

ABSTRACT

This study investigated Senior I (first-year) high school students' vocabulary learning difficulties. The purpose of the study was to (a) seek for reasons to account for vocabulary learning difficulties encountered by Senior I students, (b) investigate the vocabulary teaching techniques used in class, (c) find out the vocabulary practice activities used in class, (d) examine the vocabulary assessments given to Senior I students in class, and finally (e) explore vocabulary learning strategies used by Senior I students.

560 Senior I students and three teachers from the seven senior high schools in Taipei area participated in the present study. A vocabulary learning questionnaire was administered to the students, and the three teachers joined the oral interviews. Data were collected through the questionnaires for the students and oral interviews for the three teachers. Descriptive statistics were computed for data analysis.

Two major reasons that account for vocabulary learning difficulties encountered by the Senior I students were: (1) huge increase of vocabulary size in Senior I and (2) more demanding vocabulary practices in Senior I. Besides, the most popular vocabulary teaching techniques were conventional teacher-centered ways of presenting new vocabulary items. Vocabulary practices such as sentence making are frequently used in senior I class, followed by synonym and antonym practices. Traditional decontextualized vocabulary assessments were frequently used in class. Finally, the students did not utilize vocabulary learning strategies frequently to help their vocabulary learning. Along with these findings, limitations of the study and implications for future research have been suggested.