

Students' Attitudes to the Implementation of Vocabulary Learning Strategies in Writing Task

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Abstract

Vocabulary is paramount in language learning. Learners can strategize vocabulary learning using vocabulary learning strategies (VLS), namely memory, cognitive compensation, metacognitive, social, affective, and determination. If used appropriately, VLS can help learners in writing. The study investigates the level of students' attitudes and use of VLS in writing. Also, it examines the male and female students in their attitudes and the use of VLS in writing. Finally, it investigates students' attitudes in writing according to their English grades. A quantitative research method, namely a survey, was employed as the research design in the study. It employed 71 diploma students taking engineering majors in one of the technical universities on the East Coast of Malaysia. The study found that students demonstrated a moderately high attitude in writing but moderately low VLS scores. There was also no significant difference in the attitudes and use of VLS between genders. Finally, there was insufficient evidence to show a significant difference in attitudes and English grades. Nevertheless, the study implied a need to familiarize the students with VLS to improve their writing skills. However, students were not required to use all the VLS as some VLS might be appropriate for a particular task but not the others.

Keywords: Vocabulary learning strategies (VLS), vocabulary, writing task, attitudes, gender

1. Introduction

The term 'VLS' refers to Vocabulary Learning Strategies (VLS)- one of the most commonly researched learning strategies in language learning. There is a need to be explicit about what is meant by VLS as students need to know the strategies they use to learn new words (Gorjian et al., 2011), and it is one of the most interesting topics for researchers in the last two decades (Gu, 2003). In writing, researchers are actively searching for ways to understand second language learners' writing skills as they employ VLS. The reason is that learners with large vocabulary sizes can write better than those with limited vocabulary. Similar to speaking that requires good intonation and tone, students who speak well can use vocabulary appropriately in the message they want to convey to the audience (Ali et al., 2022). Moreover, Staehr (2008) describes a relatively strong relationship between language learners' vocabulary size and the quality of their written composition. Compared to reading, as a receptive skill, writing, as a productive skill, requires learners to use vocabulary more than reading.

Another critical factor for successful writing is students' attitude when using VLS, which eventually makes them become better writers. A study conducted by Lin (2019) showed that students demonstrated moderately positive attitudes toward learning vocabulary when asked to learn independently and with group members. It showed that attitudes played positive roles in assisting learners in learning vocabulary. In addition, students may demonstrate a favourable attitude if they are encouraged to play vocabulary games to enrich their vocabulary in writing. Ali et al. (2022) found that playing vocabulary games enabled students to retain their vocabulary in the short and long-term run. The friendly interface, ability to understand materials and ease in navigating are among the criteria that could aid