

VOCABULARY LEARNING STRATEGIES AND VOCABULARY SIZE OF THE INDONESIAN SENIOR HIGH STUDENTS

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Abstract

Penelitian ini bertujuan untuk meneliti hubungan antara strategi belajar kosakata siswa dengan penguasaan kosakata bahasa Inggris. Subyek penelitian ini sebanyak 120 siswa pada tahun ke dua di MAN 1 Bandar Lampung. Teknik pengumpulan data yang digunakan adalah kuesioner dan *vocabulary size test*. Desain penelitian adalah *ex post facto design*. Hasil penelitian menunjukkan bahwa nilai korelasi antara kedua variabel adalah 0.67 dan nilai pengaruhnya adalah 0.45. Lebih jauh, ditemukan data bahwa sosial strategi mempunyai hubungan yang positif dengan siswa yang mendapat skor antara 60-100 pada tes kosakata, sementara itu determinasi strategi adalah strategi yang digunakan oleh sebagian besar siswa yang mendapat skor kosakata antara 40-59. Berdasarkan pada hasil, dapat disimpulkan bahwa ada hubungan antara strategi belajar kosakata siswa dan penguasaan kosakata bahasa Inggris.

The objective of this research was to investigate the correlation between students' vocabulary learning strategies and their vocabulary size. The subjects were 120 second year students of MAN 1 Bandar Lampung. The data collecting techniques were questionnaire and vocabulary size test. The design was *ex post facto design*. The result showed that the correlation value between the two variables was 0.67 and the value of X toward Y was 0.45. Furthermore, it was found that the social strategy had positive correlation with the students who got 60-100 range scores on vocabulary size test, while the determination strategy was the strategy used by the majority of students who got 40-59 range scores on vocabulary size test. Based on the result, it could be concluded that there was a significant correlation between students' vocabulary learning strategies and their vocabulary size.

Keywords: correlation, vocabulary learning strategies, vocabulary size.

INTRODUCTION

To master English language, students should pay attention to many aspects of language (grammatical structure, vocabulary, and so on) in order to achieve a high degree of competence in English. And one of the most important aspects is vocabulary. McCarthy (1990:8) emphasizes that "No matter how well the student learns grammar, no matter how successfully the sounds of L2 are mastered, without words to express a wider range of meanings, communication in an L2 just cannot happen in any meaningful way". This indicates that vocabulary size is fundamental in communication both in spoken and written.

Students might have problems in their communication and cannot write when they want to convey their opinion or idea unless their vocabulary size is adequate. Nation (2001:9) states that "foreign language learners need to know a large number of words. While this may be useful in the long-term, it is not an essential short-term goal". Thus, it is important to find out ways that will be useful to help the students improving their vocabulary size.

Based on the researcher's pre-observation while having PPL in SMP N 2 Pematang Sawa, it was found that students had their own way to deal with a new word such as: taking a note, looking up in dictionary, using picture etc. In the context of learning English as foreign language the way they learn new vocabulary is called as vocabulary learning strategies. This vocabulary learning strategy helps them to learn vocabulary. For example, some students learn and memorize a new word once that has been indirectly taught. While, other learners

may look up the meaning of new words in a bilingual dictionary. In reality, some students are not aware about their vocabulary learning strategy. In addition, there are students who do not know about vocabulary learning strategy even though they are using it unconsciously. Those students do not know whether their strategy is good or not, as the result their vocabulary size is still poor. Different students may employ different strategies to learn vocabulary. The difference of strategies might affect their vocabulary size itself. Based on the problem above, this current study will analyse the correlation between vocabulary learning strategies and vocabulary size of the second year students at MAN 1 Bandar Lampung.

Therefore, teachers should be aware of the basic of vocabulary learning strategies. They should also know how students adopt the strategies effectively. Thus the principal focus of this study is to examine which vocabulary learning strategies that the students use are effective and useful so that it will help teachers to design lesson plans and to construct practical instructions in order to effectively support students' competence in English language.

METHOD

The design of this research is *ex post facto design*. Hatch and Farhady (1982) state that ex post facto design is often used when the researcher does not have control over the selection and manipulation of the independent variable. The subjects of this research are 120 second year students of MAN 1 Bandar Lampung selected by using simple random sampling.

The data collecting techniques are questionnaire and vocabulary size test. The researcher would collect the data regarding students' vocabulary learning strategies and their vocabulary size by giving questionnaire and vocabulary size test. Then, the researcher analyzes the correlation between two variables by using Pearson Product Moment Correlation. After finding the coefficient correlation, the researcher finds out the criterion of the hypothesis acceptance. Two hypotheses are proposed as follows $H_0 (r_{\text{value}} < r_{\text{table}})$ and $H_1 (r_{\text{value}} > r_{\text{table}})$.

RESULT

The results shows that social strategy (M=3.213) occupied the most frequently used strategy by the respondents. The second strategy is memory strategy (M=3.128). The third rank of strategy is determination strategy (M=3.095), then the next is cognitive strategy (M=3.03), and the least frequently used strategy is metacognitive strategy (M=2.968).

Table 1. Means of Vocabulary Learning Strategies

Vocabulary Learning Strategies	Means
Determination	3.095
Social	3.213
Memory	3.128
Cognitive	3.033
Metacognitive	2.968

For another test, that is vocabulary size test. It is categorized into three level of vocabulary size, there are high (76-100), moderate (60-75), and low (40-59). The result shows that the highest score is 90, the lowest score is 57, and the average is

75.52. The table below shows the descriptive statistics of the VLSs questionnaire and vocabulary size result.

Table 2. The Value of Correlation between Vocabulary Learning Strategies and Students' Vocabulary Size

		Correlations	
		Vocabulary Learning Strategies	Vocabulary Size
Vocabulary Learning Strategies	Pearson Correlation	1	.669**
	Sig. (2-tailed)		.000
	N	120	120
Vocabulary Size	Pearson Correlation	.669**	1
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.000	
	N	120	120

** . Correlation is significant at the 0.01 level (2-tailed).

From the result of calculation, it is found that the coefficient correlation between students' vocabulary learning strategies and their vocabulary size is 0.669 at the significant level of 0.01. The coefficient correlation is higher than the critical value of r table (0.669 > 0.232). The number 0.669 is taken from the result of data analysis using SPSS 16, which means that the two variables are calculated by using Pearson Product Moment Correlation formula and are showing certain numeric result with r table or *critical value* table as the guidance to see whether they were correlated or not. Therefore, for the first hypothesis, the null hypothesis is rejected and the research hypothesis is accepted.

The mean of each strategy is compared by the researcher based on level of vocabulary size that is categorized into three categories, there were high (76-100), moderate (60-75), and low (40-59). It is found that there are 57 students achieved

the high score (47.5%), 61 students achieve moderate score (50,8%) and for the low level score there are 2 students (1,7%).

Table 3. Anova Analysis Based on Vocabulary Size Level

Strategies		Sum of Squares	Df	Mean Square	F Count	Sig.	F Table
DET	Between Groups	1.829	2	.914	3.242	.050	3.25
	Within Groups	10.435	37	.282			
	Total	12.264	39				
SOC	Between Groups	.470	2	.235	1.528	.230	3.25
	Within Groups	5.698	37	.154			
	Total	6.169	39				
MEM	Between Groups	.430	2	.215	.479	.623	3.25
	Within Groups	16.606	37	.449			
	Total	17.037	39				
COG	Between Groups	.212	2	.106	.248	.782	3.25
	Within Groups	15.840	37	.428			
	Total	16.052	39				
MET	Between Groups	1.511	2	.756	1.823	.176	3.25
	Within Groups	15.338	37	.415			
	Total	16.849	39				

DISCUSSION

Based on the result of VLS questionnaire, most of the second year students are considered having high awareness of vocabulary learning strategies. The data also show that the most used of social strategy followed by the questionnaire item number 10 “*Saya bertanya kepada teman saya tentang arti makna dari suatu kata yang baru saya temui*” (M=3.70) and item number 7 “*Saya meminta guru untuk menerjemahkan arti kata baru kedalam bahasa indonesia*” (M=3.40). The participants tend to ask their friends to find the meaning of new words, similar to Mongkol’s research (2008) that revealed in terms of social strategy, from 94.4% of her respondents tend to ask the teachers or friends to get the meaning. As can

be seen from the table 1, social strategies, which ranks the highest mean in frequency of strategy use are strategies that use interaction with other people to improve language learning.

For the least frequently used of strategy is metacognitive strategy. Metacognitive strategy involves a conscious overview of the learning process and making decisions about planning, monitoring, or evaluating the best ways to study (Schmitt, 2000). This strategy might indicate that most of the learners has not taken control of their own learning yet, they still depend on their friends or their teacher to get the meaning of new words. Eventhough, nowadays internet and other electronic resources are easily accessed but they are still lazy to explore it as their learning media.

For another test, that is vocabulary size test. The students' mean scores are 75.52 which belong to moderate category (60-75). It indicates that students have good vocabulary size since the test was designed by Nation (1997) which is globally believed as a general principle that 3,000 word level is enough for productive use in speaking and writing.

The vocabulary size score is assumed to highlight the students' vocabulary proficiency. The results reveal that the students performed well in doing the vocabulary test at the 2000 level of the VLT. This indicates a better result compared with the previous study by Nurweni and Read (1999, as cited in Nur, 2004), who found that average first year Indonesian university student only

masters about 1226 English words. This conclusion is based on two considerations:

1. Simply referring to Zimmerman (2005), the scores on the VLT test can be used to provide a rough estimate of the vocabulary size. For example, if a participant can answer correctly 9 items out of 18 items in 1000 level, it can be assumed that he/she knows roughly 500 out of the 1000 words families from that level. Thus, in the present study, on average the students obtained the score 72.52%. It can be calculated then that they know approximately 1450 words.
2. The participants in the current study are assumed to learn English in a shorter term compared to the participants in the previous study. The first year Indonesian university students in the former study are assumed to have already learnt English for six years, while the grade 11 students of senior high school in the latter study are generally assumed to have studied English for four years.

The results of the current study can also assist language teachers to improve their teaching methods. Teachers who are interested in their students' performance in learn the English vocabulary can introduce the vocabulary learning strategies and techniques to their students by designing useful tasks and giving relevant assignments.

Based on the result of the *Anova* analysis, it was revealed that there is no significant difference in the use of VLS among those with high, moderate and low vocabulary size levels. It can be seen that greater mean of students with high

vocabulary size level than those with moderate and low vocabulary size levels reported significantly higher use of the VLSs.

Similar result was found by some previous researchers (e.g., Ahmed, 1989; Gu & Johnson, 1996; Schmitt, 1997). Shmais (2003) explained that it is a common belief that the use of learning strategies has a positive correlation with language proficiency. Ahmed (1989) stated that the more experienced learners use more strategies. It seems that the experienced language learners in English combine their use of particular vocabulary in a successful way. The high frequency use of VLSs of different level of learners might have several reasons, for example, they might have a good knowledge of vocabulary. The high proficiency group reported employing VLSs significantly more frequently than the moderate and low-groups.

Moreover, the two latter groups should be encouraged to be aware of how VLSs can help them increase their vocabulary. They should be motivated to make use of the resources including human interaction and material resources to help them in facilitating their vocabulary learning to be more adaptive when dealing with the vocabulary items.

CONCLUSION

Based on the data analysis and discussions, the researcher gets some conclusion that there is a significant correlation between students' vocabulary learning strategies and their vocabulary size. That is shown by the coefficient correlation was higher than the critical value of r table ($0.669 > 0.232$). Based on the result it

can be concluded that the null hypothesis (H_0) is rejected and research hypothesis (H_1) is accepted. Thus, prediction can be put forth that when the students use wider range of vocabulary learning strategies, their vocabulary size tends to be better. For the contribution value, it is found that the coefficient influences value is 0.449 at the significant level 0.01. It means that the students' vocabulary learning strategies contributes 44.9 % to their vocabulary size.

SUGGESTIONS

- 1) Teachers need to explore more information and knowledge about the importance of vocabulary learning strategies, to make more effective learning experience and enjoyment among the students. By identifying the students' vocabulary learning strategies, teachers might expect that the students will easily process the information and knowledge from the teachers and the students will have better understanding and achievement. The broad kinds of strategy can be applied not only by the teachers in teaching English but also by students in deepening their language mastery. The use of these strategies are hoped to enrich the teaching and learning experiences as well as to look for the most proper pattern of strategies being appropriate to the students.

- 2) Teachers who are interested in students' performance in learning English vocabulary can introduce the vocabulary learning strategies and techniques to their students by designing useful tasks and giving relevant assignments. They can also make such an improvement in their teaching methods.

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