

ENGLISH VOCABULARY LEARNING STRATEGIES OF THIRD-YEAR STUDENTS AT FACULTY OF LANGUAGES, SOUPHANOUVONG UNIVERSITY

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Abstract

The main objective of this study was to investigate the most dominant English vocabulary learning strategies of the third-year students at Department of Foreign Languages, Faculty of Languages, Souphanouvong University. This research was designed by quantitative research and used a set of questionnaires to collect data from third-year students at Department of Foreign Languages, Faculty of Languages, Souphanouvong University. After collecting the effective data, the researcher analyzed the data by using SPSS to investigate the most dominant English vocabulary learning strategies. The mean and Standard deviation were used for data analysis. There are 39 students, 10 females, and 29 males. The sample group was selected by using convenience sampling. The questionnaire consists of two parts: personal information and 20 items of English Vocabulary Learning Strategies.

The results of this study were as follows: The research found that English vocabulary learning strategies of third-year students at Department of Foreign Languages, Faculty of Languages, Souphanouvong University. There were five categories of strategies: determination strategies, social strategies, memory strategies, cognitive strategies, and metacognitive strategies. Based on the statistical analysis, the most dominant strategies that third-year students applied in learning vocabulary were metacognitive strategies. Most of third third-year students preferred to learn vocabulary by listening to English songs and news, with a mean of 4.38 and a standard deviation of 1.024. The students believed that learning vocabulary by listening to English songs and news, students could gain a wide

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variety of words. Moreover, the students enjoyed the entertainment at the same time. Although sometimes it was quite difficult, students never quit themselves to learn vocabulary through songs and news because there were several benefits more than drawbacks.

Keyword: English Vocabulary, Learning Strategies, Souphanouvong University

Introduction

The most widely used language around the world is English. According to estimates, there are 380 million native English speakers, 300 million people who speak it as a second language, and another 100 million people who speak it as a foreign language. (Mahu, 2012). People who work in science, aviation, computing, diplomacy, and tourism all speak this language. English is used widely in other nations where it does not hold an official position, since it is necessary in many different professions and occupations. It is the official or co-official language in 45 different countries (Mahu, 2012).

Vocabulary is thought to be crucial. Vocabulary knowledge helps students speak effectively and perform well in all situations by providing a valuable basis for language acquisition at later levels and real-life conversation; listening, speaking, reading, and writing are connected skills. So, the more vocabulary a learner comprehends, the more proficient expressions he or she can use. (Schmitt, 2008). Additionally, language experts identify the close connection between vocabulary knowledge and reading skills. Learners of second and foreign languages are the first to recognize the value of vocabulary. Each scenario has different circumstances with regard to vocabulary learning. Given the limited opportunities for target-language intake, output, and interaction in the setting of learning a foreign language, it is vital to use effective and motivating learning strategies for learning vocabulary (Schmitt, 2008).

Vocabulary learning strategies are several ideas or actions that students use to comprehend, absorb, or retain new information. The vocabulary learning methods employed by English language learners can be examined to encourage EFL teachers and curriculum designers to create resources and activities that would help the learners enhance their vocabulary acquisition and the individual variances in vocabulary learning among students (Ghalebi et al, 2021). More and more people in Laos are beginning to study English.

In the past, research on vocabulary acquisition lagged behind that of other fields like grammar and pronunciation. Many Lao language students found it difficult to study the language because of a shortage of vocabulary.

Nevertheless, there had not been much discussion on how many students have trouble learning new words. Some third-year students in the Department of Foreign Language, Faculty of Languages, Souphanouvong University are unwilling to learn vocabulary because learning vocabulary is difficult when spelling and pronounce words (Academic Affairs Department, Faculty of Languages, 2023) Additionally, a number of students identify vocabulary acquisition as their biggest single source of difficulty, and they openly state that they have a range of troubles pronouncing and spelling words such as having the vocabulary in the same pronunciation and same word. That leads to trouble with memory and getting the definition of words. In addition, it is obvious that students experience difficulty with language studies due to a lack of vocabulary and have issues with reading, speaking, listening, and writing. On the contrary, most students prefer to learn English vocabulary on YouTube by watching English videos, listening to music, and also by using a large number of vocabulary apps, etc. (Misbah et al, 2017). Accordingly, the researcher would like to study the most dominant English Vocabulary Learning Strategies of third-year students, Faculty of Languages, Souphanouvong University.

Objectives of the research

The main objective of this study was to investigate the highest frequency of English vocabulary learning strategies of the third-year students at Department of Foreign Languages, Faculty of Languages, Souphanouvong University.

Research question

What are the most dominant vocabulary learning strategies employed by third-year students at Department of Foreign Languages, Faculty of Languages, Souphanouvong University?

Methodology

1. Population and sample size The population of this study was the third-year students in the English program, Department of Foreign Languages, Faculty of Languages,

Souphanouvong University, with a total number of 41 students. However, the samples were 39 students: 10 males and 29 females. The researcher chose a sample group by using a convenience sampling technique (Etikan et al, 2016).

2. Research Instrument The instrument of this study was adopted and adapted from the study of Tunggadewi (2016) to investigate English vocabulary learning strategies. The questionnaire consisted of two parts: participants' information, and part 2 is about English vocabulary learning strategies, with 20 questions. After the questionnaire was adapted, it was reviewed by the advisor before being used with the sample group.

2.1 Determination strategy

Item 1: I use a bilingual dictionary to help me translate English words into Bahasa Indonesia.

Adapted it into: I use a bilingual dictionary to help me translate English words into Lao.

2.2 Social strategy

Item 4: I ask the lecturer to translate the words into Bahasa Indonesia.

Adapted it into: I ask the teacher to translate the words into Lao.

Item 5: I ask the lecturer to put an unknown word into a sentence to help me understand the word's meaning.

Adapted it into: I ask the teacher to put unknown words into a sentence to help me understand the word's meaning.

Data Collection

The researcher conducted this stage step by step as follows: First, the researcher obtained a permission letter from the Dean of the Faculty of Languages at Souphanouvong University. Second, the researcher gave the letter to the class advisor and distributed the questionnaire to third-year English program students to collect information. Third, the researcher typed the questionnaire in both Lao and English. Fourth, the researcher brought it to the advisor for review. Fifth, the researcher distributed the questionnaire to third-year students and explained clearly how to respond to it. The students were given 30 minutes to complete the questionnaire. Finally, the researcher collected all the questionnaires from the students for data analysis.

Data analysis

After data collection, the researcher analyzed the data by using the SPSS program (Statistics Package of the Social Sciences 23.10) to find out the Mean and Standard Deviation (S.D.), based on the five-point Likert scale in this questionnaire with the following criteria:

5	means	Strongly agree
4	means	Agree
3	means	Undecided
2	means	Disagree
1	means	Strongly Disagree

Results of the study

1. The results of students' English Vocabulary Learning Strategies

Table 1. An overview of determination strategies (DET)

No	Item	Mean	S.D.
1	I use a bilingual dictionary to help me translate English words into Lao.	4.05	0.805
2	I use pictures illustrated in the textbook to find the word meanings.	3.67	0.730
3	I learned the meaning of words by identifying their parts of speech.	3.57	1.028
4	I used a dictionary to remember words.	3.90	0.995
Overall		3.79	0.589

It can be seen from the data in Table 1 that the students were Learning English vocabulary by using a bilingual dictionary to help translate English words into Lao, with a mean of 4.05 and a standard deviation of 0.805. Next, the students used pictures illustrated in the textbook to find the word meanings with a mean of 3.67 and a standard deviation of 0.730. Then the students learned the meaning of words by identifying their parts of speech with a mean of 3.57 and the standard deviation of 1.028. Finally, the students used a dictionary to remember words, with a mean of 3.90 and a standard deviation of 0.995. Overall, the students learned English vocabulary, using a determination strategy with a mean of 3.79 and a standard deviation of 0.589.

Table 2. An overview of Social strategies (SOC)

No	Item	Mean	S.D.
1	I ask the teacher to translate the words into Lao.	4.05	0.865
2	I ask the teacher to put unknown words into a sentence to help me understand the word's meaning.	4.19	0.750
3	I ask my classmate for the meaning.	3.71	1.007
4	I know some new words when working in group work.	3.86	0.964
Overall		3.95	0.545

It can be seen from the data in Table 2 that the students learned English vocabulary by asking the teacher to translate the words into Lao, with a mean of 4.05 and a standard deviation of 0.865. Next, students asked the teacher to put unknown words into a sentence to help understand the word's meaning, with a mean of 4.19 and a standard deviation of 0.750. Then the students applied to ask a classmate for meaning with the mean of 3.71 and the standard deviation of 1.007. Finally, the students knew some new words when working in group work with a mean of 3.86 and a standard deviation of 0.964. Overall, the students learned English vocabulary, using social strategies of 3.95 and the standard of 0.545.

Table 3: An overview of Memory strategies (MEM)

No	Item	Mean	S.D.
1	I write a new word in a sentence so I can remember.	4.14	1.014
2	I study the spelling of new words.	4.00	0.837
3	When I try to remember a word, I write it again and again.	3.81	1.123
4	I speak words out loud when studying.	3.57	1.076
Overall		3.88	0.789

It can be seen from the data in Table 3 that the students learned English Vocabulary by writing a new word in a sentence, with a mean of 4.14 and a standard deviation of 1.014. Next, the students studied the spelling of new words, with a mean of 4.00 and a standard deviation of 0.837. Then the students tried to remember a word by writing again and again, with a mean of 3.81 and a standard deviation of 1.123. Finally, the students spoke words out loud when studying with a mean of 3.57 and a standard deviation of 1.076. Overall, the

students Learned English vocabulary, using memory strategy with a mean of 3.88 and a standard deviation of 0.78.

Table 4: An overview of Cognitive strategies (COG)

No	Item	Mean	S.D.
1	I repeatedly practice new words.	4.10	0.995
2	I write a new word on the flash card so I can remember it.	3.71	1.007
3	When I try to remember a word, I write or say it repeatedly.	4.05	1.024
4	I make vocabulary cards and take them with me whenever I go.	3.48	0.981
Overall		3.83	0.767

It can be seen from the data in Table 4 that the students were learning English vocabulary by repeatedly practicing new words, with a mean of 4.10 and a standard deviation of 0.995. Next, the students wrote a new word on the flash card so they could remember it, with a mean of 3.71 and a standard deviation of 1.007. Then students tried to remember a word by writing and saying it repeatedly, with a mean of 4.05 and a standard deviation of 1.024. Finally, the students made vocabulary cards and took them with them whenever they went, with a mean of 3.48 and a standard deviation of 0.981. Overall, the students learned English vocabulary by using the cognitive strategy with a mean of 3.83 and a standard deviation of 0.767.

Table 5: An overview of Metacognitive strategies (MET)

No	Item	Mean	S.D.
1	I listen to English songs and news.	4.38	1.024
2	I memorize words from reading English magazines and newspapers.	3.95	0.865
3	I review my own English vocabulary cards for reviewing before the next lesson starts.	3.76	0.768
4	I use online exercises to test my vocabulary knowledge.	3.90	0.944
Overall		4.00	0.670

It can be seen from the data in Table 5 that the students learned English vocabulary by listening to English songs and news, with a mean of 4.38 and a standard deviation of 1.024. Next, the students memorize words from reading English magazines and newspapers,

with a mean of 3.95 and a standard deviation of 0.865. Then the students reviewed their own English vocabulary cards for review before the next lesson started, with a mean of 3.76 and the standard deviation of 0.768 and a standard deviation of 0.768. Finally, students used online exercises to test my vocabulary knowledge, with a mean of 3.90 and a standard deviation of 0.944. Overall, the students learned English vocabulary, using metacognitive strategies with a mean of 4.00 and a standard deviation of 0.670.

Table 6. An overview of the mean and standard deviation of English Vocabulary Learning Strategies

No	English Learning Vocabulary Strategies	Mean	S.D.	Rank
1	Metacognitive strategies	4.00	0.670	1
2	Social strategies	3.95	0.545	2
3	Memory strategies	3.88	0.789	3
4	Cognitive strategies	3.83	0.767	4
5	Determination strategies	3.79	0.589	5

It can be seen from the data in Table 6 that the students used different levels of English vocabulary learning strategies. When the mean and standard deviation were compared, the metacognitive strategies gained the most (M= 4.00 & S.D= 0.670), followed by social strategies (M = 3.95 & S.D= 0.545), memory strategies (M= 3.88 & S.D= 0.789), cognitive strategies (M= 3.83 & S.D= 0.767) and lately and determination strategies (M= 3.79 & S.D= 0.589) respectively.

Conclusion

In conclusion, the research found that English Vocabulary Learning Strategies of third year students at the Department of Foreign Languages, Faculty of Languages, Souphanouvong University were divided into five categories: determination strategies, social strategies, memory strategies, cognitive strategies, and metacognitive strategies. The most dominant strategy that the third-year students used for Learning English vocabulary was metacognitive strategies, with the overall mean of 4.00 and the standard deviation of 0.670. Most students preferred to learn English vocabulary by listening to English songs and news, with a mean of 4.38 and a standard deviation of 1.024. The students believed that learning vocabulary by listening to English songs and news helps them gain a wide variety of words.

Moreover, the students enjoyed the entertainment at the same time. Although sometimes it was quite difficult, students never quit themselves to learning vocabulary through songs and news because there were several benefits more than drawbacks.

Discussion

The present study confirmed the findings about English vocabulary learning strategies of third-year students at Department of Foreign Languages, Faculty of Languages, Souphanouvong University. It demonstrated that the highest mean of 5 categories that the most dominant English vocabulary learning strategy employed by third-year students was metacognitive strategies because of students listened to English songs and news to learn new vocabulary and difficulty vocabulary easily without seriously with the mean of 4.38 and the standard deviation of 1.024 and overall strategy with the mean of 4.00 and standard deviation of 0.670, because metacognitive strategies is simple for students to access the internet and other electronic resources now. Moreover, reviewing and informal testing are activities that can easily be performed without the presence of a teacher or friend. In addition, this indirectly encourages students to develop strategies for learning and remembering words so that they become more effective word learners. Furthermore, teachers are unable to teach all the words to students because they do not have enough time to teach everything about a word; students have to become independent learners. It is supported by the theory of Bakti (2018), who provided descriptions of the following several categories of strategies, such as determination strategy, social strategy, memory strategy, cognitive strategy, and metacognitive strategy. Therefore, it is proof that English vocabulary by listening to English songs and news benefits learners. In this case, the learners are interested in listening to English songs and news.

The results of this study were similar to the research of Kafipour and Naveh (2011). Descriptive data analysis (means and standard deviations). According to descriptive statistics, EFL undergraduate students in Kerman Province employed medium amounts of techniques, with social strategies being used the least frequently and metacognitive strategies being used the most. The findings of stepwise multiple regressions showed that just one of the five categories of vocabulary learning strategies social strategy, contributed to reading comprehension.

Recommendation

To determine whether there should be guidelines for third-year students' English vocabulary Learning Strategies, more research must be done. The study was based on actual experience, and the researchers hope that these recommendations would assist them learn English language.

As for students:

- They should be aware of the significance of English Vocabulary; this will assist them to become more motivated to learn.

- They should work hard to learn and retain as many words as they can through reading, speaking, writing, and listening. At the same time, if they don't grasp something, they should ask a teacher or a classmate to help them learn it better.

- They should study independently as much as they can outside of class and in addition to social media, or by trying to think as much in English as possible.

- They should study vocabulary via magazines, textbooks, English movies, and news. Newspaper. Additionally, they can read through BBC News or The Guardian.

- They should try to participate in workshops that are conducted in English; it can help them have more words, no matter the vocabulary in economics, politics, science, and so on.

Additionally, students should continually try to memorize a word by writing it down and repeating it, and speak English, especially with their friends, teachers, and foreigners who are native speakers. Hopefully, the study could contribute to the improvement of English learning and teaching at the Department of Foreign Languages, Faculty of Languages, Souphanouvong University.

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