besides, students practice vocabulary by using new words in complete sentences. Therefore, this method has a strong relation with vocabulary.

### ***The Audio-Lingual Method***

This interesting method make that students over learn the target language. Therefore vocabulary is an important tool for this method, since new vocabulary and structures are presented through dialogs. Vocabulary is also contextualized within dialogs. It is however, limited since the emphasis is placed on the acquisition of the patterns of the language.

### ***The Silent Way***

The silent way is a method that is for advanced students who use charts for developing this. Thus the relationship between the silent way and vocabulary is clear because students use charts that contain functional vocabulary of English. Students have the responsibility to learn vocabulary and increase their knowledge about new words

### ***Suggestopedia***

The method of suggestopedia is developed in the classroom in which students are as comfortable as possible. The texts students work from are handouts containing lengthy dialogs in the target language. Next to the dialog is a translation in the students' native language. There are also some notes on the vocabulary and grammar.

Vocabulary is emphasized. Claims about the success of the method often focus on the large number of words that can be acquired. One of the techniques is role play where students have to create their own conversation using vocabulary and perform this in front of the class.

### ***Community Language Learning***

This method considers their students as whole persons. Whole persons learning means those teachers consider not only their students' feelings and intellect. Students learn how to use the target language and the target language has a direct relation with vocabulary.

### ***The Total Physical Response Method***

The total physical response is about the importance of the listening comprehension skill and students who listen to the conversations or dialogs learn English vocabulary. It means that Students respond to commands that require physical movement. It also can be used to practice and teach various things. It is well suited to teaching classroom language and other vocabulary connected with actions. It can be used to teach imperatives and various tenses and aspects. It is also useful for story-telling.

### ***The Communicative Approach***

This method is related to vocabulary because the objective is to be communicatively competent. Thus, the use of target language and vocabulary help the student to be a good communicator. The target language is a vehicle for classroom communication, not just the object of study. This method is related to

vocabulary since learners should be able to go to foreign country, prepared for reality they encounter there. They also are able to cope and survive in a variety of everyday situations. Classroom should provide opportunities for rehearsal of real-life situations and provide opportunity for real communication. In the classroom emphasis on creative role-plays, simulations, surveys, and projects all these produce spontaneity and improvisation not just repetition and drills.

### **2.3 Definitions of language learning strategies**

We need to know what a strategy is since most of the learners may use them in order to learn and use a language. In our view, strategies consist of behaviours and communicative procedures which learners use to facilitate the learning or the language acquisition. It is important to have knowledge of strategies because the better awareness you have of what you are doing, if you are conscious of the processes underlying the learning that you are involved in, then learning will be more effective. (Numan, 1999, p. 171)

According to Oxford (1990, p. 7) it is essential *“to understand learning strategies, let us go back to the basic term, strategy. This word comes from the ancient Greek term strategia meaning generalship or the art of war. More specifically, strategy involves the optimal management of troops, ships, or aircraft in a planned campaign. The strategy concept, without its aggressive and competitive trappings, has become influential in education, where it has taken on a new meaning and has been transformed into learning strategies. One commonly used technical definition says that learning strategies are operations employed by the learner to aid the acquisition, storage, retrieval, and use of information.”* Furthermore, for many years, however, programs that prepared language teachers gave little attention to techniques for helping students learn vocabulary.

We found another definition about learning strategy, which is important for students to know and interesting to us as well. Oxford (1990, p. 8) defines learning strategies as *“specific actions taken by the learner to make learning easier, faster,*

*more enjoyable, more self-directed, and more transferable to new situations.” Numan(1999, p. 172) state that Rebecca Oxford, one of the leading teachers, and researchers in the language learning strategies field, argues that “these strategies are important for two reasons. In the first place, strategies are tools for active, self-directed involvement, which is essential for developing communicative competence”. Secondly, learners who have developed appropriate learning strategies have greater self-confidence and learn more effectively.”* For that reason, she identifies twelve key features of strategies, which are the following:

- *Contribute to the main goal, communicative competence*
- *Allow learners to become more self- directed*
- *Expand the role of the teachers*
- *Are problem-oriented*
- *Are specific actions taken by the learner*
- *Involve many actions taken by the learner, not just the cognitive*
- *Support learning both directly and indirectly*
- *Are not always observable*
- *Are often conscious*
- *Can be taught*
- *Are flexible*
- *Are influenced by a variety of factors*

In addition, these features are very important to take into account for improving and applying any learning strategies. In this way, students will be able to identify if they are effective for different purposes.

### **2.3.1 Classification of L2 learning strategies**

In this section, we look at the Oxford’s strategy classification system (also called taxonomy or categorization) that Rebecca Oxford proposed. We consider this taxonomy comprehensive and practical since she outlined a host of learning

and communication strategies that have been successful among learners. (Brown 1994, p. 131-133)

**Oxford's strategy classification system**

**Direct Strategies: Memory, Cognitive, and Compensation Strategies**

<b>I. Memory</b>	A. Creating mental linkages	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Grouping</li> <li>2. Association/elaborating</li> <li>3. Placing new words into a context</li> </ol>
	B. Applying images and sounds	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Using imagery</li> <li>2. Semantic mapping</li> <li>3. Using key words</li> <li>4. Representing sounds in memory</li> </ol>
	C. Reviewing well	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Structured viewing</li> </ol>
	D. Employing	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Using physical response or sensation</li> <li>2. Using mechanical techniques</li> </ol>
<b>II. Cognitive</b>	A. Practicing	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Repeating</li> <li>2. Formally practicing with sounds and writings systems</li> <li>3. Recognizing and using formulas and patterns</li> <li>4. Recombining</li> <li>5. Practicing naturalistically</li> </ol>
	B. Receiving and sending messages	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Getting the idea quickly</li> <li>2. Using resources for receiving and sending messages.</li> </ol>
	C. Analyzing and reasoning	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Reasoning deductively</li> <li>2. Analyzing expressions</li> <li>3. Analyzing contrastively (across languages)</li> <li>4. Translating</li> <li>5. Transferring</li> </ol>
	D. Creating structure	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Taking notes</li> <li>2. Summarizing</li> </ol>



for input and output 3. Highlighting

A. Guessing intelligently

1. Using linguistic clues
2. Using other clues

### III. Compensation

B. Overcoming limitations in speaking and writing

1. Switching to the mother tongue
2. Getting help
3. Using mime or gesture
4. Avoiding communication partially or totally
5. Selecting the topic
6. Adjusting or approximating the message
7. Coining words
8. Using a circumlocution or synonym

- Memory strategies, which help students to store and retrieve information.
- Cognitive strategies, which enable learners to understand and produce new language.
- Compensation strategies, which allow learners to communicate despite deficiencies in their language knowledge.

### Indirect Strategies: Metacognitive, Affective, and Social Strategies

A. Centering your learning

1. Overview and linking with already known material
2. Paying attention
3. Delaying speech production to focus on listening

### I. Metacognitive

B. Arranging and planning your learning

1. Finding out about language learning
2. Organizing
3. Setting goals and objectives
4. Identifying the purpose of a language task (purposeful listening/reading/speaking/writing)
5. Planning for a language task
6. Seeking practice opportunities

C. Evaluating your learning

1. Self-monitoring
2. Self-evaluating

	A. Lowering your anxiety	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Using progressive relaxation, deep breathing, or meditation</li> <li>2. Using music</li> <li>3. Using laughter</li> </ol>
<b>II. Affective</b>	B. Encouraging yourself	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Making positive statements</li> <li>2. Taking risks wisely</li> <li>3. Rewarding yourself</li> </ol>
	C. Taking your emotional temperature	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Listening to your body</li> <li>2. Using a checklist</li> <li>3. Writing a language learning diary</li> <li>4. Discussing your feelings with someone else</li> </ol>
	A. Asking questions	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Asking for clarification or verification</li> <li>2. Asking for correction</li> </ol>
<b>III. Social</b>	B. Cooperating with others	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Cooperating with others</li> <li>2. Cooperating with proficient users of the new language</li> </ol>
	C. Empathizing with others	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Developing cultural understanding</li> <li>2. Becoming aware of others' thoughts and feelings</li> </ol>

- Metacognitive strategies, which allow learners to control their own learning through organizing, planning, and evaluating.
- Affective, which help learners gain control over their emotions, attitudes, motivations, and values.
- Social strategies, which help learners to interact with other people.

Oxford draws a distinction between direct and indirect strategies. Direct strategies include such things as memorizing, analyzing and reasoning, and guessing intelligently. As the name suggests, these are specific procedures that learners can use to internalize the language. Indirect strategies, on the other hand, include things such as evaluating one's learning, taking steps to power one's anxiety, and cooperating with others.

Besides, we thought that some of these L2 learning strategies can be related to vocabulary learning. For instance, memory: creating mental linkages (for example, placing new words into a context), applying images and sounds (for example, representing sounds in memory), employing action (for example, using physical response or sensation). Cognitive: creating structures for input and output (For example, taking notes). Compensation: overcoming limitations in speaking and writing (for example, using mime or gesture).

On the other hand, we have some indirect strategies that are related to vocabulary learning. Metacognitive: centering your learning (for example, paying attention). These examples can be helpful for learners who want to learn and have a good vocabulary. (Numan 1999, p. 172)

### **2.3.2 Students strategies about vocabulary learning**

Cook (2001, p. 66) claimed that students are often acutely aware of their ignorance of vocabulary in a way they are unaware of their ignorance of grammar and phonology. When you want to say something in a second language, it's the words that you feel you struggle for rather than grammar or pronunciation.

Language learners may value some language learning strategies which their teachers may try to discourage. For example, students from a culture where rote learning and memorization are widely used may think that these are useful strategies in learning English. However, their teacher may come from a culture where such strategies are not valued and may try to discourage their use by learners.

There are no universally useful strategies and they contribute to vocabulary learning in different ways. Students use a number of strategies, often simultaneously. The efficiency of vocabulary learning depends on how students combine individual strategies. If students combine and employ individual strategies from different groups they will be more successful in developing the target

language lexicon. Thus, the ideal combination would be that of strategies from all four groups.

These strategies involve planned, active and motivated learning and exposure to language outside the classroom (media).

Examples of strategies that most of the students use:

- Word grouping
- Making notes of vocabulary while reading for pleasure/watching TV
- Word cards / Leafing through a dictionary
- Planning
- Recording and listening
- Regular revision

In this group cognitive strategies which include direct manipulation of lexical items are connected to meta-cognitive strategies that make the use of cognitive ones more effective. The aim is communicative use of vocabulary. <sup>2</sup>

On the other hand, Vann and Abraham (1990) studied the strategies of unsuccessful language learners on a variety of different kinds of tasks and found that what distinguished unsuccessful learners was not the lack of appropriate strategies but the inability to choose the right strategy for the task. This is true because even most of the students did not know the learning strategies and they study without a purpose. However, most of the learners study with a high motivation and it means that high motivation is equal to high strategy use.

## **2.4 Definitions of attitudes**

Attitudes are defined as a disposition or tendency to respond positively or negatively towards a certain thing, idea, object, person, and situation. They are

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<sup>2</sup> TE editor (2011). Vocabulary and autonomy. Retrieved December 10, 2012, from <http://www.teachingenglish.org.uk/articles/vocabulary-autonomy>.

closely related to our opinions and beliefs and are based upon our experiences. Therefore, attitudes represent an important link between cognitive and social psychology. On the other hand, attitude is especially relevant to management. Besides, attitudes are related to behaviour, when an experience is constantly repeated a change of set is brought about which affects many central neurons and tends to spread over other parts of the central nervous system. These changes in the general set of the central nervous system temper the process of reception; they lead to the information of certain general modes of receiving and integrating stimulus. In terms of the subjective life these general sets are called attitudes. In the more specific sense are essentially motor sets of the organism toward general or specific stimulus. We understand attitude as a process of individual consciousness which determines real or possible activity of the individual in the social world. (Rod, 1994)

Brown (1994) adds that attitudes are developed in childhood and are the results of the parents' and peers' attitudes, of contact with people who are "different" in all ways; that is, interactive factors in the human experience. These attitudes form part of one's perception of self, of others, and of the culture. Besides culture is important part of the attitudes of each person since we as children adopt a model of attitudes of our parents. Besides, motivation is part of the construction of certain attitudes. Therefore it is important to take into account the function of the attitudes to achieve success in the vocabulary learning. (Wright, 1987)

Attitude is an essential part of the process of learning a second language, since this a need for the learner to want to take control and responsibility for learning. Besides, if learners have a positive attitude towards English vocabulary, this will help them to learn the language. Thus, Naiman (1996) states that attitudes may be the best overall predictors of success and these have influence in second language learning. Besides, attitude is made up of the beliefs that a person accumulates over his life time and each person turns his attitudes in negative or positive. Moreover, attitude is a permanent system of evaluations, emotions, and direct

behavioural tendencies, since they are organized ways of thinking, and acting in relation to facts and environment of the people, and they help influence our way of life. Since attitude is a manifestation of previous social and cultural experience that includes social factors. Thus, these factors are related to the attitude of the parents toward language study and the nature of dynamic groups in the classroom. Also, Gardner (1980) quotes that the concept of attitude is a sum of man's inclinations and feelings, prejudice or bias, preconceived notions, ideas, fears, threats, and convictions about any specified object.

On the other hand, each person has hundreds of attitudes those can be in the work, school, and religion and so on. And changes in opinions can result in attitude change depending upon the presence or absence of rewards. The learning of new attitudes is no different in nature than any other verbal or motor skill, except that opinions relate to a single proposition whereas other skills involve a series of propositions. Thus, attitude change is caused by conflict among beliefs. A number of factors determine the strength of the dissonance and therefore how much effort is required to change attitudes. By manipulating these factors, attitude change can be inhibited or facilitated. Attitudes have three important components and they are the cognitive, affective and behavioural and each of these parts has a function (see figure 2.1). Thus, it is important to explain the three attitudes components. Therefore, the first component is cognitive: this consists of the beliefs, thoughts and ideas about something, the second component is affective that is about feelings or emotions that something evokes like fear, or sympathy and the third is behavioural that is about tendency or disposition to act in certain ways toward something. In addition, the components of the attitudes make us understand better the influence of the attitude that provoke in the learners.

However, the concept of attitude is very ambiguous and confusing and many researchers have a common description of attitude as a sum of three basic features such as learning, predisposition and consistency. Therefore, the concept of consistency is about the affective dimension, the concept of predisposition is

related to the interpretation of response consistency in simple words; it means that a person is predisposed to a certain degree of favourability or unfavourability. Thus, attitudes are ways of thinking, emotions that a person control it can be positive or negative. For instance a positive attitude makes a person improve and achieve their goals and negative attitude does not help the person to achieve a goal. Subsequently, attitude is an accumulation of information about experience, person, object, situation and opinion. According to attitudes, these can be positive or negative and they are evaluative. Attitudes are part of our personality and therefore these are some of the most misunderstood aspects of personality. It is then important to take into account the impact that attitudes have in our behaviour is equally to mystery. (Wright, 1987, p. 21)

### Components of attitudes

**It is generally accepted that attitudes are composed of**

- **affective** (feelings) component
- **cognitive** (beliefs) component
- **behavioural** (actual actions) component

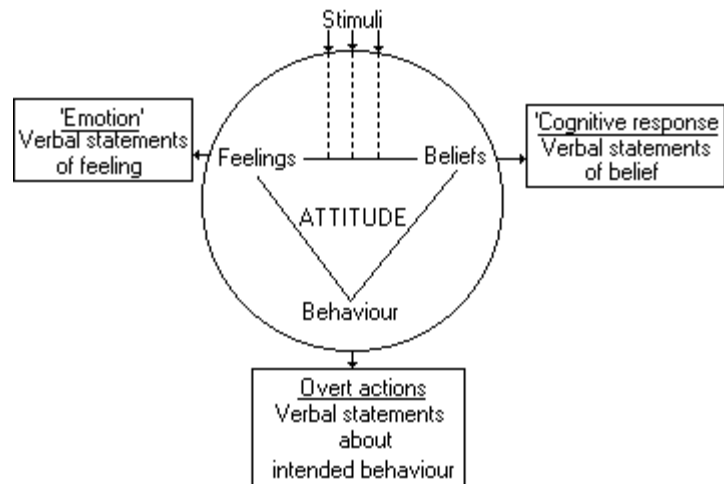


Figure 2.1 Components of attitudes

### 2.4.1 Students attitudes toward vocabulary learning

According to Edge (1994) attitude is a relevant part of the process of learning vocabulary since this has the responsibility to control their emotions, their feelings and motivation of the learners. A person's attitude is the relatively stable over

behaviour which affects his status. Moreover, attitude has a strong influence in the process of learning vocabulary since the learner has the opportunity to feel motivated and feel the emotion to learn a new vocabulary. Nevertheless, attitude has interesting sides such as negative and positive and it is important that a learner take a positive attitude when he or she wants to learn vocabulary because it may provide excellent results or bad result in the process of vocabulary learning. Thus, many students try to learn vocabulary because they are interested about learning new vocabulary and they feel motivated. They adopt a positive attitude because they feel that the result of the attitude will mean a big advance in vocabulary learning. It is important that students adopt a positive attitude and they feel happy with the process of learning. Learners should be interested in what they are learning.

It would be difficult to learn because you are with negative ideas in your mind and it is may be an obstacle for learning new vocabulary. Although learners can benefit with positive attitude and that negative attitudes may lead to decrease motivation and, in all possibility, because of decreased input and interaction, to unsuccessful attainment of proficiency. Thus, teachers need to be aware that everyone has both positive and negative attitudes, and that negative attitudes emerge from one's indirect contact to a culture a group through television, movies, news media, books, and other sources that may be less than reliable.<sup>3</sup>

Moreover, Road (1994) claimed that learners that study vocabulary of English should have positive attitude and motivation since positive attitudes make easy to learn quickly. Also attitudes have strong power in the process of learning a second language because the learner should have good attitude to face the obstacles that will be present in the process of learning vocabulary. Therefore students should have positive attitude toward vocabulary learning in English, and they will get success because they feel that they are improving and learning.

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<sup>3</sup> Individual differences in second language learning (n.d). Retrieved January 15, 2013, from [http://www.virginia.edu/mesa/Events/Pedagogy\\_Workshop/Pedagogy\\_Workshop\\_Documents/Pedagogy.lightbown.part2.pdf](http://www.virginia.edu/mesa/Events/Pedagogy_Workshop/Pedagogy_Workshop_Documents/Pedagogy.lightbown.part2.pdf)



Besides, they should have a positive attitude about vocabulary and it will be easy to learn.

As indicated above, the behaviour of a person in order to get something may be the result of the attitude and predisposition that the person has. If a learner has predisposition and have in mind a positive attitude, he will get the object and he will not find obstacles. However, if he has a negative attitude and predisposition to learn vocabulary English, he has to change his mind and take the obstacle as a challenge. It is essential to manage our attitudes and ideas about how to achieve our goals. Besides, intentionality is part of attitudes and if the learner has good intentions in the process of acquiring vocabulary, it will be easier for the learner. Moreover, some teachers talk to the learners about their attitudes and learners feel better when a teacher tells them how to develop positive attitudes. On the other hand, emotions are part of attitudes, that is, feelings make learners to increase their vocabulary, for example: a person who knows a lot of vocabulary, feel the emotion when he speaks with a native speaker since he can understand everything without any problem. Therefore, when learners want to learn vocabulary, it is essential to feel motivated and have positive attitudes since they are the guides to have success in the process of learning vocabulary. It is relevant to mention that the way in which it combines with other factors (motivation, predisposition, positive attitudes and behaviour), that contributes to second language learning. (Lightbown, 1999)

## **2.5 Definitions of beliefs**

A belief is something that you believe or accept as true. You might believe something based on a fact, an opinion or an assumption. When you believe something you might not have immediate personal knowledge but you are satisfied that something is the way it is. Your belief system is not necessarily correct or accurate. Interestingly, not only are you driven by your beliefs, you will

unconsciously look for evidence, or other experiences that will confirm and reinforce your beliefs as you don't want to be wrong.<sup>4</sup>

A belief may thus be understood as a representation that is not necessarily fully justified and is not necessary completely true, but must be true in part.<sup>5</sup> Moreover, a belief is an internally accepted statement.

Belief is the root of our way of thinking. Thus, in normal life people do not question or filter our own belief, since human beings take their beliefs as such. In addition to, beliefs are part of our lives and part of our values. More to the point, a belief is a statement held by the mind as truth. It helps us to make sense of the past and predict the future. Furthermore, it is important to take into account that beliefs influence our decisions, choices, feelings, behaviours and our automatic reactions.

We commonly believe that things will happen as they have previously happened because it is useful to do. Thus, this means that everything is a belief and it is built into the language and the culture. In addition, beliefs are just inside our brain, they are not in action.<sup>6</sup>

People believe in something because they feel the need to believe and they feel motivated. Additionally, their culture is part of this important role of beliefs in human beings life. For that reason, culture is an important factor in beliefs because those have interesting influence on the emotions and ideas of people. For instance, Mayan culture had many Gods, which Mayan people believed in them and they believed that Gods gave them rain, fire, and food. It is an example that the power of belief in something and the influence of the culture. Everybody has different forms of beliefs in many aspects such as religion, government, medicine and several factors. People who have different forms of beliefs to the

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<sup>4</sup> Hass, T. (2011). What is a belief?. Retrieved December 9, 2012, from <http://aboutmybrain.com/what-is-a-belief-2/>

<sup>5</sup> Definition of belief. Retrieved December 9, 2012, from <http://www.yourdictionary.com/belief>

<sup>6</sup> Definitions of beliefs. Retrieved December 9, 2012), from <http://dictionary.reference.com/browse/belief>

others they should respect and tolerate them. As a result of these, in some cultures expressing beliefs different from those of one's society can result in banishment, punishment and even execution since beliefs are wrapped in language and culture.

People form their beliefs from a very early age. These beliefs are based on their environment; what they were told, what they heard as well as what they observed and experienced. Their beliefs are also the conclusions they draw from these experienced. They form beliefs about themselves, about others and the world around them. People hang onto their beliefs even if they are limiting or fly in the face of evidence to the contrary. This is why it is so hard to logically reason with those who hold strong beliefs based on a 'feeling of knowing' rather than evidenced based logic and scientific proof.<sup>7</sup>

Beliefs are a central construct in every discipline that deals with human behaviour and learning (Fishbein & Ajzen, 1975; Ajzen, 1988). Beliefs about language learning are viewed as a component of metacognitive knowledge and it includes goals and needs. Thus, beliefs about learner capacity and personal models of their own process were more central to understanding the individuals learning. Since each learner has different beliefs about acquiring vocabulary. Besides there are important factors which are included in the concept of belief, such as self-concept and identity, self-efficacy, personality, perception, confidence, abilities and responsibility.

A belief is then defined as a conviction to the truth of a proposition without its verification; therefore, it is a subjective mental interpretation of the perception results. In addition to, a belief has strong utility character, in practice we believe in more things than we are able to imagine. People believe in love, ideas, God,

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<sup>7</sup> Hass, T. (2011). What is a belief?. Retrieved December 9, 2012, from <http://aboutmybrain.com/what-is-a-belief-2/>

ideas, efficacy and messages. On the other hand, in the psychological sense, belief is a representational mental state that takes the form of a propositional attitude. Thus, a belief implies the existence of mental states and intentionality. Beliefs are important because behavior is important and your behavior depends on your beliefs. Everything you do can be traced back to beliefs you hold about the world — everything from brushing your teeth to your career. Beliefs also help determine your reactions to others' behavior — for example their refusal to brush their teeth or their own career choices. This entire means that beliefs are not an entirely private matter. Even beliefs you try to keep to yourself may influence your actions enough to become a matter of legitimate concern of others. <sup>8</sup>

### **2.5.1 Student's beliefs about vocabulary learning**

According to French (1983), one reason why vocabulary was neglected in teacher preparation programs during the period 1940-1970 was that it had been emphasized too much in language classroom during the years before that time. Indeed, some people had believed it was the only key to language learning. Learners often believed that all they needed was a large number of words. They thought they could master the language by learning a certain number of English words, along with the meanings of those words in their own language. Of course, this belief was wrong. In addition to knowing English words and their meanings, one must also know how the words work together in English sentences. That is one reason for the emphasis upon grammar in teacher-preparation programs during the past few decades. During those years, teachers were told a great deal about new discoveries in English grammar. They heard much less about ways to help students learn words.

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<sup>8</sup> Cline, A. (2013). What is Belief? What Does it Mean to Say "I Believe" Something is True?. Retrieved February 26, 2013, from <http://atheism.about.com/od/definitionofatheism/a/BeliefImportant.htm>

Richards (1994, p. 55- 56) claimed that when learners and teachers meet for the first time they may bring with them different expectations concerning not only the learning process but also concerning what will be learned in a particular course and how it will be learned. Stereotyping usually implies some type of attitude toward the culture or language in question. Since learner beliefs are influenced by the social context of second language learning there are often cultural differences between the belief systems of learners from different cultural backgrounds. Moreover, differences between teachers' and learners' beliefs can sometimes lead to a mismatch between their assumptions about what is useful to focus on a language lesson. For example, a teacher may teach a reading lesson with the purpose of developing extensive reading skills while the students may think of the activity as an opportunity for intensive reading, building up their knowledge of vocabulary and idioms. Thus, students bring to the classrooms very specific assumptions about how to learn a language and about the kinds of activities and approaches they believe to be useful.

In sum, beliefs have a potential impact in the process of learning vocabulary because students' beliefs are essential to succeed in the process of vocabulary learning. Learners may have views about what constitutes appropriate forms of classroom interaction and classroom behaviour (see figure 2.3).

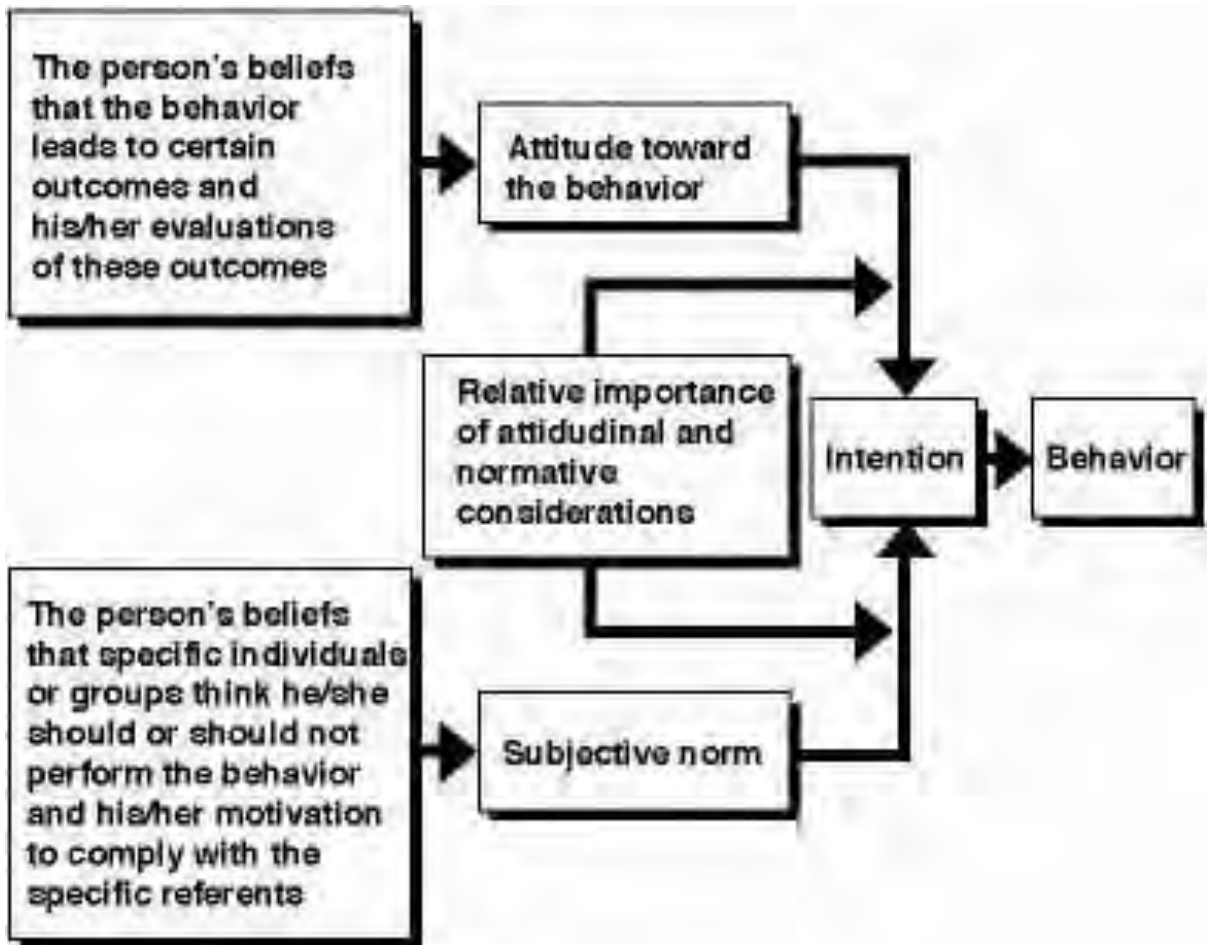


fig.2.3 Forms of classroom interaction and classroom behaviour.

figure 2.3 The theory. Retrieved July 13, 2006 from [http://www.ciadvertising.org/student\\_account/fall\\_01/adv382j/brent/yes.html](http://www.ciadvertising.org/student_account/fall_01/adv382j/brent/yes.html)

## **2.6 Research questions.**

In sum, we are interested in finding out what is the status of vocabulary in English language students at the University of Quintana Roo. Therefore, we have posited the following research questions:

RQ1. How do learners perceive the importance of vocabulary while learning English?

RQ2. Is there a relationship between lexical proficiency, beliefs, attitudes and vocabulary learning strategies?

RQ3. Is there a relationship between beliefs, attitudes, and vocabulary learning strategies?

RQ4. What are the most frequently reported beliefs, attitudes and vocabulary learning strategies?

In RQ1 we want to know how the learners perceive the importance of vocabulary in the classroom since our experience as students we realized that most of the students were not interested in increasing their vocabulary.

In RQ2 we attempt to know about the relationship between the lexical proficiency of learners and their beliefs, attitudes and vocabulary learning strategies. That is, whether those learners with high levels of lexical proficiency may show positive beliefs and attitudes, and the greater use of vocabulary learning strategies towards vocabulary whereas those with low levels of lexical proficiency may show negative aspects about vocabulary learning.

RQ3 concentrates on the possible relationship between beliefs, attitudes and the use of vocabulary learning strategies. In other words, we would like to find out the

possible inter-correlations between beliefs, attitudes, and the vocabulary learning strategies whether the learners use are associated with their lexical level of proficiency.

Finally, In RQ4 we aim to present the most frequently reported beliefs, attitudes and vocabulary learning strategies. Such results may allow teachers and learners having a general picture in frequency terms.

## **Chapter 3 Method**

In this chapter, we aim to present the subjects that took part in our study, as well as the instruments that we used in order to find out the importance of vocabulary among English major students. In addition, the procedure of how our data were collected and the analysis are covered in this section.

### **3.1 Subjects**

In order to know the importance of vocabulary among students of the English language major at the University of Quintana Roo, we worked with 79 subjects of 5 groups such as second, fourth, sixth, eighth, and tenth semester. Each term represents one year of language study at university. They were only students from the English language major and Mexican students. The ages of them are ranged 18 and 30. In this study, of all the 79 applicants there were 56 females and only 23 males.

It was essential to take into account if many of them had taken English classes before since it can be a disadvantage for the others students that did not receive private English classes. It may have been the case that their prior knowledge of English helped some of the students to understand the language better. Besides, the syllabus of the English major has different levels of English that students have to cover during the ten semesters. It is relevant to mention that students begin their English courses from the second semester of study and they finish their English courses in the ninth semester.



### **3.2 Instruments**

Three instruments were used for collecting information for language learning research, such as questionnaires, interviews, and tests.

#### ***The Vocabulary Levels Test (VLT)***

First of all, a test is a procedure used to collect data on subjects' ability or knowledge of certain disciplines. In second language (SL) acquisition research, tests are generally used to collect data about the subject's ability and knowledge of SL in areas such as vocabulary, grammar, reading, metalinguistic awareness, and general proficiency (Seliger & Shohamy 1989:176).

Therefore, we used a Vocabulary Levels Test (from the book *Teaching and Learning vocabulary* by Nation, 1990, see Appendix I. This vocabulary test can be used to decide where the learners should given help with vocabulary learning. The test is divided into five levels. The 2,000- and 3,000-word levels contain high frequency words. Because each of the words at this level occurs frequently, it is worth spending class time on them. The university word level represents one type of specialized vocabulary. The 5,000-word level is on the boundary of high- and low-frequency words. However, we did not use the level in numbers as 2000, 3000, and 5000 instead we used letters as A, B, and C. We decided to do that because we thought that the students would feel intimidated by the level of the test.

#### ***The Questionnaire about Beliefs, Attitudes and Vocabulary Learning Strategies***

Furthermore, Nunan, 1992:231) points out that: "A questionnaire is an instrument for the collection of data, usually in written form, consisting of open and /or closed questions and other probes requiring a response from subjects."

We also used a close questionnaire which is divided in three sections: beliefs, attitudes, and strategies toward vocabulary learning. It consists of statements where the answers are closed for example, absolutely disagree, neutral, true of

me, etc. This questionnaire requires personal information such as name, age, educational level. Before we applied the correct close questionnaire to the students who took part in our study, we decided to do a piloting of the questionnaire. First of all, we selected ten students from different majors in order to know if the statements were clear and understandable. Then, we applied it to them and some of the students did not understand some statements. Thus, we had to correct those statements for improving the questionnaire.

### ***Learner interviews***

At the simplest level, interviews can be described as “the elicitation of data by one person from another through person-to-person encounters” (Nunan 1992:231). The most common forms of interviewing involve individual, face-to-face verbal interchange, face-to-face group interchange or telephone surveys. The “semi-structured” interview consists of specific and defined questions determined beforehand, but at the same time it allows some elaboration in the questions and answers. For that reason, we used this kind of interview for our study. We chose two selected cases: one person with high vocabulary and one with low vocabulary from each semester. The questions were predetermined about how they learn vocabulary, about what they think about leaning vocabulary, their attitudes, etc. That is because we wanted to get selected information that we would help us to know some of the attitudes toward vocabulary learning. This interview took about 30 minutes. It is important to mention that for the interviews we used a reporter’s tape recorder in order to record what the students said, that is to say, we recorded the answers of the each student interviewed.

### **3.3 Procedure**

At the very beginning of the study, a covering letter was sent to the teachers of the different groups that we had chosen to ask for help with the data collection. In order to carry out this part of the thesis we needed to go to a class of the different groups that we chose. After that, we decided the order of groups by

semester. Then, the first instrument that we applied was the vocabulary level test. It was administered by us in February, 2006. Subjects received oral instructions from us about how to answer the vocabulary level test. We also gave the students a brief explanation of what we attempted to do with this survey or vocabulary level test telling them that the answers will be very helpful to achieve our main goal in our thesis project.

Later on, we chose another day in order to apply the questionnaire about attitudes, strategies and beliefs related to the importance of vocabulary. We chose one day per semester. The questionnaire was also administered by us and we gave them oral instructions. Besides, they were encouraged to seek clarification of any items they did not understand. Students had to answer it in one hour because it is not an open survey which requires two hours. The questionnaires was administered in March, 2006.

After that, when we had the results of the vocabulary level test we applied the last instrument. It was the interviews as we said before. We selected two students one with high vocabulary and one student with low level of vocabulary. In order to carry out this, we had to ask the selected student if they would like to assist the project by coming for an interview. They were told that their comments on their habitual learning strategies would prove extremely helpful in this research, and total discretion with their personal details was guaranteed. No political purpose or something like that, but academic research, for the interview was emphasised. Each interview took about 30 minutes. Sometimes, we needed to go to the university more than one day because we could not interview all the students. Therefore, with the students' permission the interviews were fully recorded and we also took some notes from the interview. The interviews were done in April and May, 2006.

### **3.4 Analyses**

According to Seliger and Shohamy (1989) data analysis refers to sifting, organizing, summarizing, synthesizing the data so as to arrive at the results and conclusions of the research. In so doing, we first analysed the scores from the

Vocabulary Levels Test in order to know the students' lexical level. Also we analysed the data obtained from the instrument for collecting strategies, attitudes, beliefs about vocabulary learning. Thus we were able to correlate these measures to answer the research questions of this study. This is referred to as the quantitative component of the study.

Similarly, as we aim to know how learners perceive the importance of vocabulary in the classroom we relied on the analysis of the 2 learner interviews along with the attitudes instrument. This is what we call the qualitative component of the investigation. The analysis of the interviews allowed us to compare a good language learner with a poor one. In this analysis, we organised the data in terms commonalities or regularities and patterns reflecting strategies, beliefs and attitudes towards vocabulary learning. Extracts from the interviews will be used to provide evidence of such beliefs, attitudes and strategies.

As far as the statistical analysis is concerned, we made use of simple descriptive statistics such as mean frequency ratings (e.g. the attitudes scales, test scores). Besides, the data were analyzed into SPSS (Statistical Package for Social Sciences).

Data collected by means of questionnaires, interviews or any other methods mean very little until they are analyzed and evaluated (Bell 1993). A number of published studies on beliefs about language learning strategies have been conducted by using methods of statistical analysis (e.g. Bond, 1996, Asbjornson, 1999, and Sakui & Gaies, 1999, used factor analysis to determine how subjects' beliefs were organised). Most of the data analysis techniques in the present study were performed with a computer, since it could handle the analysis of most quantitative and qualitative research data.

## Chapter 4 Results and discussion

In this chapter, we will present the main results of this investigation followed by a detailed discussion. Needless to say that the result will be organized on the basis of the four research questions formulated at the end of chapter 2. That is, learners' perceptions about vocabulary learning (RQ1); the relationship between lexical proficiency and beliefs, attitudes and strategies (RQ2); the relationship between beliefs, attitudes and vocabulary learning strategies (RQ3), and the most frequent beliefs, attitudes and VLS (RQ4). Figure 4.1 depicts the relationship among these four main variables of our study, which is correlational in nature.

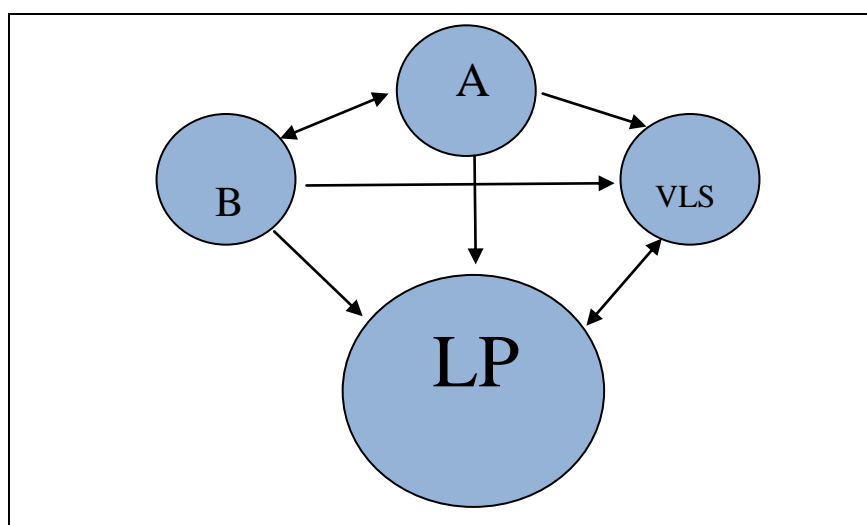


Fig. 4.1 The relationship among lexical proficiency, beliefs attitudes and strategies

### 4.1 How do learners perceive the importance of vocabulary while learning English?

In order to answer this research question we analyzed the interviews we had with the learners. This is what we consider the qualitative component of our investigation. In general, most of the participants reported that vocabulary is an essential part of the second language learning process. For example:

“It is essential for communicating with other people,” (Lola, first year).

“It is important because you understand and speak a language,” (Diorela, second year).

“It is important because if I don’t know vocabulary I will not speak in a formal or informal way,” (José Luis, third year).

“Vocabulary is necessary for understanding English,” (Angel, fourth year).

As can be observed, regardless of the year of study at university the participants expressed similar opinions about the importance of vocabulary. It would be interesting to find out whether these perceptions are related to the frequency with which they use vocabulary learning strategies and perhaps their beliefs and attitudes.

We also could see that some of the students have some positive and negative attitudes about the perception of the importance of vocabulary. For example some positive attitudes include:

“It is not enough to learn a certain number of words since it is important to know more vocabulary because you extent you knowledge about it,” (Perla, second year).

“There is not a limit to learn vocabulary” (Pedro, third, year)

“You need to learn a lot of vocabulary every day” (Mara, fourth year).

“Reading a lot helps you increase your vocabulary” (Daniela, first year)

“Using the dictionary increases the vocabulary and it helps me to express better in a language” (Ivan, fifth year)

“Listening to music in English is an excellent hobby to increase the vocabulary of English and improves the pronunciation “(Olga, fifth year)

“Speaking with native speakers makes me increases my English vocabulary and acquire a good pronunciation” (Andres, first year)

“Using internet to chat helps me to acquire and practice my vocabulary with native speakers and I learn more vocabulary”. (Raul fourth year)

However, we also noticed that few students expressed some negative attitudes about the perception of the importance of vocabulary. For instance:

“I do not need more vocabulary because it is enough the vocabulary that I have learned since first year” (Mario, fourth)

“I read a book to increase my vocabulary if the book is interesting” (Eduardo, second year)

In addition, based on our experience as students we realized that learners who are in fifth year feel that they know the enough vocabulary and they are not worry about getting more vocabulary. However, they do not know that when they get a job they would realized that they knowledge of vocabulary is not enough. We can say that when we are in fifth year we think that we have learned a lot of vocabulary but we are getting involved in a process of fossilization. This means that they keep the same vocabulary and they do not feel worry about learning more new words and having better communication using the new vocabulary.

In contrast, data obtained from the interviews led us to suggest that this does not happen with the students who are in third and fourth year since we could perceive that most of them are really interested in learning more vocabulary. They think that vocabulary help them to understand and speak better a language. Moreover, they enjoy learning vocabulary since we could see that some of them reported speaking English outside the classroom. This can be corroborated via their performance on the Vocabulary Levels test, in which third- and fourth-year learners outperformed more “advanced” students.

#### **4.2 The relationship between learners’ lexical proficiency (LP) and their beliefs (B), attitudes (A), and vocabulary learning strategies (VLS)**

In this section, we aim to present the results of the relationship between learners’ lexical proficiency and their, beliefs, attitudes, and strategies. We have departed from the premise that those students who have more positive attitudes and beliefs and greater use of vocabulary learning strategies may have a higher level of lexical proficiency.

##### ***Lexical proficiency and beliefs***

In general, we found very few statistically significant correlations between beliefs and lexical proficiency. The belief “*reading and guessing unknown words is a good way to learn*” correlated with lexical proficiency ( $r=0.367$ ). It means that this belief is positive since most of the students who believe that have good level of vocabulary. Besides, they had more lexical proficiency mean.

Another correlation was found between the belief "*English vocabulary is difficult to learn*" and LP ( $r=-0.223$ ). This can be explained in the sense that those who believe that vocabulary is difficult to learn performed poorly on the vocabulary levels test. Also, this result makes sense because more lexically proficient learners tend to consider vocabulary learning as an easy task.

The result showed a negative relationship between the belief "*repeating words aloud is the best way to retain vocabulary*" and LP ( $r=-0.266$ ). This correlation is consistent with the idea that students have about the use of repetition in vocabulary learning: the stronger this belief among students the lower their vocabulary scores.

In a similar vein, we found a correlation between the belief "*knowing a word in English only implies knowing its meaning*" and LP ( $r=-0.244$ ). Again such a correlation indicates that students who obtain low scores on the vocabulary test showed this belief more frequently. It is well known that knowing a word not only implies knowing the meaning but also knowing its form and use (Nation, 2001).

Similarly, a stronger negative correlation was observed between the belief "*You can only acquire a large vocabulary by memorizing individual words*" and LP ( $r=-0.459$ ). This may mean that those who believe that memorizing individual words is enough to learn vocabulary might not be successful in the vocabulary test. We are tempted to say that this belief may influence vocabulary learning. Put another way, learners with a higher LP may not hold this belief as strongly as those with a lower LP.

### ***Lexical proficiency and attitudes***

It is important to mention that, though not significant, the trend showed some positive relationships between attitudes and lexical proficiency.

We found a relationship between the attitude "*I like to listen to music in English in my free time*" and LP ( $r=0.298$ ). We think that this *correlation* is a positive one because we realized that students who have this attitude have a good lexical proficiency mean. This means that while you are listening to music in



English you can increase your vocabulary acquiring more words or practicing your learned vocabulary.

Another correlation that we detected was the attitude "*I like to watch movies only in English because I want to learn new vocabulary*" and LP( $r=0.232$ ). This result show that students who have this attitude have a high lexical proficiency since movies can be a tool in the learning process of English. Since this material may be interesting for most of the students, for that reason it can be considered a positive attitude.

From our point of view, another positive relationship between the attitude "*I like to speak English with native speakers because I can practice my vocabulary.*" and LP( $r=0.271$ ). It can be explained that students who have this attitude tended to retain more vocabulary. That is to say, students who practice their vocabulary speaking with the new vocabulary increase their lexical proficiency.

In the same way, we examined the correlation between the attitude "*I like to buy books about up-to-date vocabulary*" and LP( $r=0.226$ ). We consider that this attitude is a positive one since students who like to buy these books have the opportunity to increase their vocabulary through reading a lot. Thus, they can acquire more vocabulary.

### ***Lexical proficiency and vocabulary learning strategies***

It is also essential to mention some correlations between vocabulary learning strategies and lexical proficiency. The strategy "*I write the word and the picture in order to remember the new vocabulary*" and LP( $r=-0.282$ ). This correlation show a negative result because students who have this idea do not believe that drawing only the picture makes you retain the vocabulary. Since, there are many styles of learning not only using the visual method.

It is relevant to mention this relationship between the strategy "*I watch movies in English without subtitles*" and LP( $r=0.418$ ). This result showed a high score because we realized that students who apply this strategy have good result in the test. It means that this strategy may be effective in the learning process of vocabulary.

We found another correlation between the strategy *“I listen to the CD-ROM dictionaries every day”* and LP( $r=0.289$ ). We think that students who use the CD-ROM everyday may acquire more words and in this way they increase their lexical proficiency. It is known that students who have this strategy could have more vocabulary.

We agree with the correlation between the strategy *“When I write letters and essays I use the new vocabulary”* and LP( $r=0.292$ ) because this has a clear relationship with lexical proficiency. Since, when you write an essays, letters, etc. you have to use the learned vocabulary. In this way, students practice their new vocabulary.

In summary, we noticed that lexical proficiency of learners was related to some beliefs, attitudes, and vocabulary learning strategies. As can be seen in Table 4.1, the relationships were not only positive but also negative statistically speaking.

<b>Lexical Proficiency (LP)</b>	<b>Beliefs</b>	Reading and guessing unknown words is a good way to learn vocabulary (+) English Vocabulary is difficult to learn (-) Repeating words aloud is the best way to retain vocabulary (-). Knowing a word in English only implies knowing its meaning (-). You can only acquire a large vocabulary by memorizing individual words (-).
	<b>Attitudes</b>	I like to listen to music in English in my free time (+). I like to watch movies only in English because I want to learn more vocabulary (+). I like to speak English with native speakers because I can practice my vocabulary (+). I like to buy books about up-to-date vocabulary (+).
	<b>Vocabulary Learning Strategies</b>	I write the word and the picture in order to remember the new vocabulary. (-). I watch movies in English without subtitles (+). I listen to the CD-ROM dictionaries every day (+) When I write letters and essays I use the new vocabulary (+)

Table 4.1 The relationship between lexical proficiency and beliefs, attitudes, and strategies.

However, the nature of the relationships does not mean that some beliefs were wrong or that some vocabulary learning strategies are not effective. This simply means that the tendency of the results emerged from the questionnaire.

### **4.3 The relationship between students' beliefs (B), attitudes (A), and vocabulary learning strategies (VLS).**

In this section, we examine the relationships between attitudes and beliefs, strategies and beliefs, and attitudes and strategies. As we found a large number of inter-correlations, we decided to select the most relevant results on the basis of two criteria: (1) the relationships that made sense and (2) the correlations above  $r=0.30$ .

#### ***The relationship between students' attitudes and beliefs***

We agree with the relationship between the attitude *"I like to share my opinion in front of the class using the new vocabulary"* ( $r=0.406$ ) and the belief *"Having native speaking guests helps you learn vocabulary more quickly"* since students who have this belief may tend to learn more vocabulary. Thus they may have the attitude of practicing their vocabulary either in front of a class or with native speakers. Also, this may mean that having guests in their homes make them feel confident when they speak in their classes since they are practicing their English all the time with them.

Similarly, we found an interesting relationship between the attitude *"I like to speak English with native speakers because I can practice my vocabulary"* and the belief *"Studying five years in this English major makes you get a lot of vocabulary"* ( $r=0.360$ ). In this correlation we can state that if students who have this belief may be willing to speak with native speakers of the target language. Also, students are supposed to be able to speak English well when they finish their major.

#### ***The relationship between students' strategies and beliefs***

We examined the relationship between the strategy *"I underline the unknown words in a text and I look them up in the dictionary"* and the beliefs *"Using dictionaries make you learn more vocabulary"* ( $r=0.405$ ), *"You can only acquire a large vocabulary by memorizing individual words"* ( $r=0.427$ ), and *"English*

*vocabulary increases through reading a lot*" ( $r=0.409$ ). The explanation for these relationships may be that students who have the belief of using dictionaries when they do not know a word while they are reading, writing, and listening, they use the strategy of underlying the unknown words –and perhaps looking them up in dictionaries. As a result, students may increase their vocabulary and at the same time they may make use of memorization. In sum, we could observe a clear relationship between them as we applied criterion 1 for selection of relevant relationships.

### ***The relationship between students' strategies and attitudes***

We found a correlation between the strategy *"I write a list of unknown words on a notebook"* and the attitude *"I always try to spend time to study new vocabulary"* ( $r=0.401$ ). This relationship can be explained straightforwardly if we depart from the premise that the attitude having time to study may encourage students to keep a list of new words in a notebook. In this way, students may extend their vocabulary mainly because of such an attitude and perhaps other factors which are not covered in this thesis.

Interestingly, we examined the strategy *"I write sentences using the new vocabulary"* and the attitudes *"I speak English with my friends every time in order to practice my new vocabulary"* ( $r=0.404$ ), *"I like to share my opinion in front of the class using the new vocabulary"* ( $r=0.424$ ). As can be observed, these two attitudes may explain the extent to which students write sentences in order to learn vocabulary. This can happen in real life situations in which learners may be encouraged to use certain vocabulary strategies on the basis of the attitudes they have.

Other correlations worth mentioning in this thesis are between the attitude *"I like to have a notebook with the new vocabulary"* and the strategies *"I choose several words from the dictionary everyday and I learn them"* ( $r=0.432$ ), and *"I make vocabulary cards and I take them with me wherever I go"* ( $r=0.479$ ). Analyzing these correlations, we can assume that students, who reported using

these strategies, like keeping a vocabulary notebook encouraged by this positive attitude.

Similarly, we found a relationship between the attitudes *“I like to have a notebook with the new vocabulary”* and *“I have a specific time to study my English vocabulary”* ( $r=0.507$ ) and the strategy *“I write a list of unknown words on a notebook”* ( $r=0.431$ ). We can observe that there is a moderate relationship since the result indicates that such an attitude may result in the developments of those strategies.

We examined another correlation between the attitude *“I speak English with my friends every time in order to practice my new vocabulary”* and the strategies *“When I write letters and essays I use the new vocabulary”* ( $r=0.410$ ) and *“I write sentences using the new vocabulary”* ( $r=0.404$ ). In this correlation, we can state that students who use these strategies may be motivated by their positive attitudes like the one described above. Also, it can be suggested that vocabulary plays a relevant role in the development of other language skills, e.g. speaking and writing.

In addition, we observed other relationships between the attitudes *“I like to share my opinion in front of the class using the new vocabulary”* ( $r=0.457$ ), *“I speak English with my friends every time in order to practice my new vocabulary”* ( $r=0.399$ ) and *“I like to be up to date about English vocabulary”* ( $r=0.362$ ) and the strategy *“I try to use the newly learned words as much as possible in speech and writing”*. It means that having these attitudes students get a lot of vocabulary and use it in their daily life. We can also conclude that such a strategy and these three attitudes may go together in the process of acquiring L2 vocabulary.

In a similar vein, we look at the attitudes *“I always try to spend time to study new vocabulary”* ( $r=0.376$ ) and *“My motivation helps me be ready to learn more vocabulary”* ( $r=0.430$ ) with the strategy *“I try to use the newly learned words as much possible in speech and writing”*. We consider that these attitudes are positive since students who have them may use the strategy above more frequently. Again, it seems that vocabulary plays an important role in L2 learning as reported by the students.

On the other hand, we look into another correlation between the strategy *“I watch movies in English without subtitles”* and the attitude *“I like to watch movies only in English because I want to learn new vocabulary”* ( $r=0.507$ ). Therefore, students who have this strategy are able to acquire more vocabulary and their attitude may motivate them to learn more vocabulary. Besides, we could see that there is a strong correlation among the strategy and the attitudes because of the high result that we obtained from the questionnaire.

In simple words, we found another correlation between the attitude *“I like to watch TV shows in English because I want to learn new words”* and the strategy *“I watch movies in English without subtitles”* ( $r=0.403$ ). From our point of view, this correlation shows a positive one since students learn through T.V. and movies vocabulary of English. We also consider that watching T.V. in English is a good way to learn vocabulary.

We examined another correlation between the attitude *“I always try to spend time to study my new vocabulary”* and the strategy *“When I try to remember a word, I write it repeatedly”* ( $r=0.362$ ). We think that it was an interesting correlation because students have the time to study the vocabulary and improve it. At the same time, they remember the word and retain more vocabulary.

Another correlation between the attitude *“I really enjoy my English classes in which vocabulary is emphasized”* and the strategy *“I have a specific time to study my English vocabulary”* ( $r=0.350$ ). It means that students who have this attitude to the English vocabulary they try to find a specific time to study. In other words people who enjoy what they like to do, they learn fast and well.

On the other hand, the correlation between the attitude *“I like to speak English with native speakers because I can practice my vocabulary.”* and the strategy *“when I write letters and essays I use the new vocabulary”* ( $r=0.462$ ) have a moderate relationship. It is because a student who may use this strategy is easier for them to speak in English using the vocabulary that they practice writing the essays and letters.

Interestingly, we examined the correlation between the attitude *“I like to buy books about up to date vocabulary”* and the strategy *“I make vocabulary cards and*

*I take them wherever I go with me”* ( $r=0.438$ ). Therefore students who have this attitude and use the strategy in a correct way may have good level of vocabulary. We can observe that this correlation is positive since it shows a relevant score.

We found a correlation between the attitude *“I like to study more words with my new books of English”* and the strategy *“I underline the unknown words in a text and I look them up in the dictionary”* ( $r=0.396$ ). This means that this correlation is clear because students who have the attitude and find words that they unknown, it is necessary to use the dictionary to find the meaning of those words.

#### **4.4. The most frequently reported beliefs, attitudes and vocabulary learning strategies.**

In this section, you will see the top ten beliefs, attitudes and vocabulary learning strategies that students reported as the most important. The data were taken from the questionnaire in which these three variables were included. They are presented from the highest to the lower mean frequency rating.

In this segment, we aim to present the most relevant beliefs that students have according to the VLQ as we mentioned before. (see table 4.2)

#### ***Beliefs about vocabulary learning***

<b>Beliefs</b>	<b>N</b>	<b>Min.</b>	<b>Max.</b>	<b>Mean</b>	<b>S. D.</b>
1. Vocabulary is essential in the process of learning English as a foreign language.	79	3	4	3.97	.158
2. Reading books increases your vocabulary.	79	2	4	3.82	.446
3. Vocabulary is essential to understand a language better.	79	2	4	3.73	.524
4. Studying English since childhood gives you a good level of vocabulary.	79	1	4	3.63	.701
5. Living abroad makes you learn English vocabulary well.	79	1	4	3.59	.651
6. Vocabulary can be increased simply through reading a lot.	79	0	4	3.46	.813
7. Studying an English course in an English-speaking country gives you a good level of vocabulary	79	1	4	3.20	.897
8. Having native speaking guests helps you learn vocabulary more quickly.	79	1	4	3.18	.828
9. Listening to the radio in English increases your vocabulary.	79	1	4	3.14	.828
10. Using dictionaries make you learn more vocabulary	79	1	4	3.09	.950

Table 4.2 The most frequently reported beliefs about vocabulary learning

As shown in Table 4.2, The most frequent beliefs was “*Vocabulary is essential in the process of learning English as a foreign language*” with a mean frequency rating of 3.97 according to the result of the vocabulary learning questionnaire. Since, most of the students believe that it is important in the process of learning a second language and they may understand better a language.

“*Reading books increases your vocabulary*” is the second belief of this top ten and it has a mean frequency rating of 3.82. This belief is clear because reading is an important skill for acquiring vocabulary.

Most of the students chose this belief as the third “*Vocabulary is essential to understand a language better*” with a mean frequency rating of 3.73. According to the results of the questionnaire most of the students believe that vocabulary is necessary to learn a language.

The fourth belief with a high mean frequency rating of 3.63 is “*Studying English since childhood gives you a good level of vocabulary*”. It can be explained that if you receive English classes at an early age, you will understand better a language when you want to learn English.

“*Living abroad makes you learn English vocabulary well*” is the fifth belief with a mean frequency rating of 3.59. It is a logical answer because living in a country where the mother tongue is English makes you keep in contact with the language.

The sixth belief of the top ten is “*Vocabulary can be increased simply through reading a lot*” with a mean frequency rating of 3.46. In simple words, students who read a lot in a natural way acquire vocabulary.

“*Studying an English course in English-speaking country, gives you a good level of vocabulary*” with a mean frequency rating of 3.20, shows us that taking courses may give you more knowledge about vocabulary and skills in the process of English language.

“*Having native speaking guests helps you learn vocabulary more quickly.*” This is one belief of the top ten with a mean frequency rating of 3.18. Therefore, the result of the questionnaire indicates that many students believe that when you



are in contact with people who speak English and stay at home during months, it will be easy to learn more vocabulary and grammar because you are exposed to English every day.

Another belief that is relevant for the students is *“Listening to the radio in English increases your vocabulary”* with a mean frequency rating of 3.14. Thus some students believe that is an effective and dynamic belief to acquire vocabulary and also they would practice their listening skill.

Finally the tenth relevant belief is *“Using dictionaries make you learn more vocabulary”* and it has a mean frequency rating of 3.09. It can be simple to explain because according some students believe that the use of dictionary in the process of learning a second language is an essential tool. Therefore, the dictionary is the solution for doubts and helps students to learn new and more vocabulary.

### ***Attitudes towards vocabulary learning***

In this section, we show the most frequently reported attitudes towards vocabulary learning as observed in Table 4.3. It shows the high mean until the low mean.

Attitudes	N	Min.	Max.	Mean	S.D.
1. I am interested in learning new vocabulary.	79	1	4	3.84	.587
2. I like to listen to music in English in my free time.	79	1	4	3.63	.771
3. I really enjoy my English classes in which vocabulary is emphasized.	79	1	4	3.37	.754
4. I like to watch TV shows in English because I want to learn new words.	79	1	4	3.35	.785
5. I am interested in taking extra courses in order to increase my vocabulary knowledge.	79	1	4	3.33	.780
6. I like to speak English with native speakers because I can practice my vocabulary.	79	1	4	3.22	1.117
7. My motivation helps me be ready to learn more vocabulary.	79	0	4	3.18	.917
8. I like to watch movies only in English because I want to learn new vocabulary.	79	0	4	3.03	1.037
9. I speak English with my friends every time in order to practice my new vocabulary	79	1	4	2.84	1.006
10. I like to be up to date about English vocabulary.	79	0	4	2.73	.996

Table. 4.3 The most frequently reported attitudes towards vocabulary learning

*“I am interested in learning new vocabulary”*. The mean frequency rating of this attitude is 3.84. This is the highest one because according to the results of the

questionnaire students who have this attitude find interestingly learn more vocabulary since it is a positive attitude.

The second attitude with a mean frequency rating of 3.63 is *“I like to listen to music in English in my free time”*. It may be explained that students who have this attitude increase their vocabulary and improve the listening skill.

This is the third attitude with a mean frequency rating of 3.37 *“I really enjoy my English classes in which vocabulary is emphasized”*. This attitude helps students to learn and motivate more vocabulary because they do not feel the learning as an obligation. On the other hand, they seem to enjoy the learning process of vocabulary.

The fourth attitude is *“I like to watch TV shows in English because I want to learn new words”*. It is an attitude with a mean frequency rating of 3.35. This is an interesting and funny attitude since students can get a lot of vocabulary watching TV shows in English.

The fifth attitude with a mean frequency rating of 3.33 *“I am interested in taking extra courses in order to increase my vocabulary knowledge”*. According to the questionnaire most of the students think that extra courses help them to get more vocabulary and improve their skills.

*“I like to speak English with native speakers because I can practice my vocabulary”*. This is the sixth attitude with a mean frequency rating of 3.22. Students may agree with this attitude since spending time practicing English vocabulary with a native speaker is more useful and effective. Besides, they may learn correct pronunciation of the words.

This attitude with a mean frequency rating of 3.18 *“My motivation helps me be ready to learn more vocabulary”* is a positive one since students who have this attitude will be more able to learn more vocabulary.

The attitude *“I like to watch movies only in English because I want to learn new vocabulary”* with a mean frequency rating of 3.03 tell us that having this attitude eases the process of learning vocabulary. Besides, movies can encourage them to learn new vocabulary.

The ninth attitude with a mean frequency rating of 2.84 is *“I speak English with my friends every time in order to practice my new vocabulary”*. Students who have this attitude can speak in any time since they like to practice their vocabulary all time.

Finally, the tenth attitude with a mean frequency rating of 2.73 is *“I like to be up to date about English vocabulary”*. This attitude means that students who are not up to date about English vocabulary can have problems understanding the English.

### **Vocabulary Learning Strategies**

Table 4.4 shows the most frequently vocabulary learning strategies that students reported using for learning vocabulary. They were also taken from the VLQ.

<b>Vocabulary learning strategies</b>	<b>N</b>	<b>Min.</b>	<b>Max.</b>	<b>Mean</b>	<b>S.D.</b>
1. I underline the unknown words in a text and I look them up in the dictionary.	79	1	4	3.32	.793
2. When I don't know the meaning of a word I look it up in a dictionary	79	1	4	3.27	.796
3. When I try to remember a word, I write it repeatedly.	79	1	4	3.22	.811
4. I listen to music in English in order to find new vocabulary.	79	1	4	3.03	.877
5. I act out a word in order to remember it better.	79	1	4	2.96	.884
6. I remember words that sound similar.	79	1	4	2.84	.869
7. I try to use the newly learned words as much as possible in speech and writing.	79	1	4	2.82	.828
8. When I try to remember a word, I repeat it aloud to myself.	79	1	4	2.80	.992
9. I watch movies in English without subtitles	79	1	4	2.80	.838
10. I talk to teachers and classmates in English as much as possible.	79	1	4	2.71	.894

Table 4.4 The most frequently reported vocabulary learning strategies

This is the highest strategy of the top ten *“I underline the unknown words in a text and I look them up in the dictionary”* with a mean frequency rating of 3.32. Therefore most of the students think that this is an effective strategy that they can

use in the process of learning English vocabulary. This strategy according to the survey is the most popular and used for students.

The second top ten strategy is *“When I don’t know the meaning of a word I look it up in a dictionary”* with a mean frequency rating of 3.27, It may be explained as a logical reaction in the students since when a student does not know the meaning of a word, he looks it up the words that not understand in the dictionary.

The third top ten strategy is *“When I try to remember a word, I write it repeatedly”* with a mean frequency rating of 3.22. This strategy is effective because according to the questionnaire students who use this strategy help them to acquire easier the vocabulary.

The fourth top ten strategy is *“I listen to music in English in order to find new vocabulary”* with a mean frequency rating of 3.03. Most of the students may think that a good way to acquire vocabulary is developing the listening skill using the music as a tool.

The fifth top ten strategy is *“I act out a word in order to remember it better.”* with a mean frequency rating of 2.96. To some students this strategy is helpful to get and memorize vocabulary and for others students the sight can help them to remember the word.

*“I remember words that sound similar.”* This is a strategy with a mean frequency rating of 2.84 students who use this strategy learn vocabulary and find a similar sound.

The seventh strategy is *“I try to use the newly learned words as much as possible in speech and writing”* with a mean frequency rating of 2.82. Many students try to use this strategy in their homework and presentations. It helps them to reinforce the vocabulary.

*“When I try to remember a word, I repeat it aloud to myself”.* This is the eighth strategy of the top ten with a mean frequency rating of 2.80. Some students use this strategy in order to acquire knowledge about vocabulary and find easy to repeat aloud the new vocabulary.

*“I watch movies in English without subtitles.”* The mean frequency rating of this strategy is 2.80. It may be explained that students who put in practice this

strategy learn more vocabulary since they are only listening. In this way, they may remember the vocabulary listened before in the movies.

*“I talk to teachers and classmates in English as much as possible”*. The mean frequency rating of this strategy is 2.71. This strategy is effective for the students who want to practice their vocabulary since talking as much as possible help them to acquire and at the same time they put in practice what they have learned.

In sum, we also found some relationships among vocabulary learning strategies, beliefs, and attitudes according to the top ten classifications above.

We examined the relationship between the attitude *“I like to watch movies only in English to learn more vocabulary”* and the strategy *“I watch movies in English without subtitles”* because this is a reasonable and logical relationship since students who watch movies in English have the option to choose them with or without subtitles.

Another relationship that we found is between the strategy *“I underline the unknown words in a text and I look them up”* and the belief *“The use of dictionaries makes you learn more vocabulary”*. It is an evident relation because the use of the dictionary is an important tool in the development of the process of acquiring vocabulary because students need to resolve their doubts.

Interestingly, we observed that the relationships among the strategy *“I listen to music in English to find new words”*, the attitude *“I like to listen to music in my free time”*, and the belief *“listening to the radio in English increases your vocabulary”* are related because those use the skill of listening and have the same objective to increase the vocabulary.

We agree with the relationship between the attitude *“I am interesting in learning new vocabulary”* and the belief *“Vocabulary is essential in the process of learning English as a foreign language”* because students who believe this obviously they have to have this positive attitude. Therefore, they feel ready to learn vocabulary.

In a similar vein, we found a relationship between the attitude *“I am interested in taking extra courses to increase my vocabulary”* and the belief *“Studying an English course in an English-speaking country gives you a good level of vocabulary”*. This means that students who have this belief are interested in improving their vocabulary learning. They may also think that these courses are good for enriching their skills.

Another relationship that we observed was between the attitude *“I like to speak English with native speakers because I can practice my vocabulary”* and the belief *“Living abroad makes you learn vocabulary well”*. It can be explained that most of the students who believe this may have the ability to speak with native speakers. Besides, they have the opportunity to acquire the correct accent. Thus, we agree that this attitude is a positive one. In general, these are the most relevant relationships among the top ten beliefs, attitudes and strategies, which somewhat confirmed the results presented in 4.3.

#### **4.5 Selected cases of good and poor learners**

In this chapter, we explain about two selected cases. They are the students that have the high and the low lexical proficiency. It means that the first student has an extensive vocabulary. The second one is the student that lacks of vocabulary.

##### ***A good language learner with high lexical proficiency***

We observed the results Ramón Flamenco Cantor (fifth semester) on the Vocabulary Levels Test as he obtained a high score on such a test. Hence, we decided to interview him in order to explore his language learning beliefs and attitudes, and his vocabulary learning strategies.

First of all, we found out that he is a student with positive attitudes toward vocabulary learning. One example of this is that he is interested in taking extra courses to increase his vocabulary since he took a course in Harmon hall in Cancun. Besides, he told us that taking course outside university helped him to improve his English and get more vocabulary. He also enjoys learning vocabulary in the class and out of the class. Therefore, he likes to listen to music only in

English in his free time and he also tries to speak English with native speakers. In addition to this, he likes to be up to date about vocabulary and he likes to buy different types of dictionaries.

For example, He told us:

“I enjoy listening to music in English always”

“I like to practice my English out of the class”

“I am interested in taking extra courses all the time”

We also found some of his beliefs about learning vocabulary. For example, he believes that vocabulary is essential in the process of learning English as a foreign language. Moreover, it is useful for understanding the language better. For that reason we may think that he has a good level of vocabulary. He also pointed out that: “Studying English since childhood gives you a good level of vocabulary”. Interestingly, he said that the age is not an obstacle for learning a second language since he started to learn English at the age of eighteen.

Furthermore, we discovered some interesting vocabulary learning strategies that he applies in his learning. One of them is that he watches movies in English without subtitles, he listens to music in English and when he does not know the meaning of a word, he looks it up in a dictionary. The other vocabulary learning strategies that he told us are “I read books to increase my vocabulary because I like to read a lot”, “I watch movies only in English”.

### ***A poor language learner with low lexical proficiency***

On the other hand, we selected the student Alejandro Tun for the interview as he performed very poorly on the Vocabulary Levels Test. Alejandro was in his second year at university at the time of this investigation. According to the interview, we perceived that he is a student with negative attitudes towards vocabulary learning since he did not show interest in increasing his vocabulary. For instance, he told us:

“I am not interested in taking extra courses to increase my vocabulary”

“I do not have a special hobby for learning vocabulary”

“I do not find occasions to practice my vocabulary”

Besides, we also found some beliefs about his vocabulary learning. At least, he believes that vocabulary learning is essential in the process of learning English. He also believes that knowing a certain amount of vocabulary is enough to speak a language well, though he does not like to study and learn a lot of words. We noticed that he is the typical student who believes that studying grammar is enough to learn a language. Paradoxically, he told us that he only reads interesting books, but he does not believe that reading a lot of books increase his vocabulary.

It is very interesting to notice that this student only apply a few vocabulary learning strategies, which appear not to be effective. In fact, when he does not know a word sometimes he only uses a dictionary. He told us:

“I do not have a special notebook for my new vocabulary; I only make notes in my books”

“I study my vocabulary learning it by memory”

In sum, Alejandro appear to be enrolled in a major in which he did not feel somewhat satisfied. We dare to say this because of his lack of interest in learning vocabulary and because of the negative attitudes and wrong beliefs about language learning in general. Also, it was interesting to observed in qualitative terms the relationship between beliefs, attitudes, lexical proficiency and the use of vocabulary learning strategies.

In this chapter, we presented the most relevant findings about our investigación, which embraced four main research questions. As result, we found out that most of the interviewiers that took place in our study have different beliefs and attitudes toward the vocabulary learning. Add to this, most of them do not have a particular strategy for acquiring vocabulary. It is important to mention that the good language learner with the high lexical proficiency has possitive belifies and attiudes. As a consequence, he uses a lof of vocabulary learning strategies. All in all, we



reported the most frequently beliefs, attitudes, and strategies toward vocabulary learning.

## **Chapter 5 Conclusion**

In this final chapter, we present the summary of results of the study, whose main objective was to investigate the importance of vocabulary among the students of the English Language Major at the University of Quintana Roo. Next, the limitations of the study are discussed, followed by some recommendations for further research. Finally and importantly, the pedagogical implications are drawn.

### **5.1 Summary of results**

In this regard, we pointed out a summary of the results according to each research question of our investigation.

RQ1. How do learners perceive the importance of vocabulary while learning English?

The conclusion that we achieved according to the obtained results is that vocabulary is essential in the process of learning English. Most of the participants supported this conclusion and think that vocabulary is important to communicate and understand a language. Therefore, another important thing that we found was that students who are in fifth year feel that they know enough vocabulary. However, students who are in third and fourth year find vocabulary more interesting and useful. Then, we realized that our experience as students, as we explained before, were similar to the results.

RQ2. Is there a relationship between the lexical proficiency, beliefs, attitudes and vocabulary learning strategies?

We concluded that this relationship was positive since the results show that positive beliefs, attitudes and effective vocabulary learning strategies have a great influence in vocabulary learning. That is to say, students who scored higher on the

Vocabulary Levels Test also reported positive attitudes and beliefs and substantial use of vocabulary learning strategies.

RQ3. Is there a relationship between beliefs, attitudes, and vocabulary learning strategies?

In this research question we decided to exclude lexical proficiency from the correlational analysis. Thus we confirmed somewhat the relationship stated in research question 2. We observed a positive relationship between beliefs, attitudes and vocabulary learning strategies. This means that students with positive beliefs and attitudes, regardless their lexical proficiency, appear to use effective vocabulary learning strategies, though not all the effective ones. In sum, the relationship among the three variables made sense in our study.

RQ4. What are the most frequently reported beliefs, attitudes and vocabulary learning strategies?

In general, the most frequently reported beliefs and attitudes, and vocabulary learning strategies appeared to be the most important for the learners. In fact, the results demonstrate that the top ten beliefs, attitudes and strategies were positive and effective for success in vocabulary learning. Interestingly, we also found that there was a relationship between these three main variables according to the top ten beliefs, attitudes, and strategies (see table 4.2, 4.3, 4.4).

## **5.2 Limitations of the study**

In this study, some limitations were identified. First, when we applied the instruments, some of the participants were absent in the classroom. Then, we had to change the date of applying the instrument. Since, we needed to have the same number of students. Then, we could see that there was no willingness of participation because most of them did not have enough time. Many times, we had to come back two or three times in order to have the same participants.

Another, limitation was the vocabulary learning interview guide that we used. Since, the questions were specific and defined. For that reason, students were

limited to answer more information. They only gave us a short answer and it was not enough for us to collect the correct data.

In a similar vein, we did not create a comfortable environment and perhaps, it was an obstacle for obtaining our objective. It means that when we went to interview them we chose the wrong place. Since sometimes the interview was in the classroom. Thus, they did not feel self-confidence maybe because of noisy of their partners who were in the classroom.

### **5.3 Recommendation for further research**

Ideas for further research involved out of this study. First, we consider that it could be an advantage to apply the instruments the same date with all the selected participants. In this way, the data would be precise and you will not need to come back again to apply the instrument.

Another suggestion is that if you are going to use a learner interviews, you ought to choose more than one poor and good learners. Since, if it were necessary to extend the data in your investigation, you would have the option to choose the best one. On the other hand, at the moment of the interview the interviewers should be relaxed and show a friendly attitude to achieve the objective.

Another recommendation is concerned with the appropriate place for the interview. In this respect, we suggest to choose a place without noisy but comfortable. In this way, maybe the relationship between the interviewer and the participant would be positive to achieve the objective.

### **5.4 Pedagogical implications**

This study is interesting because nowadays vocabulary is necessary in the process of a second language. Learners may have to take into account that the four skills and grammar are not all the tools for speaking and understanding a language. Therefore, vocabulary is a basic factor in the comprehension and communication of a language. Evidently, this does not mean that teachers are being ignored here; on the contrary, they are encouraged to consider our suggestions for the sake of their learners, since good teaching must be founded on

a good understanding of how learning occurs. Thus, it would be a good idea that teachers can design a signature of vocabulary in the English language major in order to have learners with a high level of lexical proficiency.

Another pedagogical implication of our study can be drawn on the basis of the contribution of the vocabulary level test and the questionnaire about beliefs, attitudes and vocabulary learning strategies, which were the items of our preliminary study. Teacher can also make use of them as a diagnostic tool for knowing the importance of vocabulary. Finally, teacher should show interest in the vocabulary teaching since we noticed that some of them are only interested in teaching grammar.

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# Appendix A

## Curriculum of BA Programme in English

### Common-core Subjects for all majors

1. Logic
2. Mathematics
3. Reading and Writing in Spanish
4. Regional Problems Seminar
5. Ethics

### Common-core subjects for majors in the Humanities

1. History and Regional Culture
2. Introduction to Economics
3. Introduction to Law
4. Political and Social Theories
5. Contemporary Social Problems
6. Research Methods for Social Sciences
7. General Anthropology

### Specific subjects for English major

1. Spanish Grammar
2. English I
3. Workshop on Advanced Spanish Writing
4. English II.
5. Listening and Speaking in English
6. General Linguistics
7. English III.
8. Reading and Writing in English
9. Psycholinguistics or Morphology
10. English Grammar I
11. Philosophy of Education
12. English IV.
13. Sociolinguistics or Semantics
14. English Grammar II.
15. Educational Technology
16. English V.
17. Regional Problems Seminar
18. Methodology of English Language Teaching
19. French I or Translation I
20. English VI.
21. Phonology y Phonetics of English
22. Life and Culture of US and UK
23. Materials Design
24. French II or Translation II
25. English VII.
26. Spanish-English Contrastive Analysis
27. Teaching Practicum I
28. History of the English Language
29. French III or Translation III
30. English VIII.
31. Literature I

32. Teaching Practicum I
33. Literature II
34. French IV or Translation IV
35. Advanced Research Methods Seminar

## Vocabulary Learning Interview Guide

### Briefing

- **Ice breakers** (.e.g. talking about personal questions, the university, likes and dislikes.)
- **Purpose of the interview.** Description of the structure of the interview.
- Answers to possible questions asked by the learner before the actual interview.

### Section 1 Beliefs about vocabulary learning.

What is your opinion about the role of vocabulary when learning English?

#### Follow-ups

- Do you think that vocabulary is essential in the process of learning English?
- Do you think that learning a certain amount of vocabulary is enough to speak a language well?
- Do you think that reading a lot of (books, dictionaries, magazines, etc) increase your vocabulary of English?
- Do you think that studying English since you were a child gives you a good level of vocabulary?

### Section 2 Strategies about vocabulary learning

What do you do to learn English vocabulary effectively?

#### Follow-ups

- What do you do when you meet a new word?
- Do you ever use a dictionary to find the meaning of a new word? Monolingual or bilingual?
- Do you have a special notebook for your new vocabulary? How do you organise it?
- How do you study your vocabulary?

### Section 3 Attitudes towards vocabulary learning

What do you like doing to increase your vocabulary?

#### Follow-ups

- Do you have special hobbies for learning vocabulary?
- What do you like to do to be up to date in your vocabulary of English?
- How do you feel when your teacher teaches enough vocabulary? And why?
- Do you find occasions to practice your vocabulary? How?

## **Debriefing**

- Interviewer's main points from the interview.
- Do you have anything you want to bring up or ask about before we finish the interview?

## CUESTIONARIO SOBRE EL APRENDIZAJE DE VOCABULARIO

### Sección 1: Creencias.

En las oraciones de abajo, encontrarás algunas creencias comunes acerca del aprendizaje de vocabulario. Por favor, lee cada oración cuidadosamente y contesta que tan de acuerdo estas con ellas marcando “no del todo”, “un poco”, “mas o menos”, y “muy de acuerdo”.

		No del todo	Un poco	Mas o menos	Muy de acuerdo
01.	El vocabulario es esencial en el aprendizaje del inglés como una lengua extranjera.				
02.	El vocabulario de inglés es difícil de aprender.				
03.	Aprender la gramática es suficiente para aprender un idioma.				
04.	Decir palabras de memoria es la mejor manera de aprender vocabulario.				
05.	Leer libros incrementa tu vocabulario				
06.	Leer y adivinar palabras desconocidas es una buena manera de aprender vocabulario.				
07.	El vocabulario es esencial para entender mejor una lengua.				
08.	Repetir palabras en voz alta es la mejor forma de retener vocabulario.				
09.	El uso de diccionarios hace que aprendas más vocabulario.				
10.	Saber un cierto número de palabras es suficiente para entender y hablar un idioma bien.				
11.	Estudiar cinco años la carrera de Lengua Inglesa te hace obtener mucho vocabulario.				
12.	Saber los equivalentes del inglés de todas las palabras en español significa haber aprendido el inglés.				
13.	Tu vocabulario de inglés incrementa a través de mucha lectura.				
14.	Saber una palabra en inglés implica únicamente saber su significado.				
15.	Puedes adquirir un extenso vocabulario memorizando palabras individuales.				
16.	Escuchar la radio en inglés incrementa tu vocabulario.				
17.	Ver paquetes de videos en inglés (Inglés sin barreras) te hace aprender bien el				

	vocabulario de inglés.				
18.	Vivir en un país en donde el inglés es la lengua materna te hace aprender bien el vocabulario de inglés.				
19.	Estudiar un curso en inglés en un país donde se habla el inglés te garantiza un buen nivel de vocabulario.				
20.	Tener invitados cuya lengua materna es el inglés te ayuda rápidamente a aprender más vocabulario.				
21.	Estudiar en una escuela bilingüe significa que tu nivel de inglés es alto.				
22.	Estudiar inglés a temprana edad incrementa la posibilidad de alcanzar un buen nivel de vocabulario.				

## Sección 2: Estrategias.

En las oraciones siguientes, encontrarás algunas estrategias generales del vocabulario del inglés. Por favor lee cada oración cuidadosamente y marca tu respuesta que más se aplique a lo que haces cuando aprendes el vocabulario de inglés. **“siempre lo hago”** indica que realmente usas esas estrategias en el aprendizaje de vocabulario; esto no significa que las estrategias serán adecuadas para ti si las usas. **“nunca lo hago”** indica que realmente no usas estas estrategias en el aprendizaje de vocabulario. **“algunas veces lo hago”** indica que realmente algunas veces usas estas estrategias en el aprendizaje del vocabulario. **“raras veces lo hago”** indica que raramente usas estas estrategias en el aprendizaje de vocabulario.

		Nunca lo hago	Raras veces lo hago	Algunas veces lo hago	Siempre lo hago
01.	Cuando no se el significado de una palabra, la busco en el diccionario.				
02.	Escribo una lista de palabras desconocidas en una libreta.				
03.	Escucho música en inglés para encontrar palabras nuevas.				

04.	Escribo oraciones usando el nuevo vocabulario.				
05.	Escribo la palabra y el dibujo para recordar el vocabulario.				
06.	Escojo varias palabras del diccionario todos los días y me las aprendo.				
07.	Hago un póster con dibujos del nuevo vocabulario.				
08.	Subrayo las palabras desconocidas en un texto y las busco en el diccionario.				
09.	Hablo con mis amigos para practicar mi vocabulario en inglés.				
10.	Memorizo la ortografía de las palabras (letra por letra).				
11.	Cuando trato de recordar una palabra, la repito en voz alta para mi mismo.				
12.	Cuando quiero recordar una palabra la escribo varias veces.				
13.	Asocio las palabras con acciones físicas que hago o imagino para recordarlo mejor.				
14.	Recuerdo las palabras que suenan parecido.				
15.	Trato de leer lo mas posible para que utilice las palabras que trato de recordar.				
16.	Grabo un casete con nuevas palabras y las escucho para aprender más vocabulario.				
17.	Una vez que busco la palabra en el diccionario escribo su sinónimo o explicación.				
18.	Cuando trato de recordar una palabra, repito su pronunciación en mi mente.				
19.	Agrupo las palabras en categorías (animales, vegetales, frutas, etc.).				
20.	Hago tarjetas de vocabulario y las llevo a donde vaya.				
21.	Trato de usar las nuevas palabras aprendidas lo más posible cuando hablo y escribo.				
22.	Ve películas en inglés sin subtítulos.				
23.	Uso objetos reales para aprender más vocabulario.				
24.	Uso el diccionario de CD-ROM todos los días.				

25.	Uso la Internet para aprender mas vocabulario (paginas para estudiantes de inglés.).				
26.	Leo una revista en inglés por día.				
27.	Cuando escribo cartas y ensayos uso el nuevo vocabulario.				
28.	Tengo un tiempo determinado para estudiar mi vocabulario de inglés.				
29.	Hablo en inglés con mis maestros y mis compañeros lo más posible.				

### Sección 3. Actitudes.

En las oraciones siguientes encontrarás algunas de las actitudes más comunes hacia el aprendizaje del vocabulario. Por favor, lee cuidadosamente cada oración y contesta que tan de acuerdo estas con ellas marcando “no del todo”, “un poco”, “mas o menos” y “muy de acuerdo”.

		No del todo	Un poco	Mas o menos	Muy de acuerdo
01.	Me interesa aprender nuevo vocabulario.				
02.	Disfruto realmente mis clases de inglés en donde se hace hincapié al vocabulario.				
03.	Me gusta escuchar música en inglés en mis tiempo libre.				
04.	Veo películas solo en inglés porque quiero aprender nuevo vocabulario.				
05.	Hablo en inglés con mis amigos cada que puedo para practicar mi nuevo vocabulario.				
06.	Me encanta hablar en inglés con personas cuya lengua materna es el inglés porque así puedo practicar mi vocabulario.				
07.	Me gusta tener una libreta con el nuevo vocabulario.				
08.	Me gusta ver programas de televisión en inglés porque quiero aprender nuevas palabras.				
09.	Trato de pasar mi tiempo				



	estudiando nuevo vocabulario.				
10.	Me fascina estar actualizado en cuanto al vocabulario de inglés.				
11.	Adoro comprar libros actualizados de vocabulario.				
12.	Me gusta estudiar más palabras con mis nuevos libros de inglés.				
13.	Aprender vocabulario es una pérdida de tiempo porque no me gusta.				
14.	Me encanta compartir mis opiniones en frente de mis compañeros usando el nuevo vocabulario.				
15.	Mi motivación me ayuda a estar preparado para aprender más vocabulario.				
16.	Me interesa tomar cursos extras para incrementar mi conocimiento de vocabulario.				
17.	Me gusta ir a Cancún o a Cozumel porque me gusta practicar mi vocabulario.				
18.	Me encanta hacer amigos en el Internet para practicar mi vocabulario de inglés.				
19.	Tengo un amigo por correspondencia y de esta forma puedo practicar mi vocabulario de inglés.				
20.	Me gusta cantar canciones en inglés utilizando un kareoke.				
21.	Me gusta participar en obras de teatro en inglés en la escuela.				

#### Sección 4. Acerca de ti

Matricula: \_\_\_\_\_ Edad: \_\_\_\_\_

Semestre: \_\_\_\_\_ Sexo: \_\_\_\_\_

Me considero un estudiante de inglés de nivel: principiante \_\_\_\_\_  
intermedio \_\_\_\_\_ avanzado \_\_\_\_\_

He estudiado inglés durante: \_\_\_\_\_ años y \_\_\_\_\_ meses.

He tomado cursos de inglés fuera de la universidad: sí \_\_\_\_\_ no \_\_\_\_\_

Si es así, ¿dónde y cuando?

---

**He estudiado inglés desde que era niño: sí\_\_\_\_\_ no\_\_\_\_\_**

Si es así, ¿dónde y cuando?

---

**He recibido talleres sobre estrategias de aprendizaje del vocabulario en inglés: Sí\_\_\_\_\_No\_\_\_\_\_**

Si es así, ¿dónde y cuando?

---

**He estudiado inglés en un país de habla inglesa: si\_\_\_\_\_ no\_\_\_\_\_**

Si es así, ¿dónde y cuando?

---

## Vocabulary Levels Test (Version 1)<sup>9</sup>

**Matrícula:** \_\_\_\_\_ **Date:** \_\_\_\_\_.

**Semester:** \_\_\_\_\_ **English Course:** \_\_\_\_\_.

This is a vocabulary test. You must choose the right word to go with each meaning. Write the number of that word next to its meaning. Here is an example.

1. business
2. clock \_\_\_\_\_ part of a house
3. horse \_\_\_\_\_ animal with four legs
4. pencil \_\_\_\_\_ something used for writing.
5. shoe
6. wall

You answer it the following way.

1. business
2. clock 6 part of a house
3. horse 3 animal with four legs
4. pencil 4 something used for writing.
5. shoe
6. wall

Some words are in the test to make it more difficult. You do not have to find a meaning for those words. In the example above, these words are *business*, *clock*, and *shoe*.

If you have no idea about the meaning of the word, do not guess. But if you think you might know the meaning, then you should try to find the answer.

---

<sup>9</sup> Schmitt et al (2001) University of Nottingham, UK

## Section A

1. birth
2. dust
3. operation
4. row
5. sport
6. victory

\_\_\_\_\_ game  
\_\_\_\_\_ winning  
\_\_\_\_\_ being born

1. choice
2. crop
3. flesh
4. salary
5. secret
6. temperature

\_\_\_\_\_ heat  
\_\_\_\_\_ meat  
\_\_\_\_\_ money paid regularly for doing a job

1. cap
2. education
3. journey
4. parent
5. scale
6. trick

\_\_\_\_\_ teaching and learning  
\_\_\_\_\_ numbers to measure with  
\_\_\_\_\_ going to a far place

1. attack
2. charm
3. lack
4. pen
5. shadow
6. treasure

\_\_\_\_\_ gold and silver  
\_\_\_\_\_ pleasing quality  
\_\_\_\_\_ not having something

1. cream
2. factory
3. nail
4. pupil
5. sacrifice
6. wealth

\_\_\_\_\_ part of milk  
\_\_\_\_\_ a lot of money  
\_\_\_\_\_ person who is studying

1. adopt
2. climb
3. examine
4. pour
5. satisfy
6. surround

\_\_\_\_\_ go up  
\_\_\_\_\_ look at closely  
\_\_\_\_\_ be on every side

1. bake
2. connect
3. inquire

\_\_\_\_\_ join together  
\_\_\_\_\_ walk without purpose

4. limit
5. recognize
6. wander

\_\_\_\_\_ keep within a certain size

1. burst
2. concern
3. deliver
4. fold
5. improve
6. urge

\_\_\_\_\_ break open

\_\_\_\_\_ make better

\_\_\_\_\_ taking something to someone

1. original
2. private
3. royal
4. slow
5. sorry
6. total

\_\_\_\_\_ first

\_\_\_\_\_ not public

\_\_\_\_\_ all added together

1. brave
2. electric
3. firm
4. hungry
5. local
6. usual

\_\_\_\_\_ commonly done

\_\_\_\_\_ wanting food

\_\_\_\_\_ having no fear

## Section B

1. belt
2. climate
3. executive
4. notion  
waist
5. palm
6. victim

\_\_\_\_\_ idea

\_\_\_\_\_ inner surface of your hand

\_\_\_\_\_ strip of leather worn around the

1. acid
2. bishop
3. chill
4. ox
5. ridge
6. structure

\_\_\_\_\_ cold feeling

\_\_\_\_\_ farm animal

\_\_\_\_\_ organization or framework

1. bench
2. charity
3. jar
4. mate
5. mirror
6. province

\_\_\_\_\_ long seat

\_\_\_\_\_ help to the poor

\_\_\_\_\_ part of a country

1. boot
2. device
3. lieutenant
4. marble
5. phrase
6. vein

\_\_\_\_\_ army officer  
\_\_\_\_\_ a kind of stone  
\_\_\_\_\_ tube through which blood flows

1. apartment
2. candle
3. draft
4. horror
5. prospect
6. timber

\_\_\_\_\_ a place to live  
\_\_\_\_\_ chance or something happening  
\_\_\_\_\_ first rough form of something written

1. betray
2. dispose
3. embrace
4. injure
5. proclaim
6. scare

\_\_\_\_\_ frighten  
\_\_\_\_\_ say publicly  
\_\_\_\_\_ hurt seriously

1. encounter
2. illustrate
3. inspire
4. plead
5. seal
6. shift

\_\_\_\_\_ meet  
\_\_\_\_\_ beg for help  
\_\_\_\_\_ close completely

1. assist
2. bother
3. condemn
4. erect
5. trim
6. whirl

\_\_\_\_\_ help  
\_\_\_\_\_ cut neatly  
\_\_\_\_\_ spin around quickly

1. annual
2. concealed
3. definite
4. mental
5. previous
6. savage

\_\_\_\_\_ wild  
\_\_\_\_\_ clear and certain  
\_\_\_\_\_ happening once a year

1. dim
2. junior
3. magnificent
4. maternal
5. odd
6. weary

- \_\_\_\_\_ strange  
 \_\_\_\_\_ wonderful  
 \_\_\_\_\_ not clearly lit

### Section C

1. balloon
2. federation
3. novelty
4. pail
5. veteran
6. ward

- \_\_\_\_\_ bucket  
 \_\_\_\_\_ unusual interesting thing  
 \_\_\_\_\_ rubber bag that is filled with air

1. alcohol
2. apron
3. hip
4. lure  
clothes
5. mess
6. phase

- \_\_\_\_\_ stage of development  
 \_\_\_\_\_ state of untidiness or dirtiness  
 \_\_\_\_\_ cloth worn in front to protect your

1. apparatus
2. compliment
3. ledge
4. revenue
5. scrap
6. tile

- \_\_\_\_\_ expression of admiration  
 \_\_\_\_\_ set of instruments or machinery  
 \_\_\_\_\_ money received by the government

1. bulb
2. document
3. legion
4. mare
5. pulse
6. tub

- \_\_\_\_\_ female horse  
 \_\_\_\_\_ large group of soldiers or people  
 \_\_\_\_\_ a paper that provides information

1. concrete
2. era
3. fiber
4. loop
5. plank
6. summit

- \_\_\_\_\_ circular shape  
 \_\_\_\_\_ top of a mountain  
 \_\_\_\_\_ a long period of time

1. blend
2. devise

- \_\_\_\_\_ mix together

3. hug
4. lease
5. plague
6. reject

\_\_\_\_\_ plan or invent  
\_\_\_\_\_ hold tightly in your arms

1. abolish
2. drip
3. insert
4. predict
5. soothe
6. thrive

\_\_\_\_\_ bring to an end by law  
\_\_\_\_\_ guess about the future  
\_\_\_\_\_ calm or comfort someone

1. bleed
2. collapse
3. precede
4. reject
5. skip
6. tease

\_\_\_\_\_ come before  
\_\_\_\_\_ fall down suddenly  
\_\_\_\_\_ move with quick steps and jumps

1. casual
2. desolate
3. fragrant
4. radical
5. unique
6. wholesome

\_\_\_\_\_ sweet-smelling  
\_\_\_\_\_ only one of its kind  
\_\_\_\_\_ good for your health

1. gloomy
2. gross
3. infinite
4. limp
5. slim
6. vacant

\_\_\_\_\_ empty  
\_\_\_\_\_ dark or sad  
\_\_\_\_\_ without end