UPH STUDENTS' (META)COGNITIVE VOCABULARY LEARNING STRATEGIES

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Abstract: This study aims to identify, describe, and classify vocabulary (meta)cognitive vocabulary learning strategies used by some Universitas Pelita Harapan (UPH) students taking a distant learning program at the Communication Science Faculty during the even semester 2019-2010 academic year. The platform used for the distant learning class was Moodle Learning Management System (http://learn.uph.edu/). One of the requirements of the course was to take part in Moodle Forum discussions. In one of the Forum discussion topics, the students were asked to write at least 100 words to describe (1) how they learned English vocabulary and (2) what they did when they found difficult words. The purpose of the topic was to expose the students to as many vocabulary learning strategies as possible and to encourage them to try out new vocabulary learning strategies. Their replies to the forum topic were coded to find out their vocabulary learning strategies. In addition to common vocabulary learning strategies (such as reading English books and listening to music), new strategies were found. The strategies typically involved the use of Information Technology (IT). IT was also mainly employed to find out the meanings of difficult words. It can be concluded that IT offers new (meta)cognitive strategies to learn foreign language vocabulary.

Keywords: *vocabulary learning strategies, metacognitive strategies, cognitive strategies*

INTRODUCTION

Vocabulary is considered as a key factor to successful language learning. Wessels (2011) argued that understanding word meaning determined students' ability to comprehend content. To ensure the effectiveness of vocabulary learning, many studies on vocabulary learning strategies have emerged. These studies are not only focusing on finding a new approach to vocabulary learning, but also how to help students study vocabulary independently. This is because poor mastery of vocabulary resulted from students' unfamiliarity of other vocabulary learning strategies (Kafipur and Samaneh, 2013). Therefore, teachers and instructors should introduce students to a variety of vocabulary learning strategies.

Before deciding on which strategies to be taught, instructors and teachers should first have understanding on which vocabulary strategies that they use. This paper aims to identify, describe and classify which vocabulary learning strategies used by Universitas Pelita Harapan Students. In specific, the researcher would like to answers two research questions: "What vocabulary learning strategies they use when they learn vocabulary" and "what vocabulary learning strategies when they encounter new words.

This study is conducted in Indonesian student context, specifically in Communication science faculty in Pelita Harapan University. Furthermore, the vocabulary learning strategies are viewed from a Metacognitive and Cognitive perspective. Different classifications for vocabulary learning are used in this research. However, this research is going to focus on Metacognitive strategies and cognitive strategies.

There are many definitions of cognitive strategies (CS). Presley and Harris' (2009) definition of cognitive strategies begins with what strategies means and how it relates to information processing. They describe strategy as "knowledge of procedures, knowledge about how to do something" (p.77). They noted that strategy can be learned both consciously and unconsciously. In relation to cognition, strategies are also used to activate knowledge from long term memory to working memory in order to work on a certain task. This might determine the effectiveness of

students' performance. Apparently, knowing the strategy needed to be paired with the knowledge of when or where the strategy should be applied. This particular pairing is defined as metacognitive strategies (MS).

Many strategies in learning vocabulary are associated with cognitive and metacognitive strategy. Therefore, it is difficult to pinpoint the exact number of strategies or the differences between the CS and MS. Some of these strategies are often used by students while others have not been introduced yet. In terms of popularity, CS is found to be more used than MS according to Byon (2012) studies. In Schmitt (2000) taxonomy, learning strategies are broken down into 2 major categories which are discovery strategies (strategies used after finding new words) and consolidation strategies (dealing with meaning reinforcement when students meet the word again). CS and MS fall into consolidation categories.

Cognitive Strategies

There are many strategies associated with CS. The key of CS is repetition. To use this strategy, the subjects repeat the target words verbally or written to remember the word (Noprianto Purnawan, 2019; Byon, 2012; Schmitt, 2000). In addition to repeating the words, learners can also paint mental pictures to help them understand the new words. Another form of repetition of vocabulary is by including the vocabulary learned in conversation and writing. These activities help learners to learn different vocabulary words (Kacani and Cyfeku, 2015). Another strategies that is considered as cognitive strategies are taking notes of vocabulary words, highlighting, labeling physical objects, and making flashcards (Entesari and Zohrabi, 2016)

Note taking are considered common strategies in vocabulary learning. Goundar's (2019) studies mentioned different ways of taking notes:
1. Learners have special notebooks where they make lists of new words
2. Word translations are written besides the English word
3. Some only wrote down the meaning of the word.
4. Other than meaning, usages (example sentences, part of speech, etc.), antonyms and synonyms are also included in the notes.

Highlighting or underlining words are cognitive strategies that focus on input enhancement. It is also described as consciousness rising strategy. This particular strategy trained learner's meta-awareness of certain parts of language features. Moltagh and Nasab (2015) conclude that learning different input enhancements aid learners in selecting the important information from the vast array of language features that may distract them.

Metacognitive strategies

Noprianto and Punawarman (2019) mentioned two strategies that can be categorized as metacognitive strategies. First strategy is self-testing. An example of this strategy is students find vocabulary tests online and try them. Dunlosky et al. (2013) mentioned that students do not necessarily see tests as a means of improving their knowledge but rather as a summary of their overall learning. However, it is certainly possible to use the test as a means of practice. In fact, "practice testing enhances learning and retention" (Dunlosky et al, 2013, p. 29). These practice tests differ from summative evaluation. Practice tests might be done outside class with no-stakes which means it does not affect students' overall grades in class. These can come in the form of doing questions or tests provided in the textbooks, any electronic version of tests available in the internet, or practicing using flash cards. Dunlonsky et al (2013) rate this strategy high, considering that it can be implemented with minimal training and time intensive.

The second strategy is by listening to songs or watching news. These strategies are related to theory of incidental learning. This refers to learning vocabulary through input tasks such as reading or listening. It means that the learning process happens while doing those activities or "learning as a by-product of other activities" (Tang, 2020, p.90). In this light, this particular strategy is not only limited to listening to songs or watching movies but also other inputs such as reading or playing games. Diaz (2015) mentioned the importance of planning when doing the particular tasks to make the activities more meaningful. Learners predict what outcome they should expect from doing that activity. These plans can be specified in the learner's written record.

The subjects in Byon's (2019) studies use goal settings as learning strategy which is categorized as metacognitive strategy. Learners set learning goals such as how many new words needed to be learned in a day. This could be paired with a checklist record. Goal settings is "what an individual attempts to do'' (Huei-Ju, 2018, p. 53). These attempts involve planning and commitment to achieve the goals that have been set. Learners who find value in goal-setting and committing themselves to those goals might improve their learning performance. Setting and evaluating goals might make learning more meaningful. Knowing the goals might guide learners in the process of learning as they employ available strategies to achieve those goals. Huei-Ju (2018) noted the importance of specific goals as it shall help students in deciding the most suitable strategy.

METHOD

This particular study employed surveys as methods to gather data. Open ended questionnaires are given to 58 students from students of distance learning program from Communication Science Faculty of Pelita Harapan University. The questionnaire items given are "how do you learn English vocabulary?" and "what did you do when you encountered new words?" The question was posted in the class forum of Universitas Pelita Harapan Moodle LMS. The collected are in a form of 100-word paragraph in the discussion thread.

Students' responses are codified into label "Cognitive strategies" and "Metacognitive strategies" with sub-label "repetition", "Using in conversation", "note-taking", "input enhancement", "labeling physical objects", "making flash card", "testing oneself", "by listening", "by reading", "by watching" and "setting goals". These labels and sub-labels are based on the literature review. In order to find the frequency of the strategies, Software AntConc analyses students' responses and finds high frequency words in students' responses which aid in labeling process and point the numbers of respondents using a certain strategy. The processed data then exported to excel to process the details of students' responses.

FINDINGS AND DISCUSSION

Table 1.1. UPH Students Strategies When Learning Vocabulary

Cognitive Strategies		Metacognitive strategies	
Sub-Label	N	Sub-Label	N
Repetition	4	Read	40
Use the vocab in conversation	21	watch	41
Testing yourself	4	listening	35
		set goals	6
		games	7

Based on Table 1.1, these findings are used to answer research question 1. Strategies mentioned in students' responses to learn vocabulary repetition, using vocab in conversation, testing oneself, reading, watching, listening, setting goals and games. The highest frequency is in watching sub-label. Most respondents use reading (N=40), watching (N=41), and listening (N=35). Using vocabulary in conversation and writing are mentioned by 21 respondents in order to learn vocabulary. Reading material that they mostly mentioned is a book. Some specified what book they are reading, such as novels, textbooks, bilingual Bible, and story books. The rest of respondents read articles from newspapers, magazines, social media postings and updates, and online articles. The details of watching movies in some students' responses include the usage of English subtitles. A few state about the use of Indonesian subtitles or opt for no subtitle. Learning vocabularies through movies are mostly used by respondents when learning vocabulary. However, according to Ashcroft, Garner and Hadingham's (2018) study, low quality of attention might hinder the learners in acquiring new words.   New words in movies sometimes are so low in frequencies that learners failed to notice. It has to be paired with activities, such as flashcards and movie discussions, to make up for this limitation. Listening materials that students used are music, public speaker, audible books and Podcast. Other strategies that they used are repetition testing oneself through exercise and quiz.

Table 1.2. UPH Students' Vocabulary Learning Strategies
When They Encounter New Words

Sub-Label	N
take notes	12
dictionary	33
translate	38
internet	10
asking	12
underline	3

From table 1.2 researchers found that when the respondents encounter new words, the strategies used are looking up the dictionary, translating the words, looking up on the internet, asking other people and underlining. Researchers noted that 44 students used the strategies with the help of information technology. For example, when they translate words, they use Google Translate. Online dictionaries also preferred to find the meaning of new words. According to Zhou (2018) technologies enhance self-regulated learning. The respondents' answers support these statements on how technology made self-regulated learning using Cognitive and Metacognitive strategies easier. Zhou (2018) suggests that teachers should not only teach students vocabulary learning strategies but also how to use those strategies in TELL environments. However, it is also important to note that guidance and clear instructions on how to use technology are also needed.

CONCLUSIONS

Based on this research, researchers found that students learn vocabulary mostly by doing other tasks such as reading and listening. Writing and speaking are used as a mode to practice vocabulary. On the other hand, when they encounter new words they use dictionaries and translations to help them understand the words better. Information technology becomes a preferable option in order to help them execute those strategies. This research offers an overview of UPH students' vocabulary learning strategies. There are learning strategies, which are

mentioned in literature review, are not mentioned by students. This might indicate students' low awareness of the aforementioned strategies. If teachers and instructors aim to make students self-regulated vocabulary learners, it is important to make them aware of other strategies. Another suggestion for future research is how to introduce other vocabulary learning strategies to students, how to make use of information technology more effectively in order to enhance vocabulary self-regulated learning.

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