
**VOCABULARY LEARNING STRATEGIES EMPLOYED BY
POSTGRADUATE STUDENTS OF MATARAM UNIVERSITY IN
ACADEMIC YEAR 2014/2015**

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ABSTRACT

Vocabulary is crucial to language learning in which lack vocabulary knowledge will make learner difficult to learn the language. Vocabulary knowledge is affected by the vocabulary learning strategies. The purpose of the present study was to identify the vocabulary learning strategies employed by postgraduate students and also try to explore the most and least vocabulary strategy used by Mataram university postgraduate students. The sample of this study was 40 postgraduate students of English department in FKIP Mataram University in academic year 2014/2015. Vocabulary learning strategies questionnaire was used in this study to identify students' frequency of vocabulary learning strategies use. The result of the study showed that the research subjects used the vocabulary learning strategies in all five categories. The memory strategies (37.80) were the most frequently strategies by all subjects. Meanwhile determination strategies (mean=19.43) were determined as the second frequently used strategies followed by cognitive (mean=15.23), metacognitive (mean=13,26). The social strategies were determined as the least used strategies by all students with mean score of 11.00. In specific, looking at each item of category, the most vocabulary learning strategy used by postgraduate students was guessing from context (mean=3.33) which is part of determination category and the least vocabulary learning strategy used by postgraduate students was ask other people to discover the meaning of new vocabulary (mean=1.50)

Key Words: *Vocabulary Learning Strategies, Vocabulary Breadth, Vocabulary Depth*

INTRODUCTION

In language proficiency, vocabulary knowledge is considered as the most significant factor. It appears that the more individuals have knowledge of words, the better they become in using the language which is involved the four skills. Vocabulary knowledge is affected by the vocabulary learning strategies. Learners' vocabulary learning strategies affects vocabulary acquisition (Schmitt, 1977). However, study on how English foreign language learners acquire vocabulary effectively especially in Mataram is currently receiving less attention.

Although several studies have been conducted about the vocabulary learning strategies however the study focus on identifying strategies that learners use to create taxonomies of vocabulary learning strategies (Gu & Johnson, 1996). Vocabulary learning strategies can be define as learning a package of sub-sets of words as well as learning how to use strategies to cope with unknown or unfamiliar words (Siriwan, 2007). Meanwhile, Cameron (2001:92) defines vocabulary learning strategies as "the actions that learners take to help themselves understand and remember vocabulary items". Little attention has been given to what strategies learner use to acquire new vocabulary and what strategies learner used frequently to enhance their vocabulary. Moreover, not enough attention has been paid to vocabulary

learning strategies as crucial aspect of communication and the effect of vocabulary learning strategies on learner's vocabulary knowledge especially in Mataram, Indonesia.

In classifying learning strategies, each scholars have different ways of classifying language learning strategies (Intaraprasert, 2004). The vocabulary learning strategies in this study are consisted of five strategies based on Schmitt' classification (Determination, Social, Memory, Cognitive and Metacognitive). The Schmitt' (1997) vocabulary learning strategies were defined as follows: determination strategies are "used by an individual when faced with discovering a new word's meaning without recourse to another person's expertise". Social strategies are used when one asks other people (e.g., classmates or lecturer) to understand a word. Memory strategies help learners to acquire the new words by connecting new words to the background knowledge. The definition of cognitive strategies as "manipulation or transformation of the target language by the learner" (e.g., taking notes and highlighting new words). Finally, metacognitive strategies involved the monitoring, decision-making, and assessment of the learning progress.

The purpose of this study is to investigate to identify the vocabulary learning strategies used by postgraduate students of English department in Mataram University academic year 2014/2015. Moreover,

this study will also investigate the most frequent and least strategies used by the postgraduate students. The outcome may give participant of the study better understanding regarding how and what vocabulary learning strategies they use and also

RESEARCH METHOD

The participants in this study were postgraduate students of Mataram University in academic year 2014/2015. There are 40 students participate in this study. Their age ranged from 25 to 45. The

Research Instrument

The questionnaire was chosen to investigate the frequency of vocabulary learning strategies (VLS) postgraduate use. It consists of 40 items related to VLS. The main aim of using the vocabulary learning strategies questionnaire is to draw out type of vocabulary learning strategies used frequently by postgraduate students. This study used Schmitt's (1997) taxonomy of vocabulary learning strategies as base classification. The questionnaire is divided into two parts. The content of

Technique of Data Analysis

Before administering questionnaire, the participants' data was taken in order to anticipate any mistake for data input. Such data are their personal data which are relevant for the current study and attendance list. Personal data are taken only once at the test. Specific instructions before each test and questionnaire will be given to avoid technical

raise their awareness about various vocabulary strategies and provide information to help learners to acquire new vocabulary to their learning experience and cognitive development.

participants in this study are postgraduate students of English language department. Therefore, all of the participants are the same in terms of educational language background.

first part is participants' personal background information. The second part was 40 items vocabulary learning strategies, which were further divided into five subcategories: Determination Strategies (DET), Social Strategies (SOC), Memory Strategies (MEM), Cognitive Strategies (COG), and Metacognitive Strategies (MET). The questionnaire used a 4-point rating scale, the scale is valued 1 = seldom, 2 = Sometimes, 3 = Often and 4 = Always or almost always.

mistake. The result of the questionnaire will be scored based on the scoring system explained in research instrument. Descriptive analysis of the vocabulary learning strategies questionnaire (VLSQ) items to identify the overall pattern of VLS used by the respondents.

RESEARCH FINDING

The score average for each of the five categories was calculated by dividing the total mean scores of the strategies by the number of strategies. The mean score for each strategy was calculated by dividing the subjects' total scores by the number of the subjects. The result of the study

showed that the research subjects used the vocabulary learning strategies in all five categories. The descriptive statistics related to the students' use of vocabulary learning strategies reported in the vocabulary learning strategy questionnaire was summarized in the Table 4.1 below.

Descriptive Statistics of Vocabulary Learning Strategies

	Minimum	Maximum	Mean	Std. Deviation
Determination	14.00	26.00	19.4333	2.86095
Social	6.00	17.00	11.0000	2.71649
Memory	25.00	51.00	37.8000	6.02523
Cognitive	8.00	23.00	15.2333	3.82986
Metacognitive	10.00	17.00	13.2667	2.31834

The table above showed, the mean score of determination strategy, social strategy, memory strategy, cognitive strategy and metacognitive strategy are 19.43, 11.00, 37.80, 15.23, and 13.26 respectively. According to Table 4.10, the memory strategies (37.80) were the most frequently strategies by all subjects. Meanwhile determination strategies (mean=19.43) were determined as the second frequently used strategies

followed by cognitive (mean=15.23), metacognitive (mean=13.26). The social strategies were determined as the least used strategies by all students with mean score of 11.00. In specific, the most and the least strategy of vocabulary learning of postgraduate students can be seen in the following table based on each category. The table below showed the most and least strategy used by regarding at means score.

Descriptive Analysis of Items in Vocabulary Learning Strategies

No	Vocabulary Learning Strategies	Min	Max	Mean	Std. Deviation
1	Guess words' meaning from word classes (e.g. find its verb, noun,adj., adv., etc	1	4	2.60	.968
2	Look for any word parts that I know (impossible, possible, possibility, possibly, etc)	1	4	2.73	1.048
3	Guess the meaning by analyzing the structure of words (prefixes, roots, and suffixes) to discover the meaning of new vocabulary items	1	4	2.73	.868

4	Use any pictures or gestures(body language) to help me guess the meaning	1	4	2.53	.860
5	Guess its meaning from context	1	4	3.33	.802
6	Use a Indonesian-English dictionary	1	4	2.63	1.033
7	Use an English-English dictionary	1	4	2.87	.860
8	Ask the teacher/lecturer to give me the definition of a word	1	3	1.63	.669
9	Ask my classmates or friends to discover the meaning vocabulary items	1	4	2.17	.699
10	Ask other people, such as members of one's family, native speakers of English, to discover the meaning of new vocabulary items	1	3	1.50	.682
11	Study the word with my classmates	1	4	2.27	.944
12	Ask the teacher to check my definition	1	4	1.63	.809
13	Talk with native speakers	1	3	1.80	.664
14	Draw a picture of the word to help remember it	1	3	1.90	.845
15	Make a mental image (imaginary image) of the word's meaning	1	4	2.53	.860
16	Connect the word to a personal experience	1	4	2.60	.770
17	Connect the word to other words with similar or opposite meanings	1	4	3.00	.643
18	Remember the words in scales (always, often, sometimes, never). If it is used more, I spend more time to remember it	1	4	3.03	.928
19	Group words together to study them	1	4	2.30	1.022
20	Use new words in sentences	1	4	2.87	.730
21	Write paragraphs using several new words	1	4	2.57	.774
22	Study the spelling of a word	1	4	2.63	.890
23	Study the sound of a word	2	4	3.23	.504
24	Group vocabulary items according to the Similarity of meaning, pronunciation and spelling to retain the knowledge of vocabulary items	1	4	2.07	.868
25	Remember the word using its part (im-, un-, -able, -ful, -ment, ex-)	1	4	2.37	.928
26	Remember the word using its word form (verb, noun, adjective)	1	4	2.47	.937
27	Make my own definition for the word	1	4	2.07	.785

28	Use physical action when learning a word	1	4	2.17	.913
29	Repeat the words aloud many times	1	4	2.53	.900
30	Write the words many times	1	4	2.13	.819
31	Make lists of new words	1	4	2.17	.834
32	Use flashcards to record new words	1	3	1.83	.699
33	Take notes or highlight new words in class	1	4	2.73	.740
34	Put English labels on physical objects	1	4	1.73	.907
35	Make a vocabulary list with meanings and example in a notebook	1	4	2.10	.923
36	Use English-language media (songs, movies, the internet)	2	4	3.20	.610
37	Test myself with word tests	1	4	2.33	.884
38	Study new words many times	1	4	2.53	.900
39	Skip or pass new words	1	4	2.20	.847
40	Pay attention to English words when someone is speaking English.	1	4	3.00	.871

As presented in Table 4.2, for the determination strategies the strategy of guessing from context (3.33) is the most frequently used strategies by postgraduate students in Mataram University. Meanwhile, Guess words' meaning from word classes (2.60) was determined as the least used strategy (mean=3.29) by postgraduate students.

For the social strategies, the students used the strategy of study the word with classmates for meaning in learning English vocabulary as the most frequently used strategy (2.27). For the least used strategy, the strategy of ask other people, such as members of one's family, native speakers of English, to discover the meaning of new vocabulary items was determined as the least used strategy (mean=1.50) by students.

Another group of strategies was memory strategies. In a closer look by strategies in this category, the students used the strategy of connect the word to other words with similar or opposite meanings (3.00), remember the words in scales (3.03), study the sound of a word (3.23) as the most strategy used by postgraduate students. While the strategy of draw a picture of the word when learning a word was determined as the least used strategy (mean=1.90) by the students. Many researchers (Meara, 1995; Schmitt, 2000) say that using memorization techniques will have better results for lower proficiency levels learner meanwhile, advanced learners will use context-based which is classified as cognitive strategy. This study relevant with study by Fan (2003), the study

showed that the strategies involving reviewing the words recently learned are considered as the most used and helpful strategies. However, the use of memorization strategies among advanced learners according Waldvogel (2013) suggests that memorization strategies might be appropriate for beginner level learner of foreign language learners who are in the initial receptive knowledge-building stage of vocabulary growth.

The students used the strategy of taking note in class as the most frequently strategy used by postgraduate students (2.73). While the strategy of put English labels on physical objects was the least strategy used by postgraduate students. The result of this different from study conducted by Wang (2004), he found that Cognitive Strategies, such as word repetition to Metacognitive and Social Strategies were the most strategies used by the students.

CONCLUSION

In conclusion, the study showed that the postgraduate students of Mataram University used the vocabulary learning strategies in all five categories. The most vocabulary learning strategy used by postgraduate students was guessing from context (mean=3.33) which is

The last category, metacognitive strategies, use English-language media such as songs, movies, the internet (mean=3.20) was the most frequently strategies used by postgraduate students, while the strategy of skip or pass new words (mean=2.20) was determined as the least strategy used by postgraduate students. This finding supports Ellis' (1995) that experienced and successful language learners —use sophisticated metacognitive knowledge to choose suitable cognitive learning strategies appropriate to the task of vocabulary acquisition. Another research by Sagarra and Alba (2006) found that the students used more metacognitive learning strategies to improve their vocabulary knowledge than used repetition and other memorization techniques.

part of determination category and the least vocabulary learning strategy used by postgraduate students was ask other people, such as members of one's family, native speakers of English (mean=1.50), to discover the meaning of new vocabulary which is part of social category.

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