

Penggunaan Strategi Pembelajaran Kosakata Bahasa Inggeris dalam Kalangan Pelajar Sekolah Rendah Terpilih di Petempatan Felda di Pahang

*A Survey of Vocabulary Learning Strategies among Primary Students in a
Selected School in Felda Settlement in Pahang*

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ABSTRAK

Bagi memastikan pembelajaran Bahasa Inggeris yang berkesan, pelajar perlu mengenali cara pembelajaran mereka. Strategi pembelajaran kosakata adalah penting bagi memastikan pelajar mempelajari perkataan baru dalam Bahasa Inggeris. Penyelidikan ini bertujuan memberikan gambaran Strategi pembelajaran kosakata Bahasa Inggeris yang digunakan oleh pelajar peringkat sekolah rendah di FELDA. Metodologi kajian yang digunakan berdasarkan kaedah kuantitatif. Seramai tiga puluh enam pelajar Pra-UPSR daripada sekolah terpilih di sebuah kawasan penempatan FELDA di Pahang mewakili sampel kajian. Borang soal selidik bersama 25 item diadaptasi dari taksonomi Schmitt digunakan bagi tujuan pengumpulan data. Analisa data dilakukan melalui kaedah statistik deskriptif. Skor purata menunjukkan bahawa pelajar dari kawasan terpilih mengaplikasikan strategi pembelajaran kosakata secara 'kadang-kadang' dengan kadar purata skor kurang dari tiga. Strategi Determinasi mempunyai kadar frekuensi yang paling tinggi manakala kaedah strategi Sosial (konsolidasi) mencatatkan kadar frekuensi paling rendah. Hasil kajian adalah penting sebagai panduan kepada pendidik bagi mengimplementasikan kaedah proses pengajaran Bahasa Inggeris yang efektif bagi memberikan kesedaran kepada pelajar tentang kaedah pembelajaran kosakata yang berkesan.

Kata kunci: *pelajar peringkat sekolah rendah di FELDA, strategi pembelajaran kosakata Bahasa Inggeris, taksonomi Schmitt, kesedaran*

ABSTRACT

For an effective English learning process, learners have to be familiar with their way of learning. Strategies to learn vocabulary learning are essential in order for the learners to acquire new lexical items in English language. The aim of this paper is to describe English vocabulary learning strategies used by FELDA primary school students. The methodology used for the study is based on a quantitative approach. Thirty-six pre-UPSR students from a selected primary in one of the FELDA settlements in Pahang represent the study sample. A 25-items questionnaire adopted from Schmitt's taxonomy for vocabulary learning strategies is used to collect data. Data is analysed using descriptive statistics. The mean score obtained shows that students from the selected settlements seldom applied vocabulary learning

strategies. The highest frequency of strategies are Determination strategies while the lowest frequency strategies are Social (consolidation) strategies. The research findings could be regarded as useful guide for teachers in order to implement effective English Language teaching process and to raise learners' awareness towards effective vocabulary learning strategies.

Keywords: *FELDA primary school students, vocabulary learning strategies, Schmitt's taxonomy, awareness, effective*

1. Introduction

Vocabulary knowledge is essential in acquiring process. Read (2000:1) stated that "words are the basic building block of language, the units of meaning from which larger structures such as sentences, paragraphs and whole text are formed". The attainment of vocabulary by proposing a fundamental reading capacity in the second language learners (L2) which the learners gained only to a restricted level (Johnson, 1996). The vocabulary learning strategies are important to ensure effectiveness in expressing thoughts and conveying meanings. Learners could be successful language learners if their vocabulary learning strategies is compatible with their learning skills requirement (Oxford, 1990).

At the moment, most of primary school students in rural area such as FELDA region face challenges in acquiring English as their second language. According to Melor and Siti Sukainah (2014), FELDA primary school students frequently strive in English subject. They learn English vocabularies as a basic skill to read, write and speak in English.

According to Mustapha as cited in Siti Sukainah and Melor (2014), majority of Malaysian students are submissive learners. Most of students in FELDA schools have been confronting the similar acquisition process with the insufficiency of teaching materials and unsupportive ambience which leads them to be highly reliant on their teacher (Siti Sukainah & Melor, 2014).

The main objective of this paper is to describe FELDA's learners vocabulary learning strategies. This paper aims to raise students' awareness of the various type of VLS. Furthermore, it helps students to identify the VLS that are relevant to their learning habit and improve their skills in English vocabulary understanding and vocabulary identification process. This study will seek to answer the following questions:

1. What is the most frequently use category of VLS among students in FELDA setting?
2. What is the least frequently use category of VLS among students in FELDA setting?

The survey would provide recommendations in order to intensify the progress of English language acquisition among FELDA students. The limitations of study include two factors; limitation in methodology and facilities. This study requires a suitable and updated questionnaire which require thorough reading to ensure the questions are convenient for the respondents to answer and coherent with the students' knowledge about English vocabularies. The data collection is limited to a questionnaire form and sample constraint.

2. Literature Review

English language acquisition in FELDA settlement

The language background of Malaysians is very much tied up with the historical and educational background of the country (Darmi & Albion, 2013). FELDA settlement are positioned in rural area and mostly occupied by the Malays. The requirement of English as second language in daily activities appear to be least essential. A few circumstances may be

partly responsible to low competency of English competency among FELDA students. The inferior standard of performance is particularly anticipated by restricted exposure, implementation and enmity towards English.

There is a limited study on language learning strategies (LLS) used by primary school students in Malaysia especially in FELDA area. O'Malley and Chamot (1990) proposed that successful language learners shall be sensible enough to adapt and apply relevant strategies. It was clear that learners of different contexts would prefer different strategies, and teachers used specific strategies according to their syllabus. Vocabulary learning is one of the most challenging factors that learners will face during the process of second language learning (Safian, Malakar, & Kalajahi, 2014).

Vocabulary learning strategies

Riankamol (2008) stated that "... from the late 1980s, vocabulary was an area that had drawn researchers' interest within the mainstream of L2 acquisition". Nation (1990) stated that most learners' confronting obstacle in language learning as a result from inadequate vocabulary. Vocabulary is the essential component of language which has a great impact towards learners (Hatch & Brown 1995). The lexical items are the foundation of targeted language as they have prominent role on describing the subjects, proceedings, and purpose, which most of the learners are not being able to deliver the intentional meaning.

The main capacity of vocabulary comprehension on language acquisition has been recently planned and variety of solutions have been proposed into pedagogical field (Riankamol, 2008). Nation (2001) claims that vocabulary learning strategies are one of language learning strategies component which is part of the extensive learning strategies. Studies showed that majority of learners applied wide range of strategies to acquire vocabulary especially when analysed towards coherent functions such as audio and speaking discourse (Riankamol 2008). However, most of learners prefer to implement general vocabulary learning strategies (Schmitt, 1997).

Schmitt's taxonomy

Schmitt (1997) classified the vocabulary learning strategies into two categories; to discover the definition of unfamiliar lexical items and to integrate the definition of repeated lexical items. The previous categories of Schmitt's (1997) taxonomy consist of determination strategies and social strategies. Later, more categories, cognitive, metacognitive and social strategies were added.

Determination strategies are applied as the learners encountered new lexical item definition with the absence of option on other individual experience. These categories of determination strategies require general knowledge of targeted language and source of reference. The other alternatives, proposed by Schmitt is social strategies. It requires initial discover of a lexical item in order for learners to expand the variety strategies to rehearse and reserve vocabulary aided by other individual.

Memory strategies, generally recognized as Mnemonics. It requires the learners to correlate with the older lexical items obtained by the learners. These strategies involved the usage of imagery or classifying process. According to the Schmitt Taxonomy, cognitive strategies are representatively related to memory strategies. Cognitive strategies are not concentrated on mental scheming process. It comprises of reiteration process and learning devices such as flash cards.

Lastly, metacognitive strategies are respectively interpreted as ability to manipulate and assess the individual learning. Learners are required to summarize the whole learning

progress. It assisted on providing positive augmentation either the results from learning process is a message to differ the strategies or remain the same.

Related research

There are a number of studies reviewed to support vocabulary learning strategies. Yongqi Gu and Robert Keith Johnson (1996) conducted a study on vocabulary learning strategies and language learning outcomes. The study focused on establishing the vocabulary learning strategies applied by Chinese university students. The total respondents involved were 850 sophomore non-English majors Beijing Normal University to answer a vocabulary learning questionnaire. Majority of the respondents preferred guessing, efficient usage of dictionaries, jotting notes which were categorized as determination strategies. The research used a questionnaire for data collection.

A survey of vocabulary learning strategies of gifted English students at Triam Udomsuksa with 27 respondents from the school. The research used a questionnaire adapted from Schmitt's (1997). The research findings showed that the Metacognitive strategies are mostly preferred by the respondents while the least preferable vocabulary strategies were vocabulary learning were Cognitive strategies.

Melor Md. Yunus and Siti Sukainah Che Mat (2014) described the writing needs and writing strategies among FELDA primary school students. The findings showed that these students were interested to learn English. However, the learning process occur on slow speed despite numerous attempt applied to increase the students' interest towards English. The insufficient performance mainly occurred due to restricted exposure, utilization, and skepticism regarding English language learning.

Finally, Melor Md. Yunus and Siti Sukainah Che Mat (2014b) investigated FELDA School Students' attitudes and motivation towards learning English. This research observed the attitudes and motivations of FELDA students on acquiring English and discovered that the difficulty to learn English begin from primary education level.

Studies by Riankamol (2008) and Harun Baharudin & Zawawi Ismail (2014) used adapted questionnaire from Schmitt's (1997). The questionnaire was divided into 5 categories of strategies. Both studies used quantitative methodology in order to analyse data. The mean score of the data represents the frequency of strategies preferred by the respondents.

In sum the related review represents the point of views and data analysis from different past studies in the development of vocabulary learning strategies.

3. Methodology

The methodology used for this study is based on quantitative approach using a questionnaire. The survey form included 25 items inventory table according to six types of strategies modified from the vocabulary learning strategies classification by Schmitt's Taxonomy (1997).

Population and Sample

This research sets a target on 40 FELDA primary school students on selected FELDA settlement involving standard 6 students. The age of students are 12 years old from different grade of examination results.

Data Collection and Analysis

In order to collect data from the schools, a letter of approval is obtained. The survey questionnaire is written in both Malay and English so as to minimize the problem of misinterpretation by the learner during the administration of the research instrument. The respondents were reminded to answer the questionnaire as honestly as possible. A pencil and eraser were distributed among the respondents as an incentive for their cooperation. An empty sealed envelope was used to keep the fully completed survey form. The modified survey forms were circulated among 36 respondents. The response rate by the students were 100%. The completed survey questionnaires were collected and analysed using descriptive statistics with the help of the SPSS software. Frequencies, percentages and mean scores were used to analyse the data. Consequently, tables are used to illustrate the data.

4. Results and Findings

This section describes the findings gathered according to the distributed survey form to observe the vocabulary learning strategies practised by the students. The highest and lowest frequency of vocabulary learning strategies implemented among the students has been calculated and tabulated. The average outcome of each vocabulary learning strategies were illustrated in a form of inventory tables according to each strategy.

Based on the six categories, the data indicated that majority of the respondents preferred Determination strategies with the highest rate of mean score (M=2.34). On the other hand, the least preferred strategies were Social (Consolidation) strategies with the lowest rate of mean score (M=1.88). These students used more determination, social (discovery), memory and cognitive strategies as compared to the social (consolidation) and metacognitive strategies because majority of Malaysian learners are literally submissive learners who are highly dependent on repetition learning style which has been proposed by the old curriculum as claimed by Mustapha (1998).

TABLE 1. Percentage of Overall Strategy Use

Strategy Category	Mean (\bar{x})
Determination	2.34
Social (Discovery)	2.33
Social (Consolidation)	1.88
Memory Strategies	2.26
Cognitive Strategies	2.13
Metacognitive Strategies	1.98

From the three items in the determination strategies, the students prefer to identify word meaning through the parts of speech (M=2.44), used the bilingual dictionary (M= 2.36) and used illustrated pictures (M=2.22). This is because in rural area learners gained a positive learning process based on the observed action (Wreikat, 2014). This shows that the students are highly depending on the usage of the dictionary and translation process ((Normazidah Che Musa, Koo Yew Lie, Hazita Hazman, 2012)

TABLE 2. Descriptive Statistics of Strategy Use in Individual Item of Determination Strategies

	Never		Seldom		Often		Always		x
	F	%	F	%	F	%	F	%	
(n=36)									
1) I use a bilingual dictionary to help me translate English words into Malay language	1	2.78	24	66.67	8	22.22	3	8.33	2.36
2) I use pictures illustrated in the textbook to find the words Meanings	11	30.56	13	36.11	5	13.89	7	19.44	2.22
3) I learn meaning of words by identifying its part of speech	7	19.44	12	33.33	11	30.56	6	16.67	2.44

For the four items in the social (discovery) strategies, the students prefer to ask the teacher to translate the words into Malay language (M=2.50), ask the teacher to put a unknown word into a sentence to help me understand the word meaning (M=2.53), asking the classmate for meaning (M=2.08) and knowing some new words when working in group works (M=2.22). This is because inspiring the students shall be the main responsibility of teachers as it is the main factor to aid the students on improving English acquiring process (Siti Sukainah & Melor, 2014). This illustrates that students tend to rely on teachers as authorities (Normazidah Che Musa, Koo Yew Lie, Hazita Hazman, 2012).

TABLE 3. Descriptive Statistics of Strategy Use in Individual Item of Social (Discovery) Strategies

	Never		Seldom		Often		Always		x
	F	%	F	%	F	%	F	%	
4) I ask the teacher to translate the words into Malay language	1	2.78	23	63.89	5	13.89	7	19.44	2.50
5) I ask the teacher to put an unknown word into a sentence to help me understand the word meaning	1	2.78	21	58.33	8	22.22	6	16.67	2.53
6) I ask my classmate for meaning	6	16.67	22	61.11	7	19.44	1	2.78	2.08
7) I know some new words when working in group works	6	16.67	18	50.00	10	27.78	2	5.56	2.22

For the three items in the social (consolidation) strategies, the students prefer to practice English in group work activities (M=2.08), I ask native speakers for help (M=1.61) and learning words about the culture of English speaking countries (M=1.94). This is because the insufficiency of facilities and unfavorable environment in the remote area increase the tendency of students being dependent on their teacher (Siti Sukainah & Melor, 2014). This shows that students has lack of opportunity to practice English beyond classroom environment due to inadequate exposure to the environment (Normazidah Che Musa, Koo Yew Lie, Hazita Hazman, 2012).

TABLE 4. Descriptive Statistics of Strategy Use in Individual Item of Social (Consolidation) Strategies

Item	Never		Seldom		Often		Always		x
	F	%	F	%	F	%	F	%	
8) I practice English in group work Activities	11	30.56	15	41.67	6	16.67	4	11.11	2.08
9) I ask native speakers for help	24	66.67	6	16.67	2	5.56	4	11.11	1.61
10) I learn words about the culture of English speaking countries	18	50.00	6	16.67	4	11.11	7	19.44	1.94

For the four items in the memory strategies, the students write a new word in a sentence in order to remember (M=2.33), studying a spelling of new words (M=2.61), using physical actions when learning words (M=1.75) and speaking words out loud when (M=2.36).

TABLE 5. Descriptive Statistics of Strategy Use in Individual Item of Memory Strategies

Item	Never		Seldom		Often		Always		x
	F	%	F	%	F	%	F	%	
11) I write a new word in a sentence so I can remember it	8	22.22	14	38.89	7	19.44	7	19.44	2.33
12) I study a spelling of new words	5	13.89	13	36.11	6	16.67	12	33.33	2.61
13) I use physical actions when learning words	20	55.56	9	25.00	3	8.33	4	11.11	1.75
14) I speak words out loud when studying	7	19.44	14	38.89	10	27.78	5	13.89	2.36

For the six items in cognitive strategies, the students repeatedly practice new words (M=2.86), writing a new word on a flash card so they could remember it (M=1.78), learning words by listening to vocabulary CDs (M=1.92), recording vocabulary from English soundtrack movies (M=1.83), trying to remember a word by writing or saying repeatedly (M=2.56) and making vocabulary cards and take them wherever they go (M=1.81). This demonstrate that the main reason for this circumstances is the poor quality of technological facility that shall be distributed by the Ministry of Education for each of educational level in these remote area school (Wreikat, 2014).

TABLE 6. Descriptive Statistics of Strategy Use in Individual Item of Cognitive Strategies

Item	Never		Seldom		Often		Always		x
	F	%	F	%	F	%	F	%	
15) I repeatedly practice new words	4	11.11	10	27.78	9	25.00	13	36.11	2.86
16) I write a new word on a flash card so I can remember it	17	47.22	13	36.11	3	8.33	3	8.33	1.78
17) I learn words by listening to vocabulary CDs	17	47.22	10	27.78	4	11.11	5	13.89	1.92
18) I record vocabulary from English soundtrack movies	20	55.56	6	16.67	5	13.89	5	13.89	1.83
19) When I try to remember a word, I write or say it repeatedly	7	19.44	13	36.11	7	19.44	9	25.00	2.56
20) I make vocabulary cards and take them with me wherever I go	20	55.56	8	22.22	3	8.33	5	13.89	1.81

For the five items in the metacognitive strategies, the students listen to English songs and news (M=1.94), memorizing word from English magazines (M=1.78), reviewing English vocabulary cards before next lesson starts (M=1.78), not worrying very much about the difficult words found when reading or listening (M=2.42) and using online exercise to test vocabulary knowledge. This is because, the students did not aware of the importance to practice the language (Normazidah Che Musa, Koo Yew Lie, Hazita Hazman, 2012). It shows that English is not a main communication medium as they use their mother tongue language both for academic and personal purpose (Normazidah Che Musa, Koo Yew Lie, Hazita Hazman, 2012).

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TABLE 7. Descriptive Statistics of Strategy Use in Individual Item of Metacognitive Strategies

Item	Never		Seldom		Often		Always		x
	F	%	F	%	F	%	F	%	
21) I listen to English songs and news I memorize word from English magazines	13	36.11	16	44.44	2	5.56	5	13.89	1.94
22) I review my own English vocabulary cards for reviewing before the next lesson starts	18	50.00	10	27.78	6	16.67	2	5.56	1.78
23) I am not worry very much about the difficult words found when reading or listening	7	19.44	12	33.33	12	33.33	5	13.89	2.42
24) I use on-line exercise to test my vocabulary knowledge	12	33.33	16	44.44	5	13.89	3	8.33	1.97

The analysis of the findings shows that the respondents from Sekolah Kebangsaan FELDA seldom applied Vocabulary Learning Strategies as the overall data based on the six categories of vocabulary learning strategies shows a mean score range between 1 to 2 and the highest mean score is $M = 2.34$ which in Likert scale; 1= never, 2= seldom, 3=often and 4=always. FELDA Tersang 3 students mostly preferred the Determination strategies with the highest percentage of $\bar{x} = 2.34$ to acquire new lexical item. According to Table 2, the Determination strategies assist on the vocabulary acquiring process from abundant sources of English reference sources. It could enhance a productive and effective learning process. A few items under Determination strategies are the usage of bilingual dictionary, illustration and learning new lexical items from part of speech identification process.

The study by Schmitt and McCarthy (1997) shows that Determination strategies was applied by junior high school, high school and university students was majorly based on the application of bilingual dictionary. However, the results in Table 3 shows that 8.3% out of 100% of sample were applying this strategy which is the lowest frequency from Determination strategies. According to the results in Table 3, Item no. 3; "I learn meaning of words by identifying its part of speech" was the highly preferable learning strategies in order to learn the definition of problematic lexical items.

Based on Table 2, Social (Consolidation) strategies was the least preferable strategies with the lowest percentage of $\bar{x} = 1.88$. These strategies assist the respondents on perceiving the ideas of language acquired by the respondents. There were three items in this strategies which were practicing in group activities, communicating with native speakers and learning words by English speaking countries culture. According to Table 5, majority of respondents prefer to enhance their vocabulary skills through item no. 8; "I practice English in group work activities" with the mean score of $\bar{x} = 2.08$. It allows them to find a solution on understanding new lexical items through verbal communication. However, item no. 9; "I ask native speakers for help" has the lowest frequency among the three items with the mean scores of $\bar{x} = 1.61$ as the school was located in remote area and the exposure towards English language is lower (Melor Md. Yunus & Siti Sukainah Che Mat, 2014)

5. Conclusion and Recommendations

The findings from the study illustrated that the level of vocabulary learning strategies use among these FELDA students were considered to be less than frequent based on the mean scores obtained for the 6 categories. The findings of this study is in line with the likert scale as

the average of the mean score is below 3. This means that the students seldom applied the Vocabulary Learning Strategies as the average of the score range within $M=1 \geq 2.5$. This resulted in majority of the students in remote area only has an exposure towards English language during classes ((Normazidah Che Musa, Koo Yew Lie, Hazita Hazman, 2012). Teachers shall inspire a set of values which is essential on improving their performance on teaching and gradually increase their student's English competency level (Wreikat, 2014).

In conclusion, the vocabulary learning strategies are seldom applied by the students. The Determination strategies are highly associated with Pre-UPSR students from Sekolah Kebangsaan FELDA Tersang 3. The findings showed that the students highly preferred to learn English by identifying it from a part of speech. It helps the students on performing sustainability on acquiring English as a second language according to their own preferable strategies. The Social (Consolidation) strategies are the least preferable among the students as there is a few limitations due to their surrounding and remote area environment which restrict them from social exposure from the outer surrounding.

In order to enhance vocabulary learning process, the exposure towards vocabulary learning strategies shall be effectively implied. Parents shall be educated with awareness of their child learning styles to help the learning process at home. Teacher shall conduct a severe screening procedure in a form of test in order to recognize the students learning preferences before teaching in order to increase awareness on student preference and ability on vocabulary learning strategies. The ministry of education shall implement this procedure as a part of pedagogical process to ensure students from rural area could uniformly be aided with suitable learning devices.

Language learning strategies are acknowledged as effective alternative towards language learners which hypothetically assist English teachers teaching process. It delivers valuable knowledge on the effective method and procedure for students to interpret information and choose the eligible Vocabulary Learning Strategies to improve their second language learning process.

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