

THE VOCABULARY LEARNING STRATEGIES OF ESL MATRICULATION STUDENTS IN MALACCA MATRICULATION COLLEGE, MALAYSIA

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ABSTRACT

This study looked at types of vocabulary learning strategies (VLS) that matriculation students frequently applied and their level of use of vocabulary learning strategies (VLS) categories. Data was collected through a questionnaire from a sample of 140 matriculation students. Strategies of guessing textual contexts, asking classmates for meaning of new words, studying spelling of new words, interacting with fluent speakers, verbally repeating new words, listening to English songs and watching English television programmes or movies were found as the most frequently used vocabulary learning strategies among these students. Meanwhile, vocabulary learning strategies category with the highest level of use was metacognitive-consolidation strategies while social-consolidation strategies was the vocabulary learning strategies category with the lowest level of use. Among the implications of this study are it provides suggestions to improve vocabulary learning among ESL matriculation students and gives input to English language instructors about vocabulary learning strategies (VLS) among ESL matriculation students. It can also further understanding on vocabulary instruction that can be inculcated in post-secondary educational institutions.

Keywords: *vocabulary learning strategies , matriculation students*

INTRODUCTION

English is an important language; however, many ESL students including those in post-secondary level face problems with English vocabulary (Abdul Jalil, 2014) which can impair their learning and communication. Without adequate English vocabulary, ESL learners can neither read English texts nor write English essays, as well as listen to and speak in English well. In other words, vocabulary is a key indicator of both one's language learning and one's ability to learn the language (Mayuree, 2007). Cheang, Murugan, Wan Noorli and Ch'ng (2008) found that that limited vocabulary was the main factor for the poor spoken English among diploma students. They were frequently at a loss for words and always used the wrong words when communicating with others. This indicates that lack of vocabulary is also big handicap for students in communication.

According to Azadeh and Ghazali (2011), vocabulary learning generally is not given much emphasis in the Malaysian school system as English is taught in schools mainly for the purpose of examination. Even if vocabulary learning takes place in English classrooms, they are largely incidental. This means that when a particular word or phrase appears difficult for students, they are informed of its definitions without further explanation of its usage or limitation (Gidey, 2008). This approach to vocabulary learning may lead to inadequacy in vocabulary knowledge among students and the problem continues when they move to postsecondary education.

For matriculation students, English language is their instructional medium. Their limited English vocabulary could hamper their comprehension of the subjects taken and eventually, cause low academic performance as they are unable to write assignments, give presentations and answer examination questions well (Abdul Jalil, 2014, Kapifour & Naveh, 2011). To date, little research on vocabulary learning strategies has been conducted among Malaysian ESL learners in post-secondary education (Azadeh & Ghazali, 2011; Cheang et al., 2008). Hence, this paper intended to identify vocabulary learning strategies (VLS) used by matriculation students in Malacca Matriculation College and to examine their level of use for each vocabulary learning strategies (VLS) category.

LITERATURE REVIEW

Schmitt's Taxonomy of Vocabulary Learning Strategies (VLS)

The taxonomy invented by Schmitt (1997), Schmitt's Taxonomy of Vocabulary Learning Strategies (VLS) is used as the basis for this research. The rationale behind using Schmitt's taxonomy was due to the fact that currently it is the most extensive one available with six VLS categories that are clearly defined and easy to work with (Docqzi, 2011). Moreover, it is one of the most preferred VLS taxonomies among vocabulary teaching experts and it also has high reliability when applied in previous vocabulary-related research (Waldvogel, 2013; Mayuree, 2007). In this taxonomy, vocabulary learning strategies (VLS) consist of two main categories which are discovery strategies and consolidation strategies (Figure 1).

Schmitt's taxonomy of vocabulary learning strategy	Discovery strategies	Determination-discovery strategies
		Social-discovery strategies
	Consolidation strategies	Memory-consolidation strategies
		Social-consolidation strategies
		Cognitive-consolidation strategies
		Metacognitive- consolidation strategies

Figure 1: Schmitt's Taxonomy of Vocabulary Learning Strategy (Schmitt, 1997)

Discovery strategies are strategies that are used by learners to find the meaning of new words when they encounter them for the first time. They are further divided into two smaller categories which comprise determination-discovery strategies and social-discovery strategies. Consolidation strategies are strategies that are used by learners to memorize, practice and retain the meaning of words that have been encountered. They are further divided into four smaller categories which consist of memory-consolidation strategies, social-consolidation strategies, cognitive-consolidation strategies and metacognitive-consolidation strategies (Gidey, 2008). These six categories of vocabulary learning strategies (VLS) are explained in detailed in the following sections. In total, there are 58 strategies under these six categories (Figures 2, 3, 4, 5, 6, 7).

Determination-Discovery Strategies

DETERMINATION-DISCOVERY STRATEGIES	
DET	Analyze part of speech
DET	Analyze affixes and roots
DET	Check for L1 cognate
DET	Analyze any available pictures or gestures
DET	Guess from textual context
DET	Bilingual dictionary
DET	Monolingual dictionary
DET	Word lists
DET	Flash cards

Figure 2: Determination-Discovery Strategies (Schmitt, 1997)

Determination-Discovery strategies are vocabulary learning strategies (VLS) that help learners to identify the meaning of new words without others' help (Waldvogel, 2013). Out of the fifty-eight items in the Schmitt's Taxonomy of Vocabulary Learning Strategies (1997), nine strategies belong to this category (Figure 2). The strategies are analysing parts of speech, analysing affixes and roots, checking for L1 cognate, analysing any available pictures or gestures, guessing from textual context, using bilingual dictionary, monolingual dictionary, word lists and flash cards.

Social-Discovery Strategies

SOCIAL-DISCOVERY STRATEGIES	
SOC	Ask teacher for L1 translation of the new word
SOC	Ask teacher for paraphrase or synonym of the new word
SOC	Ask teacher for an example of sentence that includes the new word
SOC	Ask classmates for meaning of the new word
SOC	Discover meaning of the new word through group work activity

Figure 3: Social-Discovery Strategies (Schmitt, 1997)

Social-Discovery strategies are vocabulary learning strategies (VLS) that help learners to identify the meaning of new words through interaction with others. Out of the fifty-eight strategies in Schmitt's Taxonomy of Vocabulary Learning Strategies (1997), five strategies belong to this

category (Figure 3). The strategies are asking a teacher for L1 translation of a new word, for paraphrase or synonym of a new word, and for an example of sentence that includes a new word, asking classmates for meaning of a new word and discovering meaning of a new word through group work activity.

Memory-Consolidation Strategies

MEMORY-CONSOLIDATION STRATEGIES	
MEM	Study word with a pictorial representation of its meaning
MEM	Imagine word's meaning
MEM	Connect word to a personal experience
MEM	Associate the word with its coordinates
MEM	Connect the word to its synonyms and antonyms
MEM	Use semantic maps
MEM	Use 'scales' for gradable adjectives
MEM	Group words together to study them
MEM	Group words together spatially on a page
MEM	Use new words in sentences
MEM	Group words together within a storyline
MEM	Study the spelling of a word
MEM	Study the sound of a word
MEM	Say new word aloud when studying
MEM	Imagine word form
MEM	Underline initial letter of the word
MEM	Configuration
MEM	Affixes and roots (remembering)
MEM	Part of speech (remembering)
MEM	Paraphrase the word's meaning
MEM	Use cognates in study
MEM	Learn idiom together with the new word
MEM	Use physical action when learning a word
MEM	Use semantic feature grids
MEM	Use Loci Method
MEM	Use Peg Method
MEM	Use Keyword Method

Figure 4: Memory-Consolidation Strategies (Schmitt, 1997)

Memory-Consolidation strategies are vocabulary learning strategies (VLS) whereby learners acquire new words by associating their existing experience or background knowledge with new words through mental

images or groupings (Waldvogel, 2013). Out of the fifty-eight items in Schmitt's Taxonomy of Vocabulary Learning Strategies (1997), twenty-seven strategies belong to this category (Figure 4). Some example of the strategies are studying word with a pictorial representation of its meaning, using imagination to remember the meaning of a new word, connecting a word to a personal experience, connecting a word to its synonyms and antonyms, using semantic maps and using physical actions when learning a new word.

Social-Consolidation Strategies

SOCIAL-CONSOLIDATION STRATEGIES	
SOC	Study and practice meaning of a new word in a group
SOC	Teacher checks students' flash cards or word lists for accuracy
SOC	Interact with native-speakers

Figure 5: Social-Consolidation Strategies (Schmitt, 1997)

Social-Consolidation strategies are vocabulary learning strategies (VLS) used to retain information and meaning of new words through interaction with others (Azadeh & Ghazali, 2011). Out of the fifty-eight items in the Schmitt's Taxonomy of Vocabulary Learning Strategies (1997), three strategies belong to this category (Figure 5). The strategies are studying and practicing meaning of a new word in a group, asking a teacher to check students' flash cards or word lists for accuracy and interacting with native-speakers.

Cognitive-Consolidation Strategies

COGNITIVE-CONSOLIDATION STRATEGIES	
COG	Verbal repetition
COG	Written repetition
COG	Word lists
COG	Flash cards
COG	Take notes in class
COG	Use the vocabulary section in your textbook
COG	Listen to tape of word lists
COG	Put English labels on physical objects
COG	Keep a vocabulary notebook

Figure 6: Cognitive-Consolidation Strategies (Schmitt,1997)

Cognitive-Consolidation strategies are vocabulary learning strategies (VLS) that do not engage learners in mental processing but instead use repetition and mechanical means such as word lists, flash cards, and vocabulary notebooks to study words. Out of the fifty-eight strategies in Schmitt's Taxonomy of Vocabulary Learning Strategies (1997), nine of them belong to this category (Figure 6). The strategies are: verbal repetition of a new word, written repetition of a new word, using word lists, using flash cards, taking vocabulary notes in class, using the vocabulary section in a textbook, listening to a tape of word list, putting English labels on physical objects and keeping a vocabulary notebook.

Metacognitive-Consolidation Strategies

METACOGNITIVE-CONSOLIDATION STRATEGIES	
MET	Use English-language media (songs, movies, newscasts, etc.)
MET	Testing oneself with words tests
MET	Use spaced word practice
MET	Skip or pass new word
MET	Continue to study word over time

Figure 7: Metacognitive-Consolidation Strategies

Metacognitive-Consolidation strategies are vocabulary learning strategies (VLS) related to processes involved in monitoring, decision-making, and evaluating one's progress in vocabulary. Out of the fifty-eight strategies in Schmitt's Taxonomy of Vocabulary Learning Strategies (1997), five of them belong to this category (Figure 7). The strategies are using English-language media such as songs and movies to enhance vocabulary, testing oneself with words tests, using spaced word practice, skipping or passing the new word and continuing to study word over time by having a personal schedule to learn English vocabulary.

Vocabulary Learning Strategies Use among ESL and EFL Learners

Both EFL and ESL students at various levels of education depict both discovery and consolidation strategies although these strategies may vary. Wu (2005) investigated the vocabulary learning strategies used by

Taiwanese EFL secondary and English major university students. The results revealed that the three most frequently discovery strategies used by students in learning English vocabulary were using bilingual dictionaries to find out Chinese translations of English words, guessing from textual context and asking classmates for the meaning of words. The former two belong to the determination-discovery category, while the latter belongs to the social-discovery category. As for consolidation strategies, studying the sound of a word and repeating a word's form under memorization-consolidation category were the two most frequently used strategies by the students. Similarly, Docqzi (2011) explored the vocabulary learning strategies of 84 Hungarian final year high school and university students. The findings showed that two strategies: guessing from textual context and using monolingual dictionary in determination-discovery categories were the most frequently used strategies. Meanwhile, other vocabulary learning strategies such as interacting with native speakers and practicing words on a regular basis under social-consolidation category and metacognitive-consolidation category respectively were less frequently used by the students. The research also indicated that the number of vocabulary learning strategies used by the students increased with the time they spent studying the language. Meanwhile, Azadeh and Ghazali (2011) examined the type of vocabulary learning strategies used by Malaysian ESL university students majoring in Teaching English as a Second Language (TESL). The findings showed that determination-discovery, metacognitive-consolidation and memory-consolidation as the three most frequently used vocabulary learning strategies (VLS) categories. The students were keen in using the following vocabulary learning strategies: guessing from textual context, using monolingual dictionary, using various English language media, and applying new English words in their daily conversation. Next, El-Ghouati (2014) looked into Vocabulary Learning Strategies among 60 Master students from the English Department in a university in Meknes. The findings revealed that the three categories of vocabulary learning strategies the students most frequently used were determination-discovery strategies, memory-consolidation strategies and cognitive-consolidation strategies.

Benefits of Vocabulary Learning Strategies (VLS)

Vocabulary learning strategies contribute to better reading comprehension skill and bigger vocabulary size to ESL and EFL learners.

To illustrate, Kapifour and Naveh (2011) investigated the use of vocabulary learning strategies and their contribution to reading comprehension among 164 EFL undergraduate students in Kerman Province. The results showed that the EFL undergraduate students were medium strategy users who used metacognitive strategies most frequently and social strategies least frequently. The results also indicated that the use of social-discovery and social-consolidation strategies contributed to the students' reading comprehension.

Meanwhile, Muhd Sahandri, Reza and Saifudin (2009) looked into vocabulary learning strategies and their relation to vocabulary size among 125 Iranian undergraduate students majoring in TEFL. The findings revealed that Iranian EFL learners were medium users of VLS and vocabulary learning strategies contributed to their vocabulary size. However, only nine out of 41 vocabulary learning strategies showed significant relation to vocabulary size. The strategies were using physical action when learning a word, interacting with native speakers, taking notes or highlighting, studying new words many times, using a bilingual dictionary, using English language media, studying the word with classmates, studying the sound of a word, and repeating the word verbally.

Panjaitan and Gintings (2012) conducted a classroom action research on improving students' vocabulary achievement by using personal vocabulary notes which is a cognitive-consolidation strategy under Schmitt's Taxonomy of Vocabulary Learning Strategies. The subjects were 46 secondary school students. The methods used for this research were diary notes, observation sheet, and questionnaire. The research was conducted in two cycles and each cycle consisted of three meetings. The result showed improvements in the students' scores from the first test in orientation test to the third test in cycle-II test in which the mean for the first test was 46.95, the mean for the second test was 64.86, and the mean for the third test improved to 80.45. This showed that the use of personal vocabulary notes significantly improved students' vocabulary.

Shek (2007) also looked into vocabulary learning strategies and vocabulary size. He compared English as a medium of instruction(EMI), Chinese as a medium of instruction(CMI) and partial EMI (PEMI) Secondary Six students in Hong Kong. The results revealed that the

EMI students were the most proficient group in terms of vocabulary size and word knowledge followed by CMI and PEMI students. In terms of discovery strategies, the vocabulary learning strategy that was frequently used by the CMI and PEMI students was the use of dictionary, whereas guessing from context was identified as the most frequently used strategy by the EMI group when they encountered new words. For consolidation strategy, both the CMI and PEMI students often studied the sound of words while the EMI students frequently studied the spelling the words to consolidate the meanings. The study also indicated that the overall means of the EMI and PEMI students' ratings for perception of strategies were statistically higher than that of the CMI students. They (EMI and PEMI students) had a more positive attitude towards the usefulness of vocabulary learning strategies. Furthermore, a positive and significant relationship between the frequency of use and the perceived usefulness of vocabulary learning strategies was established among the three groups of students. This suggests that the more the learners perceive that a particular strategy is useful, the more frequently they will use it and subsequently, contribute to better vocabulary knowledge and bigger vocabulary size.

METHODOLOGY

The sample for this study was 140 second semester students from the Malacca Matriculation College students who were randomly chosen from four science classes and three accountancy classes. Data was collected using questionnaire adapted from VLS questionnaire by Docqzi (2011) that was modelled after Schmitt's Taxonomy of Vocabulary Learning Strategies. This questionnaire consisted of a total of 40 items (demographic data and vocabulary learning strategies). The method of response was a 5-point Likert scale whereby 1 indicated "Strongly Disagree", 2 indicated "Disagree", 3 indicated "Neutral", 4 indicated "Agree" and 5 indicated "Strongly Agree". Statistical Package for the Social Sciences software (SPSS version 20) was used to analyse data and findings were reported using descriptive and inferential statistics.

FINDINGS AND DISCUSSION

Types of Vocabulary Learning Strategies

Table 1: Frequency of Determination-Discovery Strategies used by ESL Matriculation Students.

Items	Mean	Std. Deviation
I guess the meaning of a new word from the context when I read.	3.87	.896
I use an English-Malay dictionary to find out the meaning of new words.	3.84	.984
I use an English-English dictionary to find out the meaning of new words.	3.59	1.079
I identify parts of speech of a new word to find out the meaning.	3.31	.922
I identify affixes and roots of a new word to find out the meaning.	3.10	.900

(Scale: 1= Strongly Disagree, 2= Disagree, 3= Neutral, 4= Agree, 5= Strongly Agree)

As shown in Table 1, among all Determination-Discovery strategies, the students most frequently used the strategy of guessing the meaning of a new word from the context when they read (mean=3.87, SD= .896). The second and third frequently used strategies in this category were using an English-Malay dictionary to find out the meaning of new words (mean=3.84, SD= .984) and using an English-English dictionary to find out the meaning of new words (mean=3.59, SD=1.079) respectively. Meanwhile, identifying parts of speech of new words to find out the meaning (mean=3.31, SD= .922) and identifying affixes and roots of new words to find out the meaning (mean=3.10, SD= .900) were fourth and fifth respectively in the frequency of determination-discovery strategies used by ESL matriculation students.

Guessing meaning from textual context was the most frequently used strategy among ESL matriculation students. This is supported by findings of other studies such as Azadeh and Ghazali (2011) and Gidey

(2008). One possible explanation for this finding is the influence of the experience of the ESL students in learning English in secondary schools. This is because in Malaysia, second language learning that takes place in classrooms during secondary schools is mostly reading-based (Azadeh & Ghazali, 2011). Consequently, when ESL students undergo the transition from secondary schools to matriculation colleges, they tend to fall back on this strategy whenever they encounter new unfamiliar words.

Meanwhile, the usage of bilingual and monolingual dictionaries to find the meaning of new words were respectively the second and third frequently used Determination-Discovery strategies. This is probably because they are easily available and can also be attributed to the influence of English teachers who encourage students to refer to dictionaries whenever they encounter unknown words. Moreover, as the sample of this research consisted of more Malay students (71.4%), they preferred using the bilingual English-Malay dictionary over monolingual English-English dictionary. Identifying parts of speech in order to find the meaning of new words was the fourth frequently used Determination-Discovery strategy. ESL matriculation students prefer this strategy less perhaps because they find it difficult to identify parts of speech of newly encountered words. As for identifying affixes and roots of new words in order to find their meaning, it was the least frequently used Determination-Discovery strategy as the majority of the ESL students may be unaware of this strategy. Another possible reason is that students feel that differentiating a root from its prefix and suffix is confusing for them (Gidey, 2008).

Table 2: Frequency of Social-discovery Strategies Used by ESL Matriculation Students

Items	Mean	Std. Deviation
I ask classmates to explain the meaning of new words.	3.23	1.006
I ask teachers for L1 translation of a new word.	3.11	.874
I work in groups to discover meaning of new words.	2.76	1.092

(Scale: 1= Strongly Disagree, 2= Disagree, 3= Neutral, 4= Agree, 5= Strongly Agree)

The strategy of asking classmates to explain the meaning of new words (mean=3.23, SD=1.006) was the most frequently used strategy in social-discovery category among ESL matriculation students (Table 2). The second frequently used social-discovery strategies by the students was asking teachers for L1 translation of a new word (mean=3.11, SD=.874) and the least used strategy was working in groups to find out the meaning of new words (mean=2.76, SD=1.092).

One possible reason for this finding on classmates is the students feel more comfortable in asking for help from their classmates who are there (Elias, 2014). This is because the students usually are more open when interacting with their peers and they share a similar discourse with one another which allows for greater understanding between them (Briggs, 2013). As for getting help from teachers, ESL students tend to ask teachers for L1 translation of the words that they do not know as they regard teachers as mediators for both languages (Gibbons, 2003). In contrast, working in groups to discover the meaning of new words is least preferred probably because a study group only works if everyone does their part (Taylor, 2013). Moreover, it requires continuous cooperation, discipline and motivation from all the group members to maintain it as well as it is time-consuming.

Table 3: Frequency of Memory-consolidation Strategies Used by ESL Matriculation Students

Items	Mean	Std. Deviation
I study the spelling of new words.	3.70	.950
I connect the words with personal experience.	3.61	.902
I say new words aloud when I first encounter them.	3.60	1.130
I use new words in sentences and in conversation, so I can remember them.	3.54	1.013
I create a mental image of a word's meaning/imagining the word's meaning.	3.40	.995

I remember a new word by remembering its location on a page, on a board or a street sign where I first saw or heard it.	3.30	1.142
I use physical actions when learning to remember new words.	3.30	1.037
I write new words down together with its pronunciation.	3.26	.985
I group words according to their synonyms and antonyms.	2.99	1.025
I use semantic maps to remember new English words.	2.99	.996

(Scale: 1= Strongly Disagree, 2= Disagree, 3= Neutral, 4= Agree, 5= Strongly Agree)

Table 3 indicates that out of all strategies in memory-consolidation category, the ESL matriculation students most frequently applied the strategy of studying the spelling of new words (mean=3.70, SD= .950). The second and third frequently applied strategies were connecting words with personal experience (mean=3.61, SD= .902) and saying new words aloud when they first encountered it (mean=3.60, SD=1.130) respectively. Meanwhile, using new words in sentences and conversation (mean=3.54, SD=1.013) and creating a mental image of a word's meaning (mean=3.40, SD= .995) were the fourth and fifth frequently used memory-consolidation strategy among the students respectively. Grouping words together according to its synonyms and antonyms (mean=2.99, SD=1.025) and using semantic maps (mean=2.99, SD= .996) were tied as the least frequently used memory-consolidation strategies among ESL matriculation students.

Studying the spelling of new words was the most frequently used strategy among Memory-Consolidation Strategies. The students may have realized that it is quite difficult to spell out the correct spellings of many English words due to the strong influence of L1 sound system and morphology; thus, they put more effort in learning spelling of second language vocabulary (Gidey, 2008). As for the other frequently used Memory-Consolidation strategies such as connecting words with personal experience, saying new words aloud when encountering them for the first time, etc., the students may have used these strategies as they were familiar with them as well as they were easy and practical to use. Meanwhile,

the strategies of grouping words according to synonyms and antonyms and using semantic maps were the least frequently used strategies. This could be because students rarely keep tab of newly acquired vocabulary in this manner as it takes time to group words and to draw semantic maps (Regier, Khetarpal & Asifa, 2013).

Table 4: Frequency of Social-consolidation Strategies Used by ESL Matriculation Students

Items	Mean	Std. Deviation
I interact with fluent speakers.	3.14	1.008
I study and practice the meaning of new words in a group.	2.84	1.081

(Scale: 1= Strongly Disagree, 2= Disagree, 3= Neutral, 4= Agree, 5= Strongly Agree)

Based on Table 4, for social-consolidation category, the strategy of interacting with fluent speakers was more frequently used by ESL matriculation students (mean=3.14, SD=1.008) in contrast to studying and practicing meaning of new words in a group (mean=2.84, SD=1.081). This can be linked to the appeal of communicating with others in the second language and the opportunity to practice using new words that they learn during conversations. Moreover, through the interaction, students may gain a boost in their self-confidence regarding their second language oral skill (Ramírez, 2010). In contrast, practicing meaning of new words in a group strategy is least preferred as it requires consistent commitment from the members in order for the strategy to succeed (Taylor, 2013).

Table 5: Frequency of Cognitive-consolidation Strategies Used by ESL Matriculation Students.

Items	Mean	Std. Deviation
I say a new English word several times.	3.70	.887
I use word lists to study and remember words.	3.44	1.081
I write a new English word several times.	3.40	.888

I take vocabulary notes in class.	3.20	.938
I use the vocabulary section (glossary) in books and modules.	3.09	.877
I use flashcards to study and remember words	2.71	1.075

(Scale: 1= Strongly Disagree, 2= Disagree, 3= Neutral, 4= Agree, 5= Strongly Agree)

Table 5 shows that saying a new word several times (mean=3.70, SD=.887) was the most frequently used strategy by ESL matriculation students for cognitive-consolidation category. The second and third frequently used cognitive-consolidation strategies were using word lists to study and remember words (mean=3.44, SD=1.081) and writing a new word several times (mean=3.40, SD=.888) respectively. These were followed in descending frequency of use among the students of three other cognitive-consolidation strategies: taking vocabulary notes in class (mean=3.20, SD=.938), using the glossary in books and modules (mean=3.09, SD=.877) and using flashcards (mean=2.71, SD=1.075).

The ESL matriculation students often used verbal repetition of English words. This could be because the students believe that by continuously saying the new words, eventually they will be embedded in their long-term memory and can be retrieved to be used in communication in future (Lip, 2009). Next, using word lists to study and remember words was often used due to its comprehensiveness in listing important words that should be learned by ESL students according to the students' specific language proficiency. Besides, sometimes the word listed were already categorized into certain categories such as feelings, animals and food which helped students to learn them better. Meanwhile, vocabulary notes in class were less often used by ESL matriculation students possibly because they involved more time and effort (Roberts, 2012). As for the strategy of using flashcards, it was least used by the students. The reasons are that they are expensive and even if the students produce it on their own, they may take quite a long time to be completed (Siti Inayah, 2010).

Table 6: Frequency of Metacognitive-consolidation Strategies Used by ESL Matriculation Students

Items	Mean	Std. Deviation
I listen to English songs and watch English television programs to develop my English vocabulary knowledge.	4.31	.968
I read books, magazines and newspapers to develop my English vocabulary knowledge.	4.11	.919
I test myself with vocabulary test.	3.06	1.044
I plan my schedule, so I will have enough time to study vocabulary.	2.80	1.120

(Scale: 1= Strongly Disagree, 2= Disagree, 3= Neutral, 4= Agree, 5= Strongly Agree)

As shown in Table 6, for the metacognitive-consolidation category, ESL matriculation students most frequently used the strategy of listening to English songs and watching English television programs to develop their English vocabulary knowledge (mean=4.31, SD= .968). This was followed by reading books, magazines and newspapers (mean=4.11, SD= .919) and testing themselves with vocabulary tests (mean=3.06, SD=1.044) which were the second and third frequently used metacognitive-consolidation strategies respectively. Meanwhile, planning schedule to have enough time to study vocabulary (mean=2.80, SD=1.120) was the least frequently used metacognitive-consolidation strategy among ESL matriculation students.

The frequently used strategies of listening to English songs and watching English television programmes or movies can be linked to the fact that the students were able to enjoy themselves and at the same time, learn new vocabulary. Besides, these authentic materials are good in promoting learning new words in their contexts (Azadeh & Ghazali, 2011). Other possible explanation for its frequency of use by the ESL students is perhaps due to easy accessibility of the materials as technology currently is a major tool in second language teaching and learning process (Nomass, 2013). Testing with vocabulary test was less preferred by the ESL students and this may be because they found it a rigid way to learn vocabulary. Meanwhile, the strategy of allocating specific schedule for

vocabulary learning ranked last among the metacognitive-consolidation strategies. This can be because the majority of the ESL students prefer discovering and learning new vocabulary incidentally rather than learning it in a planned manner (Diamond & Gluthon, 2006).

LEVEL OF USE OF VOCABULARY LEARNING STRATEGIES (VLS) CATEGORIES

Table 7: Level of Use of Vocabulary Learning Strategies (VLS) Categories

VLS category	Mean	Std. Deviation	Level of strategy use
Metacognitive-Consolidation	3.57	1.207	High
Determination-Discovery	3.54	1.002	High
Memory-Consolidation	3.37	1.044	Medium
Cognitive Consolidation	3.26	1.008	Medium
Social-Discovery	3.03	1.013	Medium
Social-Consolidation	2.99	1.054	Medium

(Scale: 1= Strongly Disagree, 2= Disagree, 3= Neutral, 4= Agree, 5= Strongly Agree)

Table 7 shows that among the six VLS categories, the highest frequently used VLS category by ESL matriculation students was metacognitive-consolidation strategies (mean=3.57, SD=1.207). This VLS category was classified under high level of use. This finding is supported by similar findings of other studies such as Cenghizana (2011) and Kapifour and Naveh (2011). The high usage of Metacognitive-Consolidation strategies shows that most ESL matriculation students take control of their own vocabulary learning. One reason for this finding may be due to the existence of an extensive number of easily accessible English language media such as songs, movies and television programme that enables students to discover more new words (Kapifour & Naveh, 2011). Moreover, there are various websites, blogs and other electronic resources that provide free vocabulary exercises and tests which enable learners to self-evaluate their progress in vocabulary learning. Once

students become cognizant of how much vocabulary they have learned, they are able to alter or enhance their current style of learning vocabulary by implementing more vocabulary learning strategies to assist them in improving their vocabulary (Bandpay, 2013).

Meanwhile, the second highest frequently used VLS category was determination-discovery strategies (mean=3.54, SD=1.002). This VLS category was also classified under high level of use. This finding is supported by Cenghizana (2011). One of the reasons why ESL students use these strategies is that they may be familiar with these strategies. For example, the strategy of guessing the meaning of new words based on textual context (Table 1) is most frequently used by the ESL matriculation students. This is because they probably apply it during their English language examinations and classroom activities which are mostly reading-based in secondary schools (Hiew, 2012). Meanwhile, the strategy of using bilingual and monolingual dictionaries are also frequently used by the ESL students as they are frequently encouraged by their English teachers to refer to dictionaries upon encountering unfamiliar words (Hiew, 2012).

Meanwhile, Memory-Consolidation Strategies were at a medium level of use among ESL matriculation students (mean=3.37, SD=1.044). The finding matches that of Thavornporn (2012). The reason why Memory-Consolidation Strategies are applied by ESL matriculation students is probably because they are already familiar with teacher-centered learning, rote memorizing and “spoon-feeding” during secondary schools in Malaysia (Anis, Mahani, Latisha, & Surina, 2009)

This is followed by Cognitive-Consolidation strategies (mean=3.26, SD=1.008) which were also at a medium level of use. This finding matches the research findings of Muhd Sahandri, Reza and Saifudin (2009). The reason why students apply less Cognitive-Consolidation Strategies is perhaps because they do not like the dull and tedious actions of verbal and written repetition and using glossaries to find the meaning of words (Roberts, 2012).

As for Social-Discovery Strategies (mean=3.03, SD=1.013) and Social-Consolidation Strategies (mean=2.99, SD=1.054), they were also at a medium level of use. They were the lesser used VLS strategies

ranked at fifth and sixth places in terms of level of use among ESL matriculation students. These findings correspond to the findings of other studies such as Kapifour and Naveh (2011) and Mohd Sahandri, Reza and Saifudin (2009). One reason why they are infrequently utilized by ESL matriculation students can be because the students do not want to be dependent on other people in learning vocabulary. Furthermore, teacher-controlled and presentational-style teaching in Malaysian schools promote students' passivity which counters the socio-cultural conditions that are conducive to help-seeking (Schwalb & Sukemune, 1998).

CONCLUSION

Metacognitive-consolidation strategies and determination-discovery strategies were used frequently by the students while learning English. This was probably due to the abundance of simple and practical strategies under these two VLS categories. As for the remaining four strategies: memory-consolidation strategies, cognitive-consolidation strategies, social-discovery strategies and social-consolidation strategies, they were classified under medium level of use. This study on vocabulary learning strategies has pedagogical implications. First, it enables teachers to realize their learners' needs and interest in learning vocabulary. Teachers can incorporate vocabulary learning strategies (VLS) that are less frequently used by students in the classroom. This can be done by designing tasks related to vocabulary learning strategies and giving relevant assignments that require students to apply these strategies in order to accomplish them. Subsequently, through this exposure, it could create more awareness among the students about the diverse vocabulary learning strategies as well as encourage them to apply these strategies to enrich their vocabulary.

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