Vocabulary Learning Strategies and their Contribution to Reading Comprehension of EFL Undergraduate Students in Kerman Province

Reza Kafipour
Department of Foreign Languages, Shiraz Branch
Islamic Azad University, Shiraz, Iran
E-mail: rezakafipour@gmail.com

Mohammad Hosseini Naveh
Rafsanjan Branch, Islamic Azad University, Rafsanjan, Iran

Abstract
The main purpose of the current study is to investigate the use of vocabulary learning strategies by EFL undergraduate students in Kerman Province and its contribution to reading comprehension. According to Schmitt's classification, vocabulary learning strategies for this study are classified as determination, social, memory, cognitive, and metacognitive strategies. In order to investigate the variables, 164 EFL undergraduate students in Kerman Province were chosen based on one-step cluster sampling. The data were collected by using Schmitt’s vocabulary learning strategies questionnaire (VLSQ) adopted from Bennett (2006) and TOEFL reading comprehension test. Descriptive statistics (means and standard deviations) and stepwise multiple regressions were used to analyze the data. The results for descriptive statistics showed EFL undergraduate students in Kerman Province as medium strategy users who used metacognitive strategies most frequently and social strategies least frequently. The results related to stepwise multiple regressions revealed only contribution of social strategy (one out of 5 categories of vocabulary learning strategies) to reading comprehension. It is suggested that in order to further validate the general conclusions of the current study, more specific ethnographic research needs to be done in future studies.

Keywords: Vocabulary Learning Strategy; Reading Comprehension; Language Learning Strategy

1. Introduction
Language learning strategies have received much attention in the studies that were conducted by Chamot (1987), Cohen (1998) and Oxford (1990). At the same time, the learner-centered approach has been incrementally applied in the educational system. Students are asked to have an active role and take responsibility in their learning process. According to Schmitt (1997), vocabulary learning strategies are even more important in second language learning with the increasing nature of vocabulary acquisition and its emphasis on large exposure to the language. In order to learn and use English efficiently, learners need to expand proper learning strategies for long-term learning.

Language learning strategies are directly or indirectly connected to the self-direction to a great extent. They are seen as the conscious choices of learners to solve problems and organize knowledge and skills (Cohen, 1998; McDonough, 1999), and according to Oxford (1990, 2001), they are often...
said to contribute to autonomous learning. Wenden (1991) believes that one of the characteristics of autonomous learners is their ability to apply learning strategies properly and independently.

Vocabulary learning strategies (VLS) as the main variable of the current study are a part of language learning strategies which have received much attention since the late seventies. However, a small number of studies have been conducted in the past to investigate the usage of vocabulary learning strategies (VLS) by Iranian EFL learners. Exploration of these strategies has helped learners use processes to improve their skills in a second or foreign language. According to Oxford (1997), these strategies can be affected by variables like motivation, attitude, gender, learning styles and etc. Furthermore, utilization of vocabulary learning strategies has been found to affect students’ performance in language learning (Sarani and Kafipour, 2008).

2. Problem Statement
Although, many articles have been conducted over the last decades but there are still no evident choices to specify which one is winning over the others especially in a classroom situation. In Iran, to the best of my knowledge, a small number of studies have been conducted investigating the use of vocabulary learning strategies (VLS) by Iranian EFL learners. In addition, not much has been published about teaching and learning vocabulary in an actual classroom context and an explicit guideline on how vocabulary is learned efficiently is still lacking.

According to Laufer (2003), many of learners match English words with their equivalents in the first language. They also concentrate on literal meaning of single words, and do not learn the meaning of the words in context. Because of this, it is difficult for them to understand a reading text while they are aware of the meanings of the words in it. This is due to the unfamiliarity of the students with vocabulary learning strategies. If they become aware of their own strategies they will try to learn other strategies which they do not use. This process will increase their success in learning English.

Next problem that Iranian learners may encounter with is about free production of words that they likely know. This can be mentioned in two ways. First, learners cannot recall or use the words in free writing situations while they can produce the meanings of the words. Second, students are not able to use the words with their proper collocates, for example, playing internet instead of surfing. It shows that many students have a limited range of vocabulary and this problem will influence their comprehension when producing the language. This is one of the problems of Iranian learners reflected in Kafipour’s (2009) study.

3. Objectives of the Study
The main purpose of the current study is to investigate the use of vocabulary learning strategies by EFL undergraduate students in Kerman Province and its contribution to reading comprehension. The second purpose is to describe the strategy patterns of university learners regardless of all other variables. Thus, the following research objectives can be mentioned:

1) To identify the level of strategy use of EFL undergraduate learners in Kerman Province.
   To explore the most and least frequently used vocabulary learning strategies by EFL undergraduates in Kerman Province.
   To find contribution of vocabulary learning strategies toward reading comprehension of EFL undergraduates in Kerman Province.

4. Research Questions
According to the above research objectives, the following research questions will be addressed:

1) Are EFL undergraduate students in Kerman Province high, medium, or low strategy users?
   What are the most and least frequently used vocabulary learning strategies?
Do vocabulary learning strategies contribute to reading comprehension of EFL undergraduate students in Kerman Province?

5. Significance of the Study
Strategy training studies will prepare particular information about why, when, and where strategies should be used (Brown, 2000). Teachers will be able to enhance the students’ learning when become aware of the number of strategies used by successful and unsuccessful learners. Furthermore, teachers can identify and instruct vocabulary learning strategies to learners and help students to become autonomous learners. In this case as Oxford (1990) mentions, students take more responsibility of their learning and more learning happens.

Second language acquisition depends on the expansion of a strong vocabulary to a large extend. According to Schmitt (2000), in second language vocabulary acquisition which is a sub-discipline of second language acquisition, researchers have focused their attention on the need for second language learners to utilize their vocabulary knowledge. This can be done through the help of vocabulary learning strategies.

Most of the latest studies are focused on general language learning strategies. Little attention has been given to vocabulary learning strategies and its relation to the variables like learning styles and reading comprehension. Furthermore, teachers and students will take advantage of vocabulary learning strategies survey used in this study. For instance, completing the survey can encourage some learners to employ some of the listed vocabulary learning strategies. Learners can also be aware of their strategy profile by knowing the mean score of their strategy use.

6. Literature Review
According to Oxford (1990), language learning strategies are particular activities adopted by learners to make learning easier, faster, more enjoyable, more self-directed, more effective, and more transferable to new situations. Utilization of learning strategies is very important in vocabulary learning and depends on learners’ attempts to a large extent. So, researchers have specified a large number of vocabulary learning strategies used by the learners. Vocabulary learning strategies are a subdivision of language learning strategies which have attracted much attention since the late seventies. A vocabulary strategy is a special instructional tool and way of going about directly or explicitly as well as the independent word learning skills required to learn words independently. According to Nation (2001), vocabulary learning strategies make learners enable to take more responsibility for their own learning. He believes that a large amount of vocabulary can be acquired by using vocabulary learning strategies. Fan (2003) suggests that all vocabulary learning strategies are more or less connected to the following five steps of learning vocabulary in a foreign language which have been identified by Brown and Payne (1994): (a) having sources for encountering new words, (b) getting an obvious image, either visual or auditory, of the forms of the new words, (c) learning the meaning of the words, (d) making a strong memory connection between the forms and the meanings of the words, and (e) using the words.

Some of the following studies have investigated how learners use vocabulary learning strategies. In the study that was done by Gu and Johnson (1996), a long questionnaire was used to specify which strategies Chinese university learners use to learn English vocabulary. After correlating the results with measures of vocabulary size and language proficiency, they found that use of strategies for retention was correlated with higher vocabulary size but not language proficiency.

Schmitt (1997), in his survey, investigated use of vocabulary learning strategies, usefulness of these strategies and specification of the most useful ones on 600 Japanese EFL students. Using a bilingual dictionary, written repetition, verbal repetition, saying a new word aloud, studying spelling of a word, and taking notes in class were found as most used and most helpful ones. The results showed
that dictionary strategies and repetitions were used more by Japanese learners while imagery and semantic grouping strategies were used fewer by the learners. Furthermore, word forms and mechanical memory strategies were emphasized by the learners of this study.

Briefly speaking, Nation (2001) proposes that a large number of vocabulary learning strategies are helpful at all steps of vocabulary learning and can be used to an extensive range of vocabulary. He points to the fact that language learners by help of these strategies can control their own learning without presence of a teacher. In addition, Nation, in his research, reveals that learners are very different in the proficiency that they apply strategies with. Thus, language learners should be instructed in use of vocabulary learning strategies.

Cusen (2005) in his exploratory study used diary to identify and classify vocabulary learning strategies of Romanian English major and minor undergraduates at university of Brasov. He used Oxford learning strategies classification as the analytical framework of his study. He found that advanced learners with a professional interest in the study of English seem to use almost all the types of strategies from Oxford analytical framework. The learners appeared to use other strategies relatable to the context of his study and/or to each individual.

A more recent qualitative study conducted by Lo (2007) was used to specify the perceptions of low achieving Chinese EFL students about use of vocabulary learning strategies and its usefulness in a high school located in Hong Kong. In this study, the vocabulary learning strategies questionnaire (adopted from Cheung, 2004) involved a list of 19 VLS which indicated the frequency (never=1 to always=5) and usefulness (not useful=1 to extremely useful=5) using 5-point Likert scales. Finally, the study showed repeatedly spelling the words, taking notes in vocabulary textbooks, repeating and reviewing strategies, and analyzing strategies as the most useful and the most frequently used strategies by students.

Finally, the most recent study found by researcher on vocabulary learning strategies was done by Wu (2008). He explored vocabulary learning strategies used by 10 vocational Chinese ESL learners in a vocational institute located in Hong Kong. Each of these learners was interviewed individually, and their responses were recorded with a tape recorder and transcribed by the researcher. Learners applied the following strategies to identify the meaning of the words: mental rehearsal (e.g. saying the word in the mind before speaking the word), imagery (use of pictures to remember new words), auditory representation (e.g. dividing the sound segments of the word to learn pronunciation), selective attention (e.g. paying attention to keywords in spoken English), checking the dictionary to find out the meaning of words and co-operation (e.g. working with peers).

Few studies have been done on vocabulary learning strategies and its relation to reading comprehension, and little attention has been given to them. Some of these studies related to reading comprehension will be mentioned here. Gu (1999) investigated use of vocabulary learning strategies and its relation to English language outcomes on Chinese university students by using vocabulary learning strategies questionnaire, vocabulary size test and the college English test. In this study, a higher number of vocabulary learning strategies were correlated with vocabulary size in comparison with reading comprehension. He believes that using various vocabulary size tests or other kinds of tests will have a noticeable effect on correlation results.

The results of Gu (1999) are similar to the results of Curtis (1987) and Cusen (2005). Curtis (1987), in his study, showed that vocabulary learning strategies directly affected vocabulary size of the students while they mostly had an indirect effect on reading comprehension. In the study that was done by Cusen (2005), vocabulary learning strategies had closer relationship with vocabulary size than other variables like reading comprehension.

Kiany (1997) investigated the relationship between extraversion and English proficiency of 237 Iranian postgraduate students studying in English-speaking countries by using Persian version of EPQ; and TOEFL, IELTS, MCHE, and cloze tests. The results showed a negative and a significant relationship between extraversion and TOEFL subcomponent of reading comprehension, that is, more extroverted learners tended to have lower scores on the reading comprehension. Furthermore, this
study showed that introverts performed better than extraverts at least in receptive proficiency tests and general academic achievement.

There are different vocabulary strategy classification systems; however, the classification presented by Schmitt (2000) is the basis for the current study. According to this classification, strategies are classified as determination, social, memory, cognitive, and metacognitive. Determination strategies help learners to determine the meaning by using dictionaries, guessing the meaning from the context and identifying the parts of speech and constituent elements. In other words, determination strategies are individual learning strategies that help learners to identify the meaning of new words without the other’s help (Schmitt, 2000).

Social strategies can be used to determine the word definitions by asking teachers, classmates and native speakers. In other words, social strategies can encourage learners to interact with each other and learn from each other (Schmitt, 2000). They can also be used to stabilize information by speaking to native speakers or even language teachers outside the class.

Memory strategies Memory strategies are a large number of strategies that learners apply to recall the vocabulary. In other words, Memory strategies help learners to acquire the new words via mental processing by connecting their background knowledge to the new words (Schmitt, 2000). As an example, when the learner encounters the word “dog”, he groups the word “dog” under the category of a four-legged animal since the learner is aware of the image of these four-legged animals from its background knowledge. Memory strategies are composed of three groups: a) using images to create a strong connection with the word and its meaning. These images can be shaped in the mind or drawn in notebooks, b) using strategies to link words together to help retrieval of vocabulary. For example, using words in the sentences make retrieval easier, and c) using vocabulary knowledge aspects to stabilize the meaning of the words. Specific examples include giving attention to the word’s phonological or orthographical form, memorizing affixes and roots, matching some words to their corresponding physical action, and learning the word class.

Cognitive strategies deal with mechanical aspects of learning vocabulary and are not related to mental processing (Schmitt, 2000). Repetition is one of the most commonly used cognitive strategies. Other examples are taking notes and highlighting new words, making lists of new words, using flashcards to record new words, putting English labels on physical objects, keeping a vocabulary notebooks, and writing the words many times.

Metacognitive Strategies mirror learners’ capability to find opportunities to learn and then record and review those experiences. In other words, metacognitive strategies include monitoring, decision-making, and assessment of one’s advance. They can also aid learners to specify suitable vocabulary learning strategies for learning new words (Schmitt, 2000). Specific examples include using English language media, studying new words many times, paying attention to English words when someone is speaking English, studying new words many times, and skipping or passing new words.

8. Methodology
8.1. Participants

Only Kerman Bahonar University and Rafsanjan Valiasr University in Kerman province offer English as a field of study. That is why these two state universities were considered as the clusters for the current study. Then, among these two clusters, Rafsanjan Valiasr University was chosen randomly. Finally, based on single-stage cluster sampling, the whole population of Rafsanjan Valiasr University, 164 EFL undergraduate students, was used as the sample of the study.
8.2. Instruments
In the current study which is a survey, one questionnaire and one test were used to collect the data. The questionnaire which was used in this study is Schmitt’s vocabulary learning strategies questionnaire (VLSQ) adopted from Bennett (2006). It is a 41 items likert-scale questionnaire with a reliability coefficient of 0.73; the reliability coefficient was obtained by the researcher of this study. The second instrument used in this study is TOEFL reading comprehension test which is extracted from the Barron’s TOEFL test and consists of 50 questions.

8.3. Procedure
Data collection was done in one ninety minute session at Rafsanjan Valiasr University in February 2010. First, TOEFL reading comprehension test was administered to the participants. After a short break, they were asked to answer vocabulary learning strategies questionnaire (VLSQ). The students were given 60 minutes to answer TOEFL reading comprehension test but no specific time was assigned to the questionnaire. They were asked to return it as soon as they complete it. The researcher himself administered the questionnaire and the test. The participants were assured that their responses will be kept confidential and will not affect their marks. All required information was given to the participants before administering the instruments, information like how to answer the test.

Data collected from the questionnaire and the test were analyzed using the Statistical Package for Social Science (SPSS) version 17. Descriptive statistics (means and standard deviations) were used to answer research question one and two. Oxford’s (1997, 2001) scoring system was used to find high, medium, and low strategy users. According to this scoring system, score 1-2.4 showed low strategy use, 2.4-3.5 showed medium strategy use, and 3.5-5 showed high strategy use. Based on this scoring system, mean score for overall strategy use and each category of strategies were calculated. Finally, stepwise multiple regression was applied to answer research question three. This statistical procedure showed which one of vocabulary learning strategies contributed to reading comprehension of the students. It also showed major and minor contributors.

9. Results
9.1. Descriptive Results
To determine to what extent the learners use the strategies and also answer questions number one and two, the mean score and standard deviation of overall strategy use (Table 9.1) and each category of strategies (Table 9.2) were calculated.

Table 9.1: Descriptive statistics for overall strategy use related to VLSQ

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Mean</th>
<th>SD</th>
<th>Min</th>
<th>Max</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>3.0627</td>
<td>0.45728</td>
<td>1.59</td>
<td>4.34</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

According to the above-mentioned Table and Oxford’s (1997) scoring system, the respondents of the present study were found to be medium strategy users with mean score of 3.0627 and standard deviation of 0.45728 for overall strategy use. The descriptive statistics related to the participants' reported utilization of vocabulary learning strategies, measured by the vocabulary learning strategy questionnaire was summarized in Table 9.2.

Table 9.2: Rank order of the reported strategies

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Strategy</th>
<th>Mean</th>
<th>SD</th>
<th>Rank</th>
<th>Strategy use</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Metacognitive</td>
<td>3.3752</td>
<td>0.66943</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>Medium</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Cognitive</td>
<td>3.2602</td>
<td>0.77744</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>Medium</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
As depicted in Table 9.2, metacognitive strategies (mean= 3.3752) were determined as the most frequently used strategies by the respondents followed by cognitive (mean=3.2602), memory (mean=3.1860), and determination strategies (mean=3.1728) respectively. Furthermore, social strategy was determined as the least frequently used strategy with mean score of 2.3194. Four categories of strategies, without social category, were used at a medium level which showed the learners were somehow familiar with these four categories.

9.2. Multiple Regression Results

To answer question number three and to find the contribution of vocabulary learning strategies to reading comprehension of the students, step wise multiple regressions was used. The following Table showed the contribution of vocabulary learning strategies to reading comprehension.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Variable</th>
<th>B</th>
<th>Beta(β)</th>
<th>T</th>
<th>Sig. T</th>
<th>R Square</th>
<th>Contribution</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Social Strategy</td>
<td>3.289</td>
<td>0.239</td>
<td>2.779</td>
<td>0.006</td>
<td>0.057</td>
<td>5.7%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Constant</td>
<td>33.606</td>
<td></td>
<td>11.792</td>
<td>0.000</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

The stepwise multiple regression analysis in Table 9.3 revealed among vocabulary learning strategies, only social strategy had a significant (p< 0.05) correlation and contribution (5.7%) toward learner's reading comprehension. The test results revealed a correlation between the independent variable (social strategy) and dependent variable (reading comprehension), which was 0.239 (multiple R). The variance value of dependent variable correlated significantly with independent variable. This can be explained through the power which is able to describe the regression model with the value (R²), which is 0.057.

Social strategy (β=0.239, T=2.779, Sig. T= 0.006) had a contribution as much as 5.7%. This circumstance showed that when social strategy was added by one unit, the level of reading comprehension was increased by 0.239 units, that is, students who used social strategies to find the meaning of new words were better at reading comprehension in comparison with those who did not use social strategies.

The value of R square (R²= 0.057) showed a correlated level and contribution between social strategy and the significance toward reading comprehension was moderate. The findings of the variants analysis was the F value= 7.721 (df= 1, 163) and is significant at P level (p= 0.000) < 0.05. As an explanation, the value of R² was 5.7% based on the contribution of the social strategy observed.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Sources</th>
<th>Sum of square</th>
<th>Mean square</th>
<th>Df.</th>
<th>F</th>
<th>Sig.T</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Regression</td>
<td>580.366</td>
<td>580.366</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>7.721</td>
<td>0.006</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Residual</td>
<td>9546.564</td>
<td>75.170</td>
<td>163</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total</td>
<td>10126.930</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

From the discussion above, the power which explains the regression model by using the stepwise framework revealed only social strategy had a correlation in contributing and having an affiliated effect toward reading comprehension.
10. Discussion
The results of research question 1 showed that EFL undergraduate students in Kerman Province were medium strategy users with overall strategy mean score of 3.06. Mean score of 3.06 showed medium use of strategies by the students. It can be concluded that use of various vocabulary learning strategies was not very common among the students. The results of the current study were congruent with the results of Sarani and Kafipour (2008). According to their results, medium use of strategies by Iranian students was due to their slight awareness of the vocabulary learning strategies.

The results of research question two showed metacognitive and after that cognitive strategy as the most frequently used categories of strategies (see Table 9.2). Such position of metacognitive strategy showed that most of the learners were taking control of their own learning. They preferred to use metacognitive and cognitive strategies more than the other strategies. This can be due to the existence of an extensive number of commercially produced educational materials. Today, internet and other electronic resources are easily accessed. Moreover, reviewing and informal testing is an activity which can easily be performed without presence of a teacher. This is unlike the results of most studies on Iranian learners’ learning strategies. Such studies showed that Iranian learners mostly preferred simple and direct strategies (Kafipour, 2010). However, the results of the current study were similar to the research done by Law Bik Yuk (2003). He investigated vocabulary learning strategies of 80 Chinese EFL students studying at medium secondary school through interviews, a survey and think-aloud tasks. In this study, metacognitive strategy was chosen as one of the most frequently used strategies.

Cognitive strategy was found as the second most frequently used strategy (see Table 9.2). According to Gu and Johnson (1996), cognitive strategy is a positive predictor of general proficiency, so the reason that cognitive strategy was used more frequently by EFL undergraduate students in Kerman Province could be that their level of general English proficiency was almost high. The results were different from the research done by Sahbazian (2004). She explored vocabulary learning strategies of 934 Turkish EFL undergraduate students through interview and questionnaire; students were studying at different universities in Istanbul. The finding showed that the situation in Kerman and Turkey seemed to be different. According to Sahbazian (2004), vocabulary learning for most Turkish learners followed more traditional rote memorization pattern that involved many mnemonic techniques, while vocabulary learning for EFL learners in Kerman Province followed more mental or mechanical aspects of learning.

Memory strategy was found as the third frequently used strategy which stood in the middle of other four categories of strategies. Thus, it was less frequently used than metacognitive and cognitive strategies but more frequently used than determination and social strategies. Such position of memory strategy was probably due to that rote learning was not popular among EFL undergraduate students in Kerman Province. However, the results were different from the research done by Bennett (2006). He estimated vocabulary teaching components of an intensive English teaching program for students who intended to enter universities in United States. He also investigated vocabulary learning strategies of the students through questionnaire. In his research, metacognitive strategy stood in the middle of other categories of strategies while in this study memory strategy stood in the middle of other categories of strategies.

Determination strategy was found as the forth frequently used vocabulary learning strategy in the current study, that is, EFL learners in Kerman Province used less vocabulary learning strategies which were mostly simple and direct and involved low level mental or mechanical processing in comparison with metacognitive, cognitive and memory strategies. This can be due to that EFL learners were probably familiar with determination strategies less than metacognitive, cognitive and memory strategies. The results were different from the research done by Sahbazian (2004). In her research, students mostly preferred to use determination and memory strategies to get the meaning while in this research determination strategy was in the forth position of categories of strategies.

Social strategy was found as the least frequently used category of strategies with the mean score of 2.31. This can be due to that English vocabulary learning tended to be done as an individual
process, thus, when students were faced with new words, they preferred not to seek other’s help. Besides, learning a word does not necessarily require social interaction. Moreover, the educational system in Iran is mostly based on individualism. The findings were the same as the researches done by Liao (2002) and Sahbazian (2004).

To find contribution and practical correlation of vocabulary learning strategies (research question three) toward reading comprehension, a step wise multiple regressions was conducted. The results revealed only contribution of social strategy (one of 5 categories of vocabulary learning strategies) to reading comprehension of EFL undergraduate students in Kerman Province (see Table 9.3). The fact that vocabulary learning strategies had low and indirect effect on reading comprehension in this study is supported by several studies. According to Curtis (1987), vocabulary learning strategies directly affect vocabulary size of the students while they mostly have an indirect effect on reading comprehension. Moreover, in the study that was done by Cusen (2005), vocabulary learning strategies had closer relationship with vocabulary size than other variables like reading comprehension. According to Stahl (2003), readability indexes include vocabulary as a major component, recommending that word difficulty has an effect on text comprehension. He emphasizes that the studies from readability formulae have ‘found that the most important factor in determining the difficulty of a text is the difficulty of the words’. Thus, vocabulary size is a reliable predictor of reading comprehension.

No metacognitive, cognitive, memory, determination or total strategies found to contribute to reading comprehension while social strategy had correlation and contribution (5.7 %) of significance (p< 0.05) toward learner's reading comprehension. It showed that teachers should try to encourage students to use more strategies to improve their reading comprehension. Moreover, the results were similar to the research done by Bennett (2006). He showed that various social strategies were contributed to vocabulary size and TOEFL results. He also found that social strategies were among the contributing strategies while they were used less frequently because of EFL instruction environment.

11. Conclusion
In summary, the findings of the current study have led to the following conclusions:

1) EFL undergraduate students in Kerman Province were found as medium strategy users. Metacognitive and cognitive strategies were determined as the most frequently used categories of strategies, and social strategy was found as the least frequently used category of strategies. The results related to the current study showed that among five categories of vocabulary learning strategies, only one category (social strategy) had significant correlation and contribution toward learner’s reading comprehension.

11.1. Implications
The results of the current study had the following practical implications:

1) Both lecturers and students can benefit from vocabulary learning strategies survey used for the current study; it was composed of 41 different vocabulary learning strategies. For example, participants, especially freshmen made aware of some alternative vocabulary strategies by answering vocabulary learning strategies survey. Besides, filling out the survey may encourage some learners to at least try and use some of the listed vocabulary learning strategies. Students by knowing the mean score of their strategy use will become aware of their strategy profile, their weaknesses and their strong points in strategy use. Moreover, the teachers can decide better how to teach and what strategies to use in their teaching. Vocabulary is not expressively taught in EFL classes in Iran, and it is neglected most of the time. Learners are not aware of the existence of large number of vocabulary learning strategies. This can be due to that some teachers themselves are not trained enough in this area. Thus, teachers first should be aware of various kinds of vocabulary learning strategies. This can make
learners to become familiar with different types of vocabulary learning strategies that can help them to learn the meaning of the new words much better.

According to Ellis (1994), researchers classify the good learner as someone who makes use of language learning strategies usefully, who controls themselves and others and who is familiar with learning process. Textbook writers should therefore equip learners with a larger repertoire of vocabulary learning strategies. This can help them to be more responsible for their own learning and to be more familiar with the learning process.

11.2. Suggestions for Further Studies

1) Vocabulary learning strategies may influence the four language skills. This study showed the effect of vocabulary learning strategies on reading comprehension. The effect of vocabulary learning strategies on the other relevant variables like listening, speaking and writing of the learners can be investigated in future studies.

Further research can be done to contrast the efficiency of vocabulary teaching strategies on various kinds of vocabulary like nouns, adjectives, adverbs and verbs. According to Wang and Thomas (1995), most of the studies done on vocabulary teaching strategies have just focused on nouns, and few of them have investigated other kinds of vocabulary. To estimate the efficiency of vocabulary teaching strategies, a comprehensive exploration of its efficacy on various kinds of vocabulary is needed.

According to Sarani and Kafipour (2008), few studies investigating vocabulary learning strategies have been done on Iranian EFL learners. Thus, further studies in relation to vocabulary learning strategies should be conducted on Iranian learners.

In order to further validate the general conclusions of the current study, more specific ethnographic research needs to be done. For instance, some strategies may not have been listed in the vocabulary learning strategies questionnaire used in the current study. In addition, qualitative data collection can be added in the future studies to get more realistic picture of the learners’ strategy use.

References


Appendices

Appendix A: Vocabulary Learning Strategies Questionnaire (VLSQ)

Before answering the questionnaire, please read instructions carefully.

a) There is no true or false answer.
b) Choose what you really do in learning a new vocabulary not what you think as useful to be used in learning English.
c) Answer one by one from the beginning without looking at the following items.
d) Answer demographic questions at the end of questionnaire.
e) Be sure that all your data will be kept confidential and no one will have access to them except the researcher.
f) Please write any other methods, techniques, or strategies you use in learning new vocabularies if not listed in the questionnaire. You can add them at the end of questionnaire in the space provided and mention its scale (never, seldom, sometimes, often, and always).
g) Please write any sentence, phrase, or word which is not clear or meaningful for you. Write them at the end of the questionnaire in the space provided.
h) FINALLY, thank you very much for your honest and careful answers to the questionnaire.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>When I find a new English word that I don't know, I…</th>
<th>Never</th>
<th>Seldom</th>
<th>Sometimes</th>
<th>Often</th>
<th>Always</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>A1 Check new word's form (e.g. find its verb, noun, adj., adv., etc)</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>A2 Look for any word parts that I know (impossible, possible, possibility, possibly, etc)</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>A3 Check if the word is also a Persian word (e.g. Caravan)</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
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<td>A4 Use any pictures or gestures(body language) to help me guess the meaning</td>
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<td>A5 Guess its meaning from context</td>
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<td>A6 Use a Persian-English dictionary</td>
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<td>A7 Use an English-English dictionary</td>
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<td>B1 Ask the teacher to give me the definition or a sentence</td>
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<td>B2 Ask my classmates for the meaning</td>
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<td>B3 Study the word with my classmates</td>
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<td>B4 Ask the teacher to check my definition</td>
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<td>B5 Talk with native speakers</td>
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<td>C1 Draw a picture of the word to help remember it</td>
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<td>C2 Make a mental image(imaginary image) of the word's meaning</td>
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<td>C3 Connect the word to a personal experience</td>
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<td>C4 Remember the words that follow or precede the new word</td>
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<td>C5 Connect the word to other words with similar or opposite meanings</td>
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<td>C6 Remember the words in scales (always, often, sometimes, never). If it is used more, I spend more time to remember it</td>
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<td>C7 Group words together to study them</td>
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<td>C8 Use new words in sentences</td>
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<td>C9 Write paragraphs using several new words</td>
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<td>C10 Study the spelling of a word</td>
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<td>C11 Study the sound of a word</td>
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<td>C12 Say the new words aloud when I first meet them</td>
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<td>C13 Make a mental image of the word's form.(e.g. if the word is noun I make a mental image different from its verb form</td>
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<td>C14 Remember the word using its part (im-, un-, -able, -ful, -ment, ex-)</td>
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<td>C15 Remember the word using its word form (verb, noun, adjective)</td>
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<td>C16 Make my own definition for the word</td>
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<td>C17 Use physical action when learning a word</td>
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<td>When I Want to remember new words and build my vocabulary, I…</td>
<td>Never</td>
<td>Seldom</td>
<td>Sometimes</td>
<td>Often</td>
<td>Always</td>
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<td>D1 Repeat the words aloud many times</td>
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<td>D2 Write the words many times</td>
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<td>D3 Make lists of new words</td>
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<td>D4 Use flashcards to record new words</td>
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<td>D5 Take notes or highlight new words in class</td>
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<td>D6 Put English labels on physical objects</td>
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<td>D7 Keep a vocabulary notebook</td>
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<td>E1 Use English-language media (songs, movies, the internet)</td>
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<td>E2 Test myself with word tests</td>
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<td>E3 Study new words many times</td>
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<td>E4 Skip or pass new words</td>
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<td>E5 Pay attention to English words when someone is speaking English.</td>
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Name & Family:
Student number:

Gender: Male Female
Semester: First Second
Year of the study: First Second Third Fourth

Do you have any Prior experience in English as living abroad, taking part at English institutes, TOEFL/IELTS classes, or having TOEFL/IELTS certificate?

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If you use any other method in learning new vocabularies not listed in the questionnaire, Please write them in the space provided.

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If a sentence, phrase, or word mentioned in the questionnaire is not clear or meaningful for you, please write it in the space provided.

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638
Directions: In this section you will read several passages. Each one is followed by a number of questions about it. For questions 1-50, your are to choose the **one** best answer, (A), (B), (C), or (D), to each question. Then, on your answer sheet, find the number of the question and fill in the space that corresponds to the letter of the answer you have chosen.

Answer all questions about the information in a passage on the basis of what is **stated** or **implied** in that passage.

**Questions 1-10**

Although speech is the most advanced form of communication, there are many ways of communicating without using speech. Signals, signs, symbols, and gestures may be found in every known culture. The basic function of a signal is to **impinge on** the environment in such a way that it attracts attention, as, for example, the dots and dashes of a telegraph circuit. Coded to refer to speech, the **potential** for communication is very great. Less adaptable to the codification of words, signs also contain meaning in and of themselves. A stop sign or a barber pole conveys meaning quickly and conveniently. Symbols are more difficult to describe than either signals or signs because of their **intricate** relationship with the receiver's cultural perceptions. In some cultures, applauding in a theater provides performers with an auditory symbol of approval. Gestures such as waving and handshaking also communicate certain cultural messages.

Although signals, signs, symbols, and gestures are very useful, they do have a major disadvantage. They usually do not allow ideas to be shared without the sender being directly adjacent to the receiver. As a result, means of communication intended to be used for long distances and extended periods are based upon speech. Radio, television, and the telephone are only a few.

1. Which of the following would be the best title for the passage?
(A) Signs an Signals
(B) Gestures
(C) Communication
(D) Speech

2. What does the author say about speech?
(A) It is the only true form of communication.
(B) It is dependent upon the advances made by inventors.
(C) It is necessary for communication to occur.
(D) It is the most advanced form of communication.

3. According to the passage, what is a signal?
(A) The most difficult form of communication to describe
(B) A form of communication which may be used across long distances
(C) A form of communication that interrupts the environment
(D) The form of communication most related to cultural perceptions

4. The phrase "impinge on" in line 3 is closest in meaning to
(A) Intrude
(B) Improve
(C) Vary
(D) Prohibit
5. The word "it" in line 4 refers to
(A) Function
(B) Signal
(C) Environment
(D) Way

6. The word "potential" in line 5 could best be replaced by
(A) Range
(B) Advantage
(C) Organization
(D) Possibility

7. The word "intricate" in line 9 could best be replaced by which of the following?
(A) Inefficient
(B) Complicated
(C) Historical
(D) Uncertain

8. Applauding was cited as an example of
(A) A signal
(B) A sign
(C) A symbol
(D) A gesture

9. Why were the telephone, radio, and TV invented?
(A) People were unable to understand signs, symbols, and signals.
(B) People wanted to communicate across long distances.
(C) People believed that signs, signals, and symbols were obsolete.
(D) People wanted new forms of entertainment.

10. It may be concluded from this passage that
(A) Signals, signs, symbols, and gestures are forms of communication
(B) Symbols are very easy to define and interpret
(C) Only some cultures have signals, signs, and symbols
(D) Waving and handshaking are not related to culture

Questions 11-20
Application for admission to the Graduate School at this university must be made on forms provided by the Director of Admissions. An applicant whose undergraduate work was done at another institution should request that two copies of undergraduate transcripts and degree be sent directly to the Dean of the Graduate School. Both the application and the transcripts must be on file at least one month prior or the registration date, and must be accompanied by a nonrefundable ten-dollar check or money order to cover the cost of processing the application.

Students who have already been admitted to the Graduate School but were not enrolled during the previous semester should reapply for admission using a special short form available in the office of the Graduate School. It is not necessary for students who have previously been denied admission of the Graduate School. It is not necessary for students who have previously been denied admission to resubmit transcripts; however, new application forms must accompany all requests for reconsideration. Applications should be submitted at least eight weeks in advance of the session in which the student wishes to enroll. Students whose applications are received after the deadline may be considered for
admission as non-degree students, and may enroll for six credit hours. Non-degree status must be changed prior to the completion of the first semester of study however.

An undergraduate student of this university who has senior status and is within ten credit hours of completing all requirements for graduation may register for graduate work with the recommendation of the chairperson of the department and the approval of the Dean of the Graduate School.

11. What is the author's main point?
(A) How to apply to the Graduate School
(B) How to obtain senior status
(C) How to register for graduate coursework
(D) How to make application for graduation

12. Where would this passage most probably be found?
(A) In a university catalog
(B) In a travel folder
(C) In a newspaper
(D) In a textbook

13. According to this passage, where would a student secure application forms for admission to the university?
(A) From the chairperson of the department
(B) From the Dean of the Graduate School
(C) From the institution where the undergraduate work was done
(D) From the Director of Admission

14. Which of the following document must be on file thirty days before the registration date?
(A) Two copies of recommendations from former professors
(B) A written approval of the Dean of the Graduate School
(C) One set of transcripts and an English proficiency score
(D) Two copies of undergraduate courses and grades, an application form, and an application fee

15. The author uses the word "nonrefundable" in line 6 refer to
(A) A process
(B) An application
(C) A check
(D) A date

16. The phrase "in advance of" in line 14 is closest in meaning to
(A) Into
(B) On either side of
(C) After the end of
(D) Prior to

17. The author makes all of the following observations about non-degree students EXCEPT
(A) They may be admitted after the deadline
(B) They may enroll for six credit hours
(C) They must change their status during the first semester
(D) They need not submit transcripts
18. The word "status" in line 17 could best be replaced by which of the following?
(A) Information
(B) Classification
(C) Payment
(D) Agreement

19. Students who have already been admitted to the Graduate School
(A) Never need to apply for readmission
(B) Must reapply if they have not been registered at the university during the previous semester
(C) Must reapply every semester
(D) Must reapply when they are within ten credit hours of graduation

20. What special rule applies to undergraduate students?
(A) They may not register for graduate work.
(B) They must pass an examination in order to register for graduate work.
(C) They may receive special permission to register for graduate work.
(D) They may register for graduate work at any time.

Questions 21-30

Fertilizer is any substance that can be added to the soil to provide chemical elements essential for plant nutrition. Natural substances such as animal droppings and straw have been used as fertilizers for thousands of years, and lime has been used since the Romans introduced it during the Empire. It was not until the nineteenth century, in fact, that chemical fertilizers became popular. Today, both natural and synthetic fertilizers are available in a variety of forms.

A complete fertilizer is usually marked with a formula consisting of three numbers, such as 4-8-2 or 3-6-4, which designate the percentage content of nitrogen, phosphoric acid, and potash in the order stated.

Synthetic fertilizers are available in either solid or liquid form. Solids, in the shape of chemical granules are popular because they are easy to store and apply. Recently, liquids have shown at increase in popularity, accounting for about 20 percent of the nitrogen fertilizer used throughout the world. Formerly, powders were also used, but these were found to be less convenient than either solids or liquids.

Fertilizers have no harmful effects on the soil, the crop, or the consumer as long as they are used according to recommendations based on the results of local research. Occasionally, however, farmers may use more fertilizer than necessary, damaging not only the crop but also the animals or humans that eat it. Accumulations of fertilizer in the water supply accelerate the growth of algae and, consequently, may disturb the natural cycle of life, contributing to the death of fish. Too much fertilizer on grass can cause digestive disorders in cattle and in infants who drink cow's milk.

21. With which of the following topics is the passage primarily concerned?
(A) Local research and harmful effects of fertilizer
(B) Advantages and disadvantages of liquid fertilizer
(C) A formula for the production of fertilizer
(D) Content, form, and effects of fertilizer

22. The word "essential" in line 2 could best be replaced by which of the following?
(A) Limited
(B) Preferred
(C) Anticipated
(D) Required
23. In the formula 3-6-4
(A) The content of nitrogen is greater than that of potash
(B) The content of potash is greater than that of phosphoric acid
(C) The content of phosphoric acid is less than that of nitrogen
(D) The content of nitrogen is less than that of phosphoric acid

24. Which of the following has the smallest percentage content in the formula 4-8-2?
(A) Nitrogen
(B) Phosphorus
(C) Acid
(D) Potash

25. What is the percentage of nitrogen in a 5-8-7 formula fertilizer?
(A) 3 percent
(B) 5 percent
(C) 7 percent
(D) 8 percent

26. The word "designate" in line 8 could be replaced by
(A) Modify
(B) Specify
(C) Limit
(D) Increase

27. Which of the following statements about fertilizer is true?
(A) Powders are more popular than ever.
(B) Solids are difficult to store.
(C) Liquids are increasing in popularity.
(D) Chemical granules are difficult to apply.

28. The word "these" in line 14 refers to
(A) Powders
(B) Solids
(C) Liquids
(D) Fertilizer

29. The word "convenient" in line 14 is closest in meaning to
(A) Effective
(B) Plentiful
(C) Easy to use
(D) Cheap to produce

30. What happens when too much fertilizer is used?
(A) Local research teams provide recommendations.
(B) Algae in the water supplies begin to die.
(C) Animals and humans may become ill.
(D) Crops have no harmful effects.
The development of the horse has been recorded from the beginning through all of its evolutionary stages to the modern form. It is, in fact, one of the most complete and well-documented chapters in history. Fossil finds provide us not only with detailed information about the horse itself, but also with valuable insights into the migration of herds and even evidence for speculation about the climatic conditions that could have instigated such migratory behavior.

It has been documented that, almost twelve million years ago at the beginning of the Pliocene Age, a horse, about midway through its evolutionary development, crossed a land bridge where the Bering Straits are no longer located, from Alaska into the grasslands of Europe.

The horse was the hipparion, about the size of a modern-day pony with three toes and specialized cheek teeth for grazing. In Europe the hipparion encountered another less advanced horse called the anchitheres, which had previously invaded Europe by the same route, probably during the Miocene Period. Less developed and smaller than the hipparion, the anchitheres was completely replaced by it. By the end of the Pleistocene Age both the anchitheres and the hipparion had become extinct in North America, where they had originated. In Europe they had evolved into an animal very similar to the horse as we know it today. It was the descendant of this horse that was brought by the European colonists to the Americas.

31. What is this passage mainly about?
(A) The evolution of the horse
(B) The migration of horses
(C) The modern-day pony
(D) The replacement of the anchitheres by the hipparion

32. According to the author, fossils are considered valuable for all of the following reasons EXCEPT
(A) They suggest how the climate may have been
(B) They provide information about migration
(C) They document the evolution of the horse
(D) They maintain a record of life prior to the Miocene Age

33. The word "instigated" in line 6 could best be replace by
(A) Explained
(B) Caused
(C) Improved
(D) Influenced

34. The author suggests that the hipparion and the anchitheres migrated to Europe
(A) By means of a land route that is now nonexistent
(B) On the ships of European colonists
(C) Because of a very cold climate in North America
(D) During the Miocene Period

35. Which of the following conclusions may be made on the basis of information in the passage?
(A) The hipparions migrated to Europe to feed in developing grasslands.
(B) There are no fossil remains of either the anchitheres or hipparion.
(C) There were horses in North America when the first European colonists arrived.
(D) Very little is known about the evolution of the horse.

36. According to this passage, the hipparions were
(A) Five-toed animals
(B) Not as highly developed as the anchitheres
(C) Larger than the anchitheres
(D) About the size of a small dog

37. The word "it" in line 15 refers to
(A) Anchitheres
(B) Hipparion
(C) Miocene Period
(D) Route

38. The word "extinct" in line 16 closest in meaning to
(A) Familiar
(B) Widespread
(C) Nonexistent
(D) Tame

39. Both the hipparion and anchitheres
(A) Were the size of a modern pony
(B) Were native to North America
(C) Migrated to Europe in the Pliocene Period
(D) Had unspecialized teeth

40. It can be concluded from this passage that the
(A) Miocene Period was prior to the Pliocene
(B) Pleistocene Period was prior to the Miocene
(C) Pleistocene Period was prior to the Pliocene
(D) Pliocene Period was prior to the Miocene

Questions 41-50

It was the first photograph that I have ever seen, and it fascinated me. I can remember holding it at every angle in order to catch the flickering light from the oil lamp on the dresser. The man in the photograph was unsmiling, but his eyes were kind. I had never met him, but I felt that I know him. One evening when I was looking at the photograph, as I always did before I went to sleep, I noticed the shadow across the man's thin face. I moved the photograph so that the shadow lay perfectly around his hollow cheeks. How different he looked!

That night I could not sleep, thinking about the letter that I would write. First, I would tell him that I was eleven years old, and that if he had a little girl my age, she could write to me instead of him. I know that he was a very busy man. Then I would explain to him the real purpose of my letter. I would tell him how wonderful he looked with the shadow that I had seen across his photograph, and I would most carefully suggest that he grow whiskers.

Four months later when I met him at the train station near my home in Westfield, New York, he was wearing a full beard. He was so much taller than I had imagined from my tiny photograph.

"Ladies and gentleman," he said, "I have no speech to make and no time to make it in. I appear before you that I may see you and that you may see me." Then he picked me right up and kissed me on both cheeks. The Whiskers scratched. "Do you think I look better, my little friend?" he asked me.

My name is Grace Bedell, and the man in the photograph was Abraham Lincoln.

41. What is the author's main purpose in the passage?
(A) To explain how Grace Bedell took a photograph of Abraham Lincoln
(B) To explain why Abraham Lincoln wore a beard
(C) To explain why the first photographs were significant in American life  
(D) To explain why Westfield is an important city

42. The word "fascinated" in the line 1 could best be replaced by
   (A) Interested
   (B) Frightened
   (C) Confused
   (D) Disgusted

43. The word "flickering" in line 2 is closest in meaning to
   (A) Burning constantly
   (B) Burning unsteadily
   (C) Burning very dimly
   (D) Burning brightly

44. The man in the photograph
   (A) Was smiling
   (B) Had a beard
   (C) Had a round, fat face
   (D) Looked kind

45. What did Grace Bedell do every night before she went to sleep?
   (A) She wrote letters.
   (B) She looked at the photograph.
   (C) She made shadow figures on the wall.
   (D) She read stories.

46. The little girl could not sleep because she was
   (A) Sick
   (B) Excited
   (C) Lonely
   (D) Sad

47. Why did the little girl write the man a letter?
   (A) She was lonely.
   (B) She wanted his daughter to write her.
   (C) She wanted him to grow a beard.
   (D) She wanted him to visit her.

48. The word "it": in line 17 refers to
   (A) Time
   (B) Speech
   (C) Photograph
   (D) Station

49. From this passage, it may be inferred that
   (A) Grace Bedell was the only one at the train station when Lincoln stopped at Westfield
   (B) There were many people waiting for Lincoln to arrive on the train
   (C) Lincoln made a long speech at the station in Westfield
   (D) Lincoln was offended by the letter
50. Why did the author wait until the last line to reveal the identification of the man in the photograph?
   (A) The author did not know it.
   (B) The author wanted to make the reader feel foolish.
   (C) The author wanted to build the interest and curiosity of the reader.
   (D) The author was just a little girl.

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Student number:

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