VOCABULARY LEARNING STRATEGIES USED BY MALE AND FEMALE LEARNERS OF HIGHER INTERMEDIATE LEVEL

ArinaAfiyatiShadikah
Sekolah Tinggi Agama Buddha Negeri Raden Wijaya Wonogiri
arshadikah@gmail.com

Abstract
This recent study focuses on the use of vocabulary learning strategies (VLSs). Nevertheless, in this study the subject was categorized based on gender (male and female). This study aims to identify vocabulary learning strategies employed by female and male learner in learning new vocabularies. The method of this study is qualitative. The participants are 10 male learners and 10 female learners of higher intermediate level at LBPP LIA Solo. The data were collected using vocabulary learning strategy questionnaires (VLSQs), interview, documentations, and test. The data collected were analyzed qualitatively. The research finding showed that female learners tend to use more vocabulary learning strategies than male did. In addition, the most vocabulary learning strategies used by female learners were dictionary strategies and memory strategy: rehearsal as the least vocabulary learning strategies used. Meanwhile, male learners indicated to use guessing strategies more often and note-taking strategy rarely.

Keywords: VLSs, Higher Intermediate Level, Male Learners, Female Learners.

Abstrak

Kata Kunci: Strategi pembelajaran kosakata, Tingkatan Higher Intermediatel, Siswa Laki-laki, Siswa Perempuan.
INTRODUCTION
The first thing that comes to people mind when they talk about language must be “words”. Words here are vocabularies. Ghazal (2007, p.84) indicates that vocabulary is central to language and is of great significance to language learners. Because of its importance, the learners need to learn vocabulary more. Besides, Ahour and Salamzadeh (2014, p.12) also state that words are the basic building blocks of a language, the units of meaning from which larger structures such as sentences, paragraphs and the whole texts are formed. It means that learners should know more about English vocabularies if they want to be able to speak and use English. The more vocabularies they know, the better their ability in English. Wessels (2011, p.46) believes that vocabulary knowledge is essential to students’ academic success. If students do not understand the meaning of the words in the text, they will have difficulty understanding the content. As Ghazal (2007, p.84) states that vocabulary learning is one of the major challenges foreign language learners face during the process of learning a language. This causes learners need to use their own way to learn vocabularies.

This is what they call vocabulary learning strategies (VLSs). Those are the tool that can be used by language learners in developing their vocabulary knowledge. This recent research is conducted in one of popular English institute in Surakarta. It is Lembaga Bahasa dan Pendidikan Professional LIA Solo (next will be called LBPP LIA Solo). There are some unique things that take the researcher’s attention to conduct a research there. It is because LBPP LIA Solo is different from other language institution exists in Surakarta. What makes it different from other institutions is that LIA Solo has determined the level of their new students based on the result of their placement test. It makes each class seems homogeneous because they have similar ability in learning English. The placement test is held once in three months to get new students. Besides, LBPP LIA Solo has professional teachers who are given training activities in a month before they are allowed to teach. The quality of the teachers is also always controlled by supervisor and quality control employers. Moreover, the course book that is used in LBPP LIA is corporate with the original Oxford. Based on the interview done in the pre-research, the teachers believe that their students are taught based on integrated skill in English. Although they learn based on integrated skills, the students still need to learn and understand more deeply about the vocabularies they are going to use in each skill. It means that they do not get specific vocabulary session in their teaching and learning process. The researcher will explore more deeply about their strategies, practices and their effects of vocabulary learning strategies on their vocabulary mastery.

1. LITERATUREREVIEW
There were some theories about the indicators of vocabulary proposed by some researcher. Nation (2000) believed that in knowing a word, there are three aspects involved. Those are form, meaning, and use. Ur (1991, p.60-62) argues that there are some aspects that involve in knowing a word. Those were form (includes pronunciation and spelling), grammar, collocation, meaning (denotation, connotation, appropriateness, and meaning relationship word formation. Qian (2002, p.517) stated that there are two concerns in knowing word. They are breadth and depth of vocabulary knowledge. Tilfarhoğlu
and Bozgeyik (2012, p.93) believe that vocabulary must consist of word meanings, spelling, and pronunciation that are widely recognized. Pan and Xu (2011, p.1586-1587) define knowing a word as knowing pronunciation and spelling, grammar, and word formation. In brief, there are four indicators of vocabulary, they are spelling, pronunciation, meaning, and use.

Vocabulary learning strategies are crucial in language learning. Thus, the learners need to use VLSs in learning language. There are some significant reasons deals with the importance of Vocabulary Learning Strategies (VLSs). Some researchers have given information about it. Nayan and Krishnasamy (2015, p.10) states that knowing the right strategies to acquire words is also important to help learners in their study. Another expert named Halilahet all (2014, P.362) state that vocabulary learning strategies (VLS) may prove to be the key to successful language acquisition. A person with a limited vocabulary will never be able to speak, write, read or understand a language effectively. VLSs do not only function for language learners, but also the language teacher. According to Al-Khasawneh and Huwari (2012, p.102), in teaching second or foreign language, teachers face difficulties to help students learn a notable amount of vocabulary. This is the important role of VLSs that can help the teacher to solve what their students’ problems and needs towards vocabulary knowledge.

Vocabulary learning strategies have some classification according to some expert. For instance Schmitt’s taxonomy (1997) that classifies VLSs into two groups named discovery strategies and consolidation strategies. Each strategy has some subcategories. Determination and social strategies include to the discovery strategies. While social, memory, cognitive, and metacognitive include to the determination strategies. Gu and Johnson (1996) have their own classification of VLSs. Those are guessing strategy, dictionary strategy, note-taking strategy, memory strategy rehearsal, memory strategy encoding, and activation strategy. Meanwhile, Lawson and Hogben (1996) also classify VLSs differently among others. They classified VLSs into repetition, word feature analysis, simple elaboration, and complex elaboration. The recent study also has found the classification of VLSs reported by Ostovaret all’s in 2005. They classify VLSs into seven categories. Those are resourcing, creating structure, grouping, repeating, contextualizing, using images, sounds and actions, and using dictionaries. However, this study takes Gu and Johnson’s VLSs classification to collect and analyze the data.

Therefore, the aim of the present study was to find out what vocabulary learning strategies used by male and female learners of higher intermediate level at LBPP LIA Solo. Besides, this study also reveals the most and the least frequently vocabulary learning strategies used by male and female learners.

2. METHODOLOGY

The method of this study is qualitative design that is hoped to give detail and in depth information about certain phenomenon. Cresswell (2008) identified qualitative research as an investigative method for understanding a phenomenon based on separatemethodological traditions of inquiry that elicit human conditions or social problem. In addition, the researcher is the main instrument of analyzing the data.
1.1. Data Collection and Analysis

This study used interview and questionnaires to collect the data. McNamara (1999) explains that interviews are particularly useful for getting the story behind a participant's experiences. Those explanations are appealing the researcher to use this technique. The researcher had used this technique in pre-research to find the case in this study. Further, the researcher used this technique to collect the data. In addition, questionnaires can provide evidence of patterns among large populations, qualitative interview data often gather more in-depth insights on participant attitudes, thoughts, and actions (Kendall, 2008) in Harris (2010, p.1). These questionnaires are one of the main techniques that the researcher used to collect the data.

3. FINDINGS

3.1. Vocabulary Learning Strategies Used

The results showed that higher intermediate level learners of LBPP LIA solo employed six vocabulary learning strategies in learning new vocabularies. Those strategies will be described in these following sections. Here were the percentages of Vocabulary Learning Strategies used by male and female learners:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>VLS</th>
<th>Female Percentage</th>
<th>VLS</th>
<th>Male Percentage</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Dictionary Strategies</td>
<td>83,06%</td>
<td>Guessing Strategies</td>
<td>80,42%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Activation Strategies</td>
<td>76,00%</td>
<td>Dictionary Strategies</td>
<td>69,17%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Guessing Strategies</td>
<td>66,67%</td>
<td>Activation Strategies</td>
<td>52,00%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Note-Taking Strategies</td>
<td>63,33%</td>
<td>Memory Strategies: Encoding</td>
<td>48,81%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Memory Strategies: Encoding</td>
<td>61,90%</td>
<td>Memory Strategies: Rehearsal</td>
<td>33,89%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Memory Strategies: Rehearsal</td>
<td>59,44%</td>
<td>Note-Taking Strategies</td>
<td>27,50%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total</td>
<td>68,40%</td>
<td>Total</td>
<td>51,97%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Table 1. The percentage of VLSs used by male and female learners

Based on the table above, it could be identified the percentage of VLSs used by male and female learners. The first one was that female learners applied dictionary strategies as the most frequently VLSs used, but male learners made guessing strategies as the most useful VLSs used. The second VLSs used by female learners were activation strategies, while male learners were dictionary strategies. The third VLSs used by female learners were guessing strategies, while male learners were Activation strategies. The next VLSs used by female learners were note-taking strategies, while for male learners were memory strategies: encoding. The fifth VLSs used by female learners were memory strategies: encoding, but male learners made memory strategies: rehearsal as the fifth VLSs used. The last VLSs used by female learners were memory strategies: rehearsal, while male learners had note-taking strategies as the last VLSs used in learning new vocabularies.

3.2. The Most Vocabulary Learning Strategies

Based on the vocabulary learning strategies questionnaires’ result, it could be identified that female learners made dictionary strategies as the most VLSs they applied. On the table 4.2 above showed that there were about 83,06% of VLSs that female learners used. This result was supported by R2 answer in the interview as follow:

**Female learner**

Rc : Tell me why do you always use dictionary to learn new words?

R2 : I think that is the easiest way in learning new vocabulary for me by looking for the meaning in dictionary and remember it. *(Learner  R2,
Based on the interview result above, it could be identified that female learners applied dictionary strategies since it was the easiest and the most efficient way used in finding meaning and learning new vocabularies they found. Besides, using dictionary was also the more practical to learn new vocabularies. These were the reasons why female learners applied dictionary strategies as the most VLSs used.

On the other hand, male learners did not do the same most VLSs used as female learners did. Male learners tend to apply guessing strategy the most rather than other strategies. From the table 4.2 can be seen that there were 80,42% of male learners applied this strategy. This result was encouraged by male learners answer in the interview as below:

**Male learner**

R15 : Kalo yang guessing strategiitu, metodenyalebihhefektifdanefisienkrenalangsungmenebakdarikalimat yang ada di dalamteks. (I prefer gussingstrategi because it is more effective because i can guess dichtly the meaning of words in text). (Learner R11, Interview Note 7,8-4-2017).


Gakusahkemana-mana. Yalebihematwaktulah, miss. (I often use guessing. It is the easiest way to do. I just can guess by looking for clues in the passageitself). (Learner R18, Interview Note 8,15-4-2017).

Based on the interview result above, it could be identified that male learners applied guessing strategies as the most frequently VLSs used because it was the easiest, effective, and efficient way in finding the meaning of new words. These reasons made male learners tend to apply guessing strategies when they wanted to learn new vocabularies. Thus, the most frequently VLSs used by female were dictionary strategies. Meanwhile male preferred guessing strategies as the most VLSs used.

### 3.3. The Least Vocabulary Learning Strategies

Based on the vocabulary learning strategies questionnaires’ result, it could be identified that female learners made Memory Strategies: Rehearsal as the least VLSs they applied. On the table 4.2 above showed that there were about 59,44% of VLSs that female learners used. This result was supported by R2 answer in the interview asfollow:

**Female learner**

Rc : Why don’t you like memorizing when learning?

R2 : Emmm. I often forget about what I learn. Sometimes, pas bacateksgtitukan miss pegin tau artikosakata, nah kalolupakangabisajawab. Makanyamaugakmahuansakatuma. Kalocum amengandalkanhfalsans gh I think it don’t work to me. (Learner R2, Interview Note 2, 22-3-2017).

R3 : Akusihgaksukahafalan, miss. Ya mendingbukakamusajakalopengin tau artikosakata.
Based on the interview results above, it could be identified that female learners did not get advantage by applying memory strategies: encoding because they preferred other strategies as the alternative strategies in learning new vocabularies.

On the other hand, male learners did not have the same least VLSs used as female learners did. Male learners preferred not to apply note-taking strategies very often. From the table 4.2 can be seen that there were only 27.50% of male learners applied this strategy. This result was encouraged by male learners answer in the interview as below:

**Male learner**


R18 :Sayajarakrangnyatet vocab-vocab barugitu, miss. Soalnyagakadawaktu, ribet pula. Jadisemisaladakatabaruyalangsungbukakamu saja.Kalo pas bacadangakbolehbukakamus ta ditebakajaartinyagitu, miss.(I seldom taking notes about new vocabularies because I have no time for that and it is quiet complicated. So, if I find new words, I will open dictionary if it is necessary, I it is not, I will guess). (Learner R18, Interview Note 8,15-4-2017).

Based on the interview results above, it could be identified that male learners did not get advantage by applying note-taking strategies because they could waste their time when they took notes. Besides, they also seldom to do it because it was not so effective to do.

4. **DISCUSSION**

Based on the research findings, there are six strategies used by female and male learners in learning new vocabularies. They are dictionary, guessing, activation, memory (rehearsal), and note-taking strategies. Based on the data collected from the VLSQs, interview and documentation, those six strategies used by female and male learners in learning new vocabularies. This result relied on Gu and Johnson’s (1996) theory about the types of VLSs. They stated that there were six types of VLS, those were guessing, dictionary, note-taking, memory (rehearsal), memory (encoding), and activation strategies.

The percentage showed that both male (80,42) and female learners (66,67%) applied guessing strategies in learning new vocabularies. This result was higher than 50% that means guessing strategies were used often by the learners. This finding was in line with Ostovaret all’s (2015)finding.

Another most favorite vocabulary learning strategies used by male and female learners was dictionary strategy. The percentage showed that female (83,06%) and male learners (69,17%) applied dictionary strategies. This finding corresponded with Halilah’s work (2014) which resulted that dictionary strategies were among the favorite vocabulary learning strategies used bylearners.

However, this finding was in contrast to
Nayan and Krishnasamy in which dictionary strategies were not useful at all because their finding showed that dictionary strategies were the least strategies used by learners (2015,p.12). In addition, other findings (Yazdi and Kafipor 2014; Noormohammadi and Amirian 2015; and Gang 2014) found out that dictionary strategies were employed more often by the learners.

The next strategies were note-taking strategies. The percentage showed that both female (63,33%) and male learners (27,50%) applied guessing strategies in learning new vocabularies. This finding agreed with Noormohammadi and Amirian’s work in which showing that the learners employed note-taking as one of important strategies in learning new vocabularies (2015:50).

The fourth vocabulary learning strategies used by male and female learners were memory strategies: rehearsal. The percentage showed that both female (59,44%) and male learners (33,89%) applied memory strategies: rehearsal in learning new vocabularies. Some of male and female learners believed that memory strategies: rehearsal were quiet beneficial for them. This result was not in line with Mei’s finding in 2007. She found out that memory rehearsal strategy led learners only to short-term retention (2007:104).

The next vocabulary learning strategies used by male and female learners in this study were memory strategies: encoding. The percentage showed that both female (61,90%) and male learners (48,81%) applied memory strategies: rehearsal in learning new vocabularies. It meant that these strategies were beneficial enough for the learners in learning new vocabularies since these strategies were categorized as one of most vocabulary strategies used by both male and female learners. Nevertheless, this finding was not in line with Hertzog et all’s work in 2008.

The last vocabulary learning strategies used by male and female learners in this recent study were activation strategies. The percentage showed that both of female (76,00%) and male (52,00%) learners applied these strategies to learn new vocabularies. This finding was on the same track with Noormohammadi and Amirian’s work. They identified that one of the most frequently used strategy commonly shared by all students was activation strategies (2015:49).

Those were the vocabulary learning strategies detected to use by female and male learners. Both male and female learners applied all of those six strategies. However, they applied them in different frequently. Female learners tend to apply more strategies than male learners.

4.1. The Most Frequently VLSsUsed.

Male and female learners had different preference in applying the most frequently VLSs. For female learners, they preferred to apply dictionary strategies rather than other strategies. This is confirmed on the previous study by Gang (2014:113) that the most frequent strategy the learners used was dictionary strategy. This strategy was the most frequently used by female learners and the secondly most used by male learners in learning new vocabularies. Based on the research findings, female learners viewed dictionary strategies as the easiest, most effective and most efficient way in learning new vocabularies. As Bristi (2015) stated that language learners are very interested to use the dictionaries in developing their vocabulary knowledge and stock; they are more comfortable with bilingual dictionary which can be an indicator that they have difficulty in learning new words from their
synonyms or antonyms; the sounds of words are particularly popular among them because of using digital dictionaries.

On the other hand, male learners tend to use guessing strategies more often rather than other VLSs. Based on the research finding, there were 80.42% of male learners applied dictionary strategies. Based on the result of the interview, they believed that guessing strategies were the easiest and most efficient VLSs used in learning new vocabularies. This result is confirmed by Sener (2015). He found out that guessing from textual context, connecting word to a personal experience, analyzing any available pictures or gestures were the most frequently used strategies. It means that one of most frequently used VLS used by learners was guessing strategies. Besides, as Nayan and Krishnasamy (2015) stated that it can be seen that learners find contextual clues useful when they try to find meanings of words from reading texts. This strategy was done to help learners in finding the meaning of new words they found. This was also confirmed by Ahmed’s (1989) findings, he found that his subjects used guessing strategies very frequently to discover the meanings of new words. They found clues from the text they read and related them to the context.

4.2. The Least Frequently VLSs Used

Male and female learners had different least frequency VLSs applied. For female learners, the least frequently VLSs they applied was memory strategies: encoding. Based on the interview results, they believed that memory strategy: encoding did not really beneficial for them in reading activity. It meant that they could not use memory strategies: encoding very often because it cannot help them when they want to find the meaning of a word in a text. This result was confirmed by Bristi (2015) that stated that upper intermediate level learners use memory strategies least because they have more opportunities for extensive reading and writing which help them learn from guessing and context.

Meanwhile, male learners did not take advantage to note-taking strategies. It caused the result of VLSs they used showed that note-taking strategies were the least VLSs they applied when they learned new vocabularies. Based on the interview result, male learners did not apply note-taking strategies very often because they took more time in doing the practices and they did not really get advantage by using this strategy. This research finding was confirmed by Nayan and Krishnasamy’s Work (2015). They believed that learners used most memorization techniques, dictionary strategies and linguistic clues in their vocabulary learning and they seldom used note-taking. It was because practicing activities in note-taking strategies was wasting more times. It was in line with Graham and Rees’ (1995) finding. They found out that work hard at things that seem a waste of time. Besides, Halilahet all (2014) also have the same statement that the least favorite strategy is writing words. It meant that note-taking strategy was not so popular among language learners. Thus, male learners rarely used note-taking strategies since it was a waste of time and not quite popular among them.

5. CONCLUSION AND IMPLICATION

After describing the research finding and discussion of the previous chapter, there were three conclusions can be drawn from this study. There were six strategies applied by male and female learners in learning new vocabularies. Those were guessing strategies, dictionary
strategies, note-taking strategies, memory strategies rehearsal, memory strategies encoding, and activation strategies. Regarding to these findings, female learners tend to applied most strategies rather than male learners did. Female learners applied dictionary strategies more often rather than other strategies. Meanwhile, male learners applied guessing strategies more frequent rather than other strategies. This is because they were indicated to get benefits by applying those strategies.

Based on the results, some implications can be observed. First of all, an advantage of this study is that it will increase the public awareness on the importance of vocabulary learning strategies in second language learning and teaching. Furthermore, because of the existence of vocabulary learning strategies, learners will be able to understand more about the most suitable strategies they need to apply in learning new vocabularies.

REFERENCES


Halilah, Adibah. 2014. Vocabulary learning strategies among Malaysian TEVT students in German-Malaysian Institute (GMI). Procedia - Social and


