

VOCABULARY NOTEBOOK KEEPING AS A WORD LEARNING STRATEGY: STATE OF THE ART REVIEW OF RESEARCH ON L2 LEARNERS' USE OF THE STRATEGY

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ABSTRACT: *This article describes research on L2 learners' use of one vocabulary learning strategy, namely the strategy of vocabulary notebook keeping. Four themes for research on the strategy are identified: tips and recommendations on using the strategy, effectiveness and usefulness of the strategy for L2 vocabulary acquisition, gender differences in the use of the strategy as well as learners' perceptions and attitudes towards the strategy.*

KEYWORDS: vocabulary acquisition, vocabulary learning strategy, vocabulary notebook, L2 learners

INTRODUCTION

Laufer (1997) argues that vocabulary learning is at the heart of any language learning and language use. The vitality of the role of vocabulary in foreign language learning as such led vocabulary studies in the past decade to dominate the subject of L2 acquisition (Laufer and Sim, 1985). In this realm, the bulk of research on vocabulary learning strategies (VLS), i.e. strategies L2 learners use to help them learn new words, is on the increase (for a list of such strategies, see Schmitt's (1997) VLS taxonomy). This paper aims to provide a somewhat comprehensive review of the research carried out in recent decades on one word learning strategy that is very commonly used by many L2 learners worldwide, namely the strategy of 'vocabulary notebook' keeping. First, the strategy is briefly defined. The research conducted on the strategy is then reviewed taking into account the various themes it covered. Four themes are identified: tips and recommendations on using the strategy of vocabulary notebooks, effectiveness and usefulness of the strategy for L2 vocabulary acquisition, gender differences in the use of the strategy as well as learners' perceptions and attitudes towards the strategy.

What is a 'Vocabulary Notebook'?

Fowle (2002: 380) explains that a 'vocabulary notebook' is "a notebook kept by each learner specifically for the purpose of recording new and useful lexical items". Similarly, Dennison (2014: 55) notes that "a lexical notebook refers to any form of personal dictionary used to record new or useful vocabulary and additional word information beyond a word's meaning". She further explains that "lexical notebooks can record word meanings, parts of speech, word forms, collocations, synonyms, antonyms, context sentences, semantics, and pronunciation (Dennison, *ibid.*: 56). Vocabulary notebooks are frequently advocated as a way for students to take control of their vocabulary learning (Fowle, 2002) with the added benefit of improvements in vocabulary learning (Schmitt and Schmitt, 1995; Laufer and Nation, 1999).

RESEARCH ON THE USE OF VOCABULARY NOTEBOOKS BY L2 LEARNERS

Theme 1. Tips and recommendations on using the strategy

Schmitt & Schmitt (1995)

This study provides some theoretical foundations on what constitutes a good vocabulary notebook as well as practical suggestions on how it can be efficiently incorporated into the EFL classroom. The authors lay down eleven principles extracted from language memory and language learning research which L2 learners can use as a guide for making a pedagogically-sound notebook. A vocabulary notebook design drawn from the eleven principles is suggested. The suggested design acknowledges the incremental nature of vocabulary learning as well as the different aspects of word knowledge. The authors stress that teachers should foster independent vocabulary learning by L2 learners by encouraging them to learn words from as many different perspectives as possible as well as choose the learning activities that are best for them. The authors provide a sample schedule that illustrates how notebooks can be introduced into EFL classes. The type of notebook they advocate is likely to be much more interesting than traditional notebook designs and should keep students actively engaged in the learning process long enough to gain some tangible results.

Leeke & Shaw (2000)

This study aimed to establish a basis for identifying optimal vocabulary recording procedures by finding out what learners currently do. A questionnaire was used and learners who kept vocabulary records of some kind were interviewed and their records were examined. The findings indicate that two-thirds of the participants had given up making vocabulary lists upon entering the L2 environment and/or starting to read extensively. However, several students made interesting lists of various kinds and these lists differed according to the linguistic attitudes of their makers and the purpose for which they were made. Narrowly focused lists intended for help with production included many multi-word items and fewer translations whereas lists intended broadly for language improvement were single-word focused and had more translations. The authors stress that the learners should distinguish between the records they make in class under teacher direction which should be as linguistically effective as possible from those they make independently out of class which should be tailored to their purpose and the time available to them. It is concluded that the optimal listing and recording procedures are those which represent a compromise between linguistically and psychologically effective practices on the one hand and the amount of investment learners are actually prepared to put in on the other.

Fowle (2002)

This paper looks at how vocabulary notebooks have been introduced into a secondary school language program in Thailand as a means of increasing the learners' lexical competence and assisting them in the development of autonomous modes of learning. Possible outcomes are considered, particularly in terms of the development of the study skills and cognitive strategies necessary for independent learning. The findings suggest that vocabulary notebooks acted as an effective tool for exposing learners to a wide variety of vocabulary learning strategies as well as promoting learner independence in ways which were both meaningful for the learners and manageable for the teachers. Another extremely attractive feature is that they are not dependent on high technology or expensive resources and are thus accessible to all language teachers. The notebooks are nonthreatening for both learners and teachers and are therefore relatively easy to

implement in whole schools or language departments. The author suggests that, with some adaptation to the implementation process, vocabulary notebooks could be successfully used in a variety of contexts, particularly where introducing learners to modes of autonomous learning is another subsidiary aim of the language teaching program.

Ledbury (2006)

Based on Schmitt and Schmitt's (1995) study, this article describes a set of underlying principles for learning vocabulary as well as draws on practical experiences of training students how to organize their vocabulary learning. A training program for students, designed to promote the effective use of vocabulary notebooks that will both help students to expand their vocabulary and deepen their knowledge of how words work, is presented. The author suggests that an essential prerequisite for the successful use of vocabulary notebooks is the allocation of classroom time to vocabulary development and awareness-raising and that training students in the use of vocabulary notebooks should be an integral part of the learner training strand of the curriculum. He stresses that students will benefit from the notebook strategy and that they will improve in a number of aspects: a. their awareness of what a good learner's dictionary can offer; b. their ability to use a learner's dictionary; c. their word attack skills; and d. their ability to guess meaning of unknown words from the context as well as from the words' constituent parts.

McCrostie (2007)

This study examined the vocabulary notebooks kept by 124 first-year English majors at a Japanese university to determine: (1) the sources from which students choose words, (2) the types and frequency of words selected, and (3) the reasoning behind word selection. The findings show that the overwhelming majority of words selected by students originated from their course textbooks and class handouts. It was also found that students over-represented certain parts of speech and neglected others. Also, in terms of word selection reasoning, it appeared that students viewed all words they did not know as equally important. Moreover, the findings suggest that many students up to the intermediate level seem to have difficulty selecting words on their own and that those below the high-intermediate level have difficulty determining the frequency or usefulness of words. Finally, it was found that a large percentage of example sentences written by students contained serious errors. The author stresses that these findings should provide teachers and researchers with new information about vocabulary notebooks and that they show how standard notebook strategies do not always meet students' vocabulary learning needs.

Dennison (2014)

The purpose of this paper is to assist teachers in developing lesson plans that focus on teaching, modeling, and practicing the skills needed to keep an effective vocabulary notebook. This is because many students do not understand how to use the basic tools needed to keep a notebook and have difficulty choosing useful vocabulary to include. The paper analyzes studies of how lexical notebooks have been used in EFL classrooms and the results they produced focusing on practical classroom implementations. A series of lesson plans are implemented over the course of 10 teaching weeks, modeling and training Grade 7 international language arts students how to use lexical notebooks. Also, the paper gives a detailed explanation of the plans and the underlying theories and rationales that went into their design. Finally, the paper suggests ways teachers can assess the effectiveness of lexical notebooks in relation to vocabulary retention and vocabulary depth.

Theme 2. Strategy effectiveness and usefulness for L2 vocabulary acquisition

Makarchuk (2006)

This two-phase study explores learners' attitudes toward using vocabulary notebooks as a second language vocabulary learning strategy and examines the impact of the notebooks on learner vocabulary acquisition. It was found that although learners believed their vocabulary notebooks to be a useful aid to vocabulary acquisition, they were less than enthusiastic about keeping them. In terms of vocabulary acquisition, while a positive relationship was established between using vocabulary notebooks and target vocabulary acquisition, the effect was weak. It is suggested that this weak effect of notebook use on vocabulary acquisition may be attributed to the lack of learner enthusiasm for using vocabulary notebooks reported by participants which, in turn, may have resulted from learners regarding the vocabulary notebooks as being excessively burdensome in relation to the perceived benefits. Since learners in this study were adults, it may well be the case that younger learners would be more open to undertaking the work involved in keeping vocabulary notebooks.

D'Onofrio (2009)

The aim of this study was to investigate the effectiveness of vocabulary notebook use in the retention and accurate use of new words. Using a pre-post design, the study was conducted on secondary learners of English to investigate their knowledge of 50 words they had studied using two vocabulary notebook templates, one that focused largely on definitions and another that engaged learners in creating personal knowledge links. It was hypothesized that words entered in the notebook templates (i.e. treatment words) would be better retained than words that did not undergo any treatment (i.e. control words). The findings show that learning of the new words, both the notebook treatment words as well as the non-notebook control words, did take place but the expected differences between both word groups were not found. The study also investigated whether vocabulary that the learners selected themselves for study would be better retained than words selected by the teacher. Contrary to expectation, results showed an advantage for teacher-selected items. A final question was qualitative in nature and looked into both the students' and teachers' perceptions of the materials and the learning process which involved the use of the vocabulary notebook. Results showed that over half of the students found the activities relatively easy to use and most of the students found the two notebook templates introduced in the study to be useful. Although a little more than half of the students reported that they did not enjoy using the templates, the teachers favored them.

Walters & Bozkurt (2009)

This study investigates the effect of vocabulary notebooks on EFL students' vocabulary acquisition. Students in three lower intermediate EFL classes participated in the study. A vocabulary notebook program was implemented in one class over a four-week period, with the remaining two classes acting as control groups, following the same curriculum with the same materials but without keeping vocabulary notebooks. Receptive and controlled productive vocabulary tests revealed significantly greater learning of the target words in the vocabulary notebook group (i.e. treatment group). In addition, students in the treatment group demonstrated a greater tendency to use target words in free writing compositions. However, a positive impact on learner autonomy was not observed. As such, it may be concluded that vocabulary notebooks can

be an effective learning tool in EFL classrooms. However, positive impacts on learner autonomy may not be seen in the absence of appropriate motivation for language learning.

Baleghizadeh & Moladoust (2012)

This study compared teacher-provided vocabulary notebooks (TPVNs) with student-made vocabulary notebooks (SMVNs) given the challenge that EFL learners may not be able to decide what sort of knowledge to acquire about a certain word. The participants were 28 elementary teenage EFL learners divided into two experimental groups: TPVN and SMVN. The findings suggest that both types of vocabulary notebooks promote gains in knowledge of orthography, paradigmatic association, meaning and form, syntagmatic association, and grammar in a short time. However, learning vocabulary through TPVNs is more effective particularly in terms of productive knowledge of orthography and productive knowledge of meaning and form. Thus, the authors stress that teachers and materials writers are recommended to introduce TPVNs to language learners. Three days after the post-test, a number of participants from both groups were interviewed randomly to explore their viewpoints about each kind of notebook. It was found that the SMVN group did not look some of the words up for three reasons: (a) they thought they could guess the correct meaning from the context, (b) they were at times lazy, and (c) they did not have enough time.

Hirschel & Fritz (2013)

This study investigated the short and long-term effectiveness of two popular vocabulary learning approaches: 1) vocabulary notebooks and, 2) a Computer Assisted Language Learning (CALL) program with spaced repetition. The participants were 140 first-year Japanese university students studying English as a second language. They were divided into three groups. Whereas the first group used the vocabulary notebook approach (i.e. first treatment group) to learn new words, the second group used the CALL program with spaced repetition approach (i.e. second treatment group). A third group (i.e. the control group) was not given any treatment. The effectiveness of the two vocabulary learning approaches was measured via pre, post as well as delayed post-tests. The results indicate that, in terms of increases in vocabulary scores, similar statistically significant gains were made from the pre to post-tests for both the CALL and vocabulary notebook groups. However, in terms of longer-term gains, the CALL group performed slightly better.

Centenario (2013)

This study replicates the original study by Walters and Bozkurt (2009) on the effectiveness and classroom validity of the use of vocabulary notebooks as an efficient learning strategy for the EFL classroom. The participants were a school group of 13 Spanish learners of English. The study examines the learners' vocabulary retention through a vocabulary notebook program implemented in a four week schedule which includes: (i) a vocabulary pretest to a control group and a treatment group (ii) notebook program implementation in treatment group and incidental learning of vocabulary by control group through text reading and (iii) a vocabulary posttest to both groups. The findings show that whereas students from the treatment group performed slightly better than the control group in terms of vocabulary acquisition, none of the strategies seem to be totally successful in terms of positive perception by students regarding learning strategy validity or usefulness. Also, the use of a vocabulary notebook does not seem to have a significant impact on vocabulary retention by itself and hence some variations to enhance its learning potential are recommended.

Kömür & Özdemir (2015)

This study was experimental in nature and it aimed to explore the effects of keeping vocabulary notebooks on productive academic vocabulary growth. The participants were sampled from first-year ELT students at a Turkish university. The intervention was held during the participants' "Advanced Reading and Writing Skills II" course. The participants were divided into two groups one of which was the experimental group (they kept a vocabulary notebook) and the other was the control group (they did not keep a vocabulary notebook). The data were obtained in two sections: before and after the treatment. Before the treatment, the participants in both groups had a pre-test on vocabulary composed of three parts (namely true-false, word formation, and multiple-choice questions) so as to define their current level of academic vocabulary knowledge. Both groups used the same materials whereas only the participants of the experimental group were asked to keep vocabulary notebooks. The treatment lasted eight weeks at the end of which a post-test was applied to both groups to detect any differences. The results showed that the experimental group (vocabulary notebook group) performed better than the control group especially in terms of the word formation part of the test which requires the participants to use their productive vocabulary knowledge. It can be concluded as such that even though it may not make a major difference in the short term, keeping vocabulary notebooks can contribute to activating learners' productive vocabulary in the long term. The authors believe that vocabulary notebooks can make a significant contribution to learners' productive academic vocabulary if the problems with time and strategy training are addressed and the notebook strategy is incorporated to the curriculum from the very beginning of the academic year.

Vela & Rushidi (2016)

This study attempts to lend support to the claims advocated in recent vocabulary teaching literature that keeping a vocabulary notebook is an effective tool which promotes vocabulary acquisition as well as learner autonomy. The study analyzes the effect of vocabulary notebooks on EFL students' vocabulary acquisition and responsibility of their own learning. The participants are three groups of intermediate level students from a Macedonian university. Over a four-week period, students followed the same course material and syllabus. One group acted as the treatment group and kept vocabulary notebooks and the remaining two groups were control groups and didn't keep vocabulary notebooks. Scores from the vocabulary tests reveal that the treatment group students were significantly more successful than the control groups students. The findings lead to the conclusion that vocabulary notebooks are an effective tool that can be successfully implemented in the EFL classroom. The author concludes that using vocabulary notebooks is an effective strategy that motivates students to learn and one that can support learner autonomy if the appropriate motivation for language learning exists.

Theme 3. Gender differences in the use of the strategy

Uzun (2013)

This study investigated whether there were any differences between the vocabulary acquisition and retention level of female and male students with regard to two conditions: 1) formal instruction and feedback on vocabulary notebook keeping; and 2) the amount of information recorded in the vocabulary notebooks. A total of 147 participants representing five groups of second-year university students took part in the study. Four of the groups kept vocabulary notebooks, two of which (Experimental Group 1 and Experimental Group 2) received formal instruction and

feedback on the words recorded and how to keep vocabulary notebooks, while two other groups (Control Group 1 and Control Group 2) did not receive any instruction or feedback. The fifth group neither received any instruction or feedback nor kept vocabulary notebooks (Control Group 3). The two data collection tools were: (i) a questionnaire of vocabulary knowledge and retention that was administered prior to the study; and (ii) a test of receptive and productive vocabulary which was administered as a post-test. The findings revealed that extra recording of information related to the unknown words as well as the regular feedback provided by instructors improved vocabulary acquisition and the effect of vocabulary notebook keeping. However, no significant difference was observed between the impact of treatment on female and male students.

Theme 4. Learners' perceptions and attitudes towards the strategy

Chien (2013)

This study focuses on the perception and practice of 157 university non-English major freshmen of the vocabulary notebook as a vocabulary learning strategy. The instruments used included vocabulary notebooks, self-evaluation of keeping vocabulary notebooks, and instructional PowerPoint files. The participants were asked to complete a vocabulary notebook and turn in their notebooks twice, first during the mid-term exam week and later during the final exam weeks. They were told they could choose any words they would like to include in their notebooks. The findings show that most participants made paper-based vocabulary notebooks with one word per unit and that they tended to work on the words they did not know the meanings of. As for the word information included in their notebooks, they liked to record the word, definitions, Chinese translation, phonetic symbols, and example sentences but some missed elements such as expressions, synonyms/antonyms, or word families. In terms of their attitude toward the strategy of vocabulary notebooks, the learners had a positive attitude as the notebooks helped them learn English words and increase their word knowledge, particularly of word families. They used their notebooks to review the lessons and prepare for the exams. One interesting finding was that participants preferred making their notebooks in hard copy on paper because they could easily carry them around and review the lessons. Moreover, of all the required elements in a vocabulary notebook, the learners found that recording word families was the most useful because they could memorize word families and use them to make sentences. However, while making their notebooks, some of the participants had difficulties in writing English definitions, making sentences, and finding synonyms, antonyms, expressions, and word families.

Lai (2013)

The purpose of this study was to investigate how students respond to a vocabulary notebook assignment to understand their approaches to learning vocabulary. The data were gathered from 152 EFL learners using self-report questionnaires. The study highlights the importance of exposing language learners to a variety of learning techniques and providing them with guidance on how to use those techniques during the learning process. The findings show that keeping records of unknown words in a vocabulary notebook is helpful to students and effective at promoting skills necessary for learner autonomy. Students reported that this learning approach improved their English learning skills. These students subsequently became more attentive to their own learning, spent more time and effort in learning, and developed better study habits.

Table 1 charts the research carried out on the strategy of vocabulary notebook keeping providing a concise summary of it.

Table 1. Summary of the research on the strategy of vocabulary notebook keeping

| Theme | Study | Instruments | Major findings |
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| 1. Tips and recommendations on using the strategy of vocabulary notebooks | Schmitt & Schmitt (1995) | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Literature analysis | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Eleven principles extracted from language memory and language learning research which L2 learners can use as a guide for making a pedagogically-sound notebook are presented. • A vocabulary notebook design drawn from the eleven principles is suggested. • A sample schedule that illustrates how notebooks can be introduced into EFL classes is suggested. |
| | Leeke & Shaw (2000) | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Document analysis of learners' records • Questionnaire • Interviews | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Two-thirds of the participants had given up making vocabulary lists upon entering the L2 environment and/or starting to read extensively. • Several students made interesting lists of various kinds and these lists differed according to the linguistic attitudes of their makers and the purpose for which they were made. • Narrowly focused lists intended for help with production included many multi-word items and fewer translations whereas lists intended broadly for language improvement were single-word focused and had more translations. |
| | Fowle (2002) | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Document analysis of learners' notebooks • Questionnaire | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Vocabulary notebooks acted as an effective tool for exposing learners to a wide variety of vocabulary learning strategies as well as promoting learner independence. • The notebooks are nonthreatening for both learners and teachers and are therefore relatively easy to implement in |

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| | | | whole schools or language departments. |
| | Ledbury (2006) | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Literature analysis | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Allocation of classroom time to vocabulary development and awareness-raising is important. Training students in the use of vocabulary notebooks should be an integral part of the learner training strand of the curriculum. Students will benefit from the notebook strategy and will improve in a number of aspects: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> a. their awareness of what a good learner's dictionary can offer; b. their ability to use a learner's dictionary; c. their word attack skills; d. their ability to guess meaning of unknown words from the context as well as from the words' constituent parts. |
| | McCrostie (2007) | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Document analysis of learners' notebooks | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Students draw the words for their notebooks overwhelmingly from textbooks. Students favour certain parts of speech. Students have difficulty identifying high frequency words. Students view all words they do not know as equally important. |
| | Dennison (2014) | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Document analysis of learners' notebooks Literature analysis | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> The author provides examples for lesson plans that focus on teaching, modeling, and practicing the skills needed to keep an effective notebook. The author suggests ways teachers can assess the effectiveness of lexical notebooks in relation to vocabulary retention and vocabulary depth. |
| 2. Strategy effectiveness and usefulness for L2 | Makarchuk (2006) | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Vocabulary tests (pre and post) Questionnaire | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Although learners believed their vocabulary notebooks to be a useful aid to vocabulary |

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| vocabulary acquisition | | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Interviews | <p>acquisition, they were less than enthusiastic about keeping them.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • In terms of vocabulary acquisition, while a positive relationship was established between using vocabulary notebooks and target vocabulary acquisition, the effect was weak. |
| | D'Onofrio (2009) | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Vocabulary tests (pre and post) • Questionnaire (pre and post) | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Learning of the new words, both the notebook treatment words as well as the non-notebook control words, did take place but the expected differences between both word groups were not found. • In terms of whether vocabulary that the learners selected themselves for study would be better retained than words selected by the teacher, results showed an advantage for teacher-selected items. |
| | Walters & Bozkurt (2009) | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Vocabulary tests (pre and post) • Free vocabulary use compositions • Interviews | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Receptive and controlled productive vocabulary tests revealed significantly greater learning of the target words in the vocabulary notebook group (i.e. treatment group). • Students in the treatment group demonstrated a greater tendency to use the target words in free writing compositions. • A positive impact on learner autonomy was not observed. |
| | Baleghizadeh & Moladoust (2012) | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Document analysis of learners' notebooks • Vocabulary tests (pre and post) • Interviews | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Both types of vocabulary notebooks (teacher-provided and student-provided) promote gains in knowledge of orthography, paradigmatic association, meaning and form, syntagmatic association, and grammar in a short time. • However, learning vocabulary through TPVNs is more effective particularly in terms of productive knowledge of |

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| | | | orthography and productive knowledge of meaning and form. |
| | Hirschel & Fritz (2013) | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Vocabulary tests (pre and post) | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> In terms of increases in vocabulary scores, similar statistically significant gains were made from the pre to posttests for both the CALL and vocabulary notebook groups. In terms of longer-term gains, the CALL group performed slightly better. |
| | Centenario (2013) | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Vocabulary tests (pre and post) | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Whereas students from the treatment group performed slightly better than the control group in terms of vocabulary acquisition, none of the strategies seem to be totally successful in terms of positive perception by students regarding learning strategy validity or usefulness. The use of a vocabulary notebook does not seem to have a significant impact on vocabulary retention by itself and hence some variations to enhance its learning potential are recommended. |
| | Kömür & Özdemir (2015) | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Vocabulary tests (pre and post) | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> The experimental group (vocabulary notebook group) performed better than the control group especially in terms of the word formation part of the test which requires the participants to use their productive vocabulary knowledge. |
| | Vela & Rushidi (2016) | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Vocabulary tests (pre and post) Questionnaire | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Scores from the vocabulary tests reveal that the treatment group students were significantly more successful than the control groups students. |
| 3. Gender differences in the use of the strategy | Uzun (2013) | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Vocabulary tests (pre and post) | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Extra recording of information related to the unknown words as well as the regular feedback provided by instructors improved vocabulary acquisition |

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| | | | <p>and the effect of vocabulary notebook keeping.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • No significant difference was observed between the impact of treatment on female and male students. |
| <p>4. Learners' perceptions and attitudes towards the strategy</p> | <p>Chien (2013)</p> | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Document analysis of learners' notebooks • Questionnaire | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Most participants made paper-based vocabulary notebooks with one word per unit and they tended to work on the words they did not know the meanings of. • As for the word information included in their notebooks, they liked to record the word, definitions, Chinese translation, phonetic symbols, and example sentences but some missed elements such as expressions, synonyms/antonyms, or word families. • The learners had a positive attitude towards the strategy as the notebooks helped them learn English words and increase their word knowledge, particularly of word families. • They used their notebooks to review the lessons and prepare for the exams. • Learners preferred making their notebooks in hard copy on paper because they could easily carry them around and review the lessons. • Of all the required elements in a vocabulary notebook, the learners found that recording word families was the most useful because they could memorize word families and use them to make sentences. • While making their notebooks, some of the participants had difficulties in writing English definitions, making sentences, and finding synonyms, |

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| | | | antonyms, expressions, and word families. |
| | Lai (2013) | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Questionnaire | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Keeping records of unknown words in a vocabulary notebook is helpful to students and effective at promoting skills necessary for learner autonomy. • Students reported that this learning approach improved their English learning skills. • These students became more attentive to their own learning, spent more time and effort in learning, and developed better study habits. |
| Several of the studies that covered the other three themes also had partly dealt with the theme of learners' perceptions and attitudes via a questionnaire and positive attitudes towards the strategy were generally reported in these studies. | | | |

CONCLUSION

Although a common vocabulary learning strategy for many L2 learners, the bulk of research on the strategy of vocabulary notebook keeping is not sizable. More research into learners' use of this strategy is still needed. At any rate, the research carried out so far on the strategy has provided valuable insights. First, it provided guidance to L2 learners and teachers alike in the form of tips and recommendations on how the strategy should be taught, learned and used (see Schmitt & Schmitt, 1995; Leeke & Shaw, 2000; Fowle, 2002; Ledbury, 2006; McCrostie, 2007; Dennison, 2014). Also, in terms of its effectiveness and usefulness to L2 learners, the empirical research on the strategy has for the most part proven it a very effective and useful aid to L2 vocabulary acquisition (see Walters & Bozkurt, 2009; Baleghizadeh & Moladoust, 2012; Hirschel & Fritz, 2013; Kömür & Özdemir, 2015; Vela & Rushidi, 2016). As for gender differences in the use of the strategy, only one study (see Uzun, 2013) investigated this theme and it concluded that no significant difference was observed between male and female use of the strategy. As such, more research into this theme is perhaps particularly needed in order to verify any gender differences in L2 learners' use of the strategy. As for learners' perceptions and attitudes towards the strategy, the research that looked into this theme has generally shown positive attitudes from L2 learners towards the use of the strategy and indicated that learner autonomy and independence were reinforced due to its use (see Chien, 2013; Lai, 2013).

As far as the researcher is concerned, with the dominant control of technology on our everyday lives, there seems an urgent need for shifting the research on the strategy of vocabulary notebook keeping from the traditional paper-based note-taking to the various forms of digital note-taking available nowadays. Thus, we believe, it is now high time for researchers working in the realm of vocabulary learning strategies in general and those particularly interested in the notetaking strategy to explore the digital use of the strategy by the more 'modern' L2 learners as one new lane of

enquiry and preferably compare the effectiveness of using the strategy in both of its formats (i.e. traditional and digital) as another new lane.

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