

**A CASE STUDY:
GENDER DIFFERENCE IN VOCABULARY LEARNING
STRATEGY USED BY THE NINTH GRADE STUDENTS OF
SMP NEGERI 4 TENGARAN KABUPATEN SEMARANG**



**Submitted as a Partial Fulfilment of the Requirements for Getting Magister
in Language Studies Graduate Program**

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2023**

APPROVAL

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PUBLICATION ARTICLE

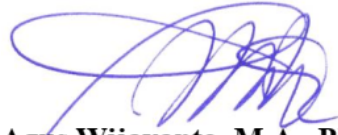
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I hereby declare that in this scientific publication no work has ever been submitted for obtaining a bachelor's degree in a college and to my knowledge there are also no works or opinions that have been written or published by other people, unless in writing they are referred to in the text and ownership in bibliography.

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Abstrak

Penelitian kualitatif ini bertujuan untuk mengetahui strategi pembelajaran kosakata (VLS) yang digunakan oleh siswa laki-laki dan perempuan di SMP Negeri 4 Tenganan Kabupaten Semarang. Pengumpulan data menggunakan taksonomi Schmitt berupa kuesioner terbuka, wawancara dan observasi. Kuesioner terdiri dari 31 pernyataan yang diberikan kepada 32 siswa kelas sembilan. Wawancara dan observasi yang melibatkan 10 siswa laki-laki dan 10 siswa perempuan juga dilakukan untuk mendapatkan informasi lebih lanjut dari para partisipan. Hasil penelitian menunjukkan bahwa pertama, siswa menerapkan strategi memori, strategi kognitif, strategi meta-kognitif, strategi determinasi, strategi sosial pembelajaran kosa kata tetapi kedua gender menggunakan strategi yang berbeda. Aktivitas gabungan dalam pembelajaran kosa kata adalah yang paling nyaman bagi mereka. Peran guru dan guru ekstrakurikuler cenderung mempengaruhi siswa dalam mempelajari kosa kata. Kedua, lingkungan pembelajaran bahasa, guru, guru ekstrakurikuler dan program di sekolah memiliki pengaruh terbesar terhadap pembelajaran kosa kata.

Kata kunci: strategi pembelajaran kosakata, gender, faktor

Abstract

This qualitative research aimed at investigating vocabulary learning strategy (VLS) used by male and female students in SMP Negeri 4 Tenganan Kabupaten Semarang. The data were collected by using Schmitt's taxonomy in forms of open-ended questionnaires, interviews and observation. The questionnaire consists of 31 statements administered to 32 of the ninth-grade students. Interviews and observation involving 10 male and 10 female students were also conducted to obtain more information from the participants. The results showed that first, the students applied memory strategies, cognitive strategies, meta-cognitive strategies, determination strategies, social strategies of vocabulary learning but both genders used different strategies. Combined activity in vocabulary learning was the most comfortable for them. The teacher and extracurricular teacher's role tend to influence students in learning the vocabulary. Second, the environment of language learning, teacher, extracurricular teacher and program in the school have the biggest influence on learning vocabulary.

Keywords: vocabulary learning strategy (VLS), genders, factors

1. INTRODUCTION

Vocabulary is considered to be one of the most important elements in understanding lesson materials, especially when learning a foreign language. Heidari et al. (2012) said that vocabulary is the core of language and the cornerstone of language

learning. By comprehending the words, students will understand the meaning of them. Wessels (2011: 46) believes that vocabulary knowledge is crucial to students' academic achievement. "If students do not understand the meaning of the words in the text, they will have difficulty understanding the content". Comprehending the words meaning is a competency the students must acquire that will help them understand language materials and texts.

We need strategy in learning a language. According to Wenden and Rubin, learning strategies can be defined as actions, steps, plans or routines taken by the learners in processing the information they received (Hashim, 2018). The use of the strategies contributes to language learning. Vocabulary Learning Strategies (VLSs) have a role in helping students' learning become more independent in learning a language. Cameron (2001:92) defined vocabulary learning strategies as "action that learners take to help them understand and remember vocabulary".

For Junior High students VLSs are obviously important, because they help students understand and increase their memory of new vocabularies, also encourage them to be independent learners. Unfortunately, this level of study does not offer specific technical classes on vocabulary. On the other hand, the students cannot always dependent on their teachers. They have to be independent in conducting their own strategies in determining the meanings of unknown words, so they can understand their class materials better. Vocabulary learning strategies are resources that students can engage them in improving their vocabulary knowledge to solve their difficulties of language learning. Gu (2010: 116) said that VLSs are an indispensable instrument to describe and to explain the vocabulary development of a foreign language. VLSs are also an instrument to encourage learners in making wiser decision of what and how to learn.

Language learners' awareness, personality traits, stage of learning, task requirements, teacher expectations, age, general learning style, purpose for learning language, motivation level, nationality, gender, etc, were some factors that influence strategy choice mentioned by recent research studies. One of a few studies on vocabulary learning strategies and gender preference is a study conducted on Chinese high school students by Na (61; 2016). The researcher found that there were differences between students of both genders that were triggered by their Chinese cultural background. Females are more cautious when it comes to study

planning and are more patient when it comes to repeating word. As a result, female students are more familiar with metacognitive and cognitive strategies for vocabulary acquisition.

. Based on the explanation above, the attention and curiosity had led the researcher to make a study regarding to the case of the students' obstacles in learning vocabulary. Most of students in SMP Negeri 4 Tenganan Kabupaten Semarang have practiced their English by mixing Indonesian accents and Indonesian grammatical. Students tend to become passive learner during English classes because they lack of vocabulary, which affect their behaviour in learning English. Students tend to dependent to the teacher in learning English especially for male students. Beside gender differences, how the students use the vocabulary learning strategies was also interesting to investigate.

Based on the problems statements, the researcher formulates the objectives of the study: 1) to explain the VLS used by male and female of ninth grade students SMP Negeri 4 Tenganan Kabupaten Semarang, 2) to explain the differences of VLS used by male and female of ninth grade students SMP Negeri 4 Tenganan Kab. Semarang, 3) to describe the factors that contribute to the VLS used by male and female students. Based on the description above, the researcher formulated the study entitled "A Case Study: Gender Difference in Vocabulary Learning Strategy Used by the Ninth Grade Students of SMP Negeri 4 Tenganan Kabupaten Semarang."

2. METHOD

The study was set as qualitative design which will give detail and thorough information about certain phenomenon, therefore qualitative method was selected as the method of this study. Qualitative research involves "procedure of data that lead to primarily in non-numerical open-ended data, then analysed primarily by non-statistical methods" (Dornyei, 2008:24, cited in Fauziati, 2009: 243). This study applied case study approach which explored the phenomenon of how the students applied the vocabulary learning strategy connected to their vocabulary mastery.

The research was conducted in SMP Negeri 4 Tenganan Kabupaten Semarang. The data of the research will be the information about VLSs engaged by

male and female of ninth grade students of SMP Negeri 4 Tengaran Kabupaten Semarang. The data of this research are: a) VLSs implemented by the students, b) Gender differences in using vocabulary learning strategies. c) Factors influencing students' strategies. In this research, the researcher used Schmitt (2000) taxonomy. The interview was conducted to collect some information about the common VLSs and factors contribute to the choice of VLSs. The observation was conducted to obtain the data of the vocabulary learning strategies used by ninth grade students with high and low proficiency in SMP Negeri 4 Tengaran. All documentations related to the research were recorded as the source of information in forms of note, images or pictures, people's monumental creation. In this research, the researcher used two kinds of triangulation to validate the data, triangulation of data source and triangulation of data collection. A descriptive qualitative method was used to analyse the data. The activities on the data analysis were: data reduction, data display, and conclusion drawing/verification. After all of the data had been gained, they were analysed using SPSS version 20. The results were presented to answer research questions of the study and then the results were ready to be visualized and interpreted using related theories.

3. RESULT AND DISCUSSION

This chapter described the VLSs used by different gender of ninth grade students, the difference of VLS used by different gender of the students and the factors that take part in the choice of vocabulary learning strategies.

3.1 Results of the Findings

The findings are; vocabulary learning strategies used by male and female students, the gender differences between VLS used by students from different gender, and the factors that take part to the choice of VLS.

3.1.1 VLSs Used by Male and Female of Ninth Grade Students SMP Negeri 4 Tengaran.

The researcher classifies the categories of VLSs used by male and female students. The classification of VLSs is described in the following description.

a. Determination Strategy

Schmitt (2000) said that determination is the strategies used when learners faced with discovering a new words' meaning without recourse to

another person experience. The female of ninth grade students often (42.4%) used determination strategies and the male of ninth grade students often (36.5%) used determination strategies to get new meaning of word. In the interview result, two female students revealed that they employed determination strategies. The students were guessing the word's meaning by the context for VLS. Students said that the similarity between Indonesian and English words helped them in guessing the meaning of words.

b. Social Strategy

Schmitt (2000) said that there were the strategies in which the other interference is needed. The result of the study showed that females often (47.7%) used social strategies to in discovering new words' meaning. While the male students sometimes (42.8%) used social strategies in discovering new words' meaning. The questionnaire analysis proved that asking the teacher for definition has an 'always' position. The students were very engaged to their teacher. The researcher also found that students were asking their friends about how to speak in English in their habituation activity at school and correcting each other.

c. Memory Strategy

Schmitt (2000) said that memory strategies were referred as relating the word with some previously learned knowledge. From the table of memory strategy questionnaire showed that the females sometimes (50%) used memory strategies to find out new word meaning by relating past experience. By relating the word with their past experience, 5 students got the meaning of new words. This strategy has the highest female respondents compared to other items. Meanwhile the males often (34.7%) used this strategy in discovering new word meaning. Based on the questionnaire's result we can see that the strategy by relating the word with their past experience, and recollect it by studying and paying attention to the spelling, the position of this strategy is 'always'.

d. Cognitive Strategy

Schmitt (2000) said that cognitive strategies exhibit the common function of manipulation or transformation of the target language by the learner. Based on the analysis we can see that the females sometimes (29.9%) used cognitive strategies to find out new word meaning. From the interview data

showed that 3 students were making notes, and taking a vocabulary notebook on habituation activity, so we can put the position of the strategy as “always”. On the other hand, the males sometimes (44.9%) used cognitive strategies to find out new word meaning. The analysis result proved that the strategy of making notes is on “always” position and 7 students conducted the strategy.

e. Meta-Cognitive Strategy

Schmitt (2000) said that meta-cognitive strategy elaborates a conscious overview of the learning process and making decision about planning, monitoring, or evaluating the best way to study, including improving access to input, deciding on the most efficient method of study or review, and testing oneself to measure improvement. From the data analysis showed that the females sometimes (36.4%) used meta-cognitive strategies to find out new word meaning. From the data analysis showed that using English media (news, internet, video, etc.) is on “always” position and 5 students conducted this the strategy. Meanwhile, the males sometimes (45.2%) used meta-cognitive strategies to find out new word meaning. The data analysis result proved that doing independent word test is on “always” position. Media has a great role for the students in learning and new words. From the interview showed that using media such as news, internet, video, etc can make the students obtained new English vocabularies easily.

3.1.2 The Gender Differences of the Ninth Grade Students of SMP Negeri 4 Tenganan in Using VLS

From the analysis of the questionnaires, we can see that there were differences in using VLS between male and female students. To make it clearer, the results presented in the following table.

Table 1. Average Frequencies of Gender Differences of in Engaging VLSs

No	VLS	Gender	Mean	SD
1	Determination Strategy	Female N : 10	2.86	0.50
		Male N : 10	2.58	0.47
2	Social Strategy	Female N : 10	2.42	0.37
		Male N : 10	2.42	0.42
3	Memory Strategy	Female N : 10	2.45	0.77
		Male N : 10	2.58	0.45

4	Cognitive Strategy	Female N : 10	2.53	0.67
		Male N : 10	2.32	0.45
5	Meta-Cognitive Strategy	Female N : 10	2.40	0.54
		Male N : 10	2.41	0.53

The five strategies based on the Schmitt (2000) classification had revealed the differences by presenting the statistical analysis calculating mean and standard deviation. Clearly there is difference of VLS usage among students with different gender and level of ability.

Table 2. The Gender Differences of VLS used by Male and Female Students

Respondent	Vocabulary Learning Strategies	Number of VLS used
Female Students 1	Determination Strategies	3
	Social Strategies	4
	Memory Strategies	7
	Cognitive Strategies	6
	Meta-Cognitive	4
	TOTAL	29
Female Students 2	Determination Strategies	4
	Social Strategies	3
	Memory Strategies	7
	Cognitive Strategies	6
	Meta-Cognitive	3
	TOTAL	23
Male Students 1	Determination Strategies	3
	Social Strategies	4
	Memory Strategies	7
	Cognitive Strategies	3
	Meta-Cognitive	4
	TOTAL	21
Male Students 2	Determination Strategies	2
	Social Strategies	3
	Memory Strategies	5
	Cognitive Strategies	2
	Meta-Cognitive	3
	TOTAL	15

3.1.3 Factors that Contribute to the Choice of VLS Used by Male and Female Students.

The brief explanation of each strategy can be seen on the explanation above. The researcher differentiates the classification of vocabulary learning strategy based on the Schmitt (2000) classification.

a. Language Proficiency Level

The findings in this factor tend to prove that successful learners engaged a massive VLSs than the less successful learners of language. From the statement above, the researcher concludes that students add their vocabulary based on their language proficiency. They know their ability so they choose to use their language proficiency level as the strategy to improve their vocabulary.

b. Cognitive Style

From the cognitive style, the male and female students were watching movies and listening songs to increase their vocabularies. From the statement above, the researcher concluded that students increase their vocabulary by listening music and watching movies. They used their cognitive aspect to improve their vocabulary by doing what they fond of. They also learned how to pronounce the word in English correctly by doing those activities. Those statements show that cognitive aspect as the factors of vocabulary learning strategy is proven.

c. Attitude and Motivation

The third factors that the researcher found that almost all the male and female students who have the high and low proficiency level were highly motivated in learning English. From the interview result, the researcher concludes that students' motivation comes from internal and external factors. They have to study English because they were put in situation where they must use English wherever they are. Because of English is the international language, the students thought that they have to learn English. Their motivation can be the factors in their vocabulary learning strategies.

d. Language Learning Environment

The fourth factor that contributes to the choice of learning strategy is the environment. From the interview analysis, the researcher concludes that the environment gives more influence to their English learning. Teachers, extracurricular teachers, peer teachers, formal situation and informal situation become the factors to the students in learning English. Joining the English program in the school gives the benefit for students to improve their vocabularies. The stability of the English environment makes the students consistence in learning English vocabulary.

e. Social and Situational Factors

The researcher finds that the students applied social strategies. It involved field of study, class level, course type, and gender. From the interview result, the researcher concludes that students improved their vocabulary by asking their friends, teacher, extracurricular teacher, and their peer teacher. They use their social strategies to improve their learning English vocabulary. Field of study and course type became the factors of students in learning vocabulary.

3.2 Discussions

There are three discussions that the researcher compiled from this research.

3.2.1 The VLSs Used by Male and Female of Ninth Grade Students of SMP Negeri 4 Tengeran.

This finding of determination strategy supports the VLS theory discussed by Schmitt (2000) and Kafipour (2009) but contradicted by Dwi (2018) research. The students use determination strategy in order to discover new words. Both male and female use the dictionary, classify the word, based on part of speech, although the students are influenced by the teacher. So, the role of teacher and extracurricular teacher are influencing the students learning.

This finding of social strategy supports Dwi (2018), Bristi (2015), Nelson et al (2014) study. The researcher found that students are asking the teacher about the meaning of word that they didn't understand, raising their hand and asking about tenses where they mostly confused on the change of irregular verbs.

The finding of memory strategy was confirmed by Akbari (2011), Gu (2003). Those findings are in line with the current study which found out that memory strategy will help the students to remember easily, to write correctly and to know the correct meaning in learning vocabulary. In this research, classroom activity was conducted by the English teacher whether a vocabulary activity was conducted by the extracurricular teacher.

This finding of cognitive strategy supports Dwi's (2018) study and in line with Lee (2007), Kirmizi (2014). The researcher found that the students were saying the word repeatedly to memorize the word and taking note when they find a new word based on classification of context. Students brought their notes everywhere they were going.

This finding of cognitive strategy supports the previous study of Brahja (2013), Bakti (2018). Those previous studies support the current study which found out that watching films and listening to music provided by the extracurricular teacher were amusing media for students in learning English. In this activity, the students were also involving cognitive strategy. The students both male and female also took notes and made the summary of the film while watching it.

From those collected discussion of vocabulary learning strategy used by male and female of ninth grade students of SMP Negeri 4 Tengaran with the previous study, the current study presented that collaborative activity in learning vocabulary was the most suitable way of learning for them.

3.2.2 The Gender Differences of VLS used by Male and Female of Ninth Grade Students of SMP Negeri 4 Tengaran Kabupaten Semarang.

The researcher found the differences finding of study with the same field study of vocabulary learning strategies. Getachew & Getachew (2014) study showed that there is a relationship between the students' perception and their language achievement, and that there is a significant difference between the high and the low achievers regarding VLSs they used. Many of the high successes 'usually' and 'always' used almost all of the strategies provided, whereas many of the low successes 'never' and 'rarely' used the majority of the strategies provided to discover the meanings of new English words and to consolidate the words they have learned.

Besthia (2018) study revealed that the major finding of this research was that determination strategies such as guessing from context and consulting a dictionary became the most popular strategies, whereas social strategies were the least popular. The findings of this study revealed that the majority of students did not use certain vocabulary learning strategies such as semantic maps and discovering meaning through group work activity.

3.2.3 Factors Contribute to The Choice of VLS Used by Male and Female Students

The finding is in line with the Oxford & Nyikos theory which shows that the factors contribute to the choice of vocabulary learning strategy are level of language skill, cognitive style, attitude and motivation, language learning environment, social and situational factors. The findings of the current study support the previous study of Boonkongsaen (2012). The factors which were in line

with the current study are language learning environment, attitudes, motivation, level proficiency. The factor which does not discuss, and contradicted with the previous study is the findings of Wu (2013) research about cognitive strategy. The results of the study show that the variable that had the greatest effect on the use of learners' vocabulary strategy was motivation. Another important factor affecting to the choice of vocabulary strategy was family background, including family involvement and years of study.

4. CONCLUSION

Based on the vocabulary learning strategy categories, male and female students preferred to use English in their school daily activities. The environment and English programs of the school make them able to obtain English vocabularies easily and practice it. Collaborative activity in vocabulary learning was the most suitable for them. The female students used all five vocabulary learning strategy categories. Male students are generally using memory strategies to find out the word meaning. They mostly used memory strategies, and determination strategies, and only few of them used cognitive strategy. The teacher and extracurricular teacher's role tend to influence students in learning the vocabulary. The female student used the top frequency of VLS. From the result of interview, we can see that the female students used complete strategy of VLS resulted the highest proficiency on vocabulary learning. On the other hand, the male student uses low frequency of VLS. The difference usage of VLSs can be seen among male and female students. The environment of language learning, teacher, extracurricular teacher and program in the school have the biggest influence on learning vocabulary. From this study, the researcher can conclude that the teacher can take for granted of the most and least frequent strategies used by the students to find the ways to increase the least strategies used by students. The students of both genders use different strategies. The teacher must aware the difference in learning vocabulary to develop learning activity.

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