

## The Use of Vocabulary Learning Strategies by High, Medium, and Low ESL Proficiency Learners in Malaysia

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### Abstract

Recognizing the importance of lexis and vocabulary learning strategies (VLS) in any language learning, this study tries to identify vocabulary learning strategies preferred by university students. The aim of this study was to identify the least and the most use of vocabulary learning strategies preferred by high, medium and low proficiency learners. Moreover, this study discussed the impact of their preferences on the acquisition of English vocabulary. Hence, the study used a quantitative method and the instrument used was survey questionnaire that was distributed to the students. Seven vocabulary learning strategies namely metacognitive regulation, guessing strategies, dictionary strategies, note-taking strategies, rehearsal strategies, encoding strategies, and activation strategies which was proposed by Gu & Johnson (1996) is adapted for the study. 283 semester two students from five diploma programs of Universiti Teknologi MARA, Perak were involved in the study. A vocabulary learning questionnaire adapted from Gu and Johnson (1996) was used to collect the data. Results showed that the students preferred to use guessing in context and dictionary strategies at the most; the other five namely metacognitive regulation, note-taking strategies, rehearsal strategies, encoding strategies, and activation strategies were less preferred. Thus, due to the lack of English proficiency incompetence, findings also showed that the students were only able to encounter new words and using the word without getting the word meaning or consolidating the word form and meaning in memory.

**Keywords:** ESL Learners, Vocabulary Learning Strategies (VLS), Language Learning Strategies (LLS), Language Proficiency.

### Introduction

Learning a second language involves the manipulation of four main skills namely speaking, writing, listening and reading which direct to effective communication. One crucial factor is the amount of vocabulary one possesses as vocabulary forms the biggest part of the meaning

of any language (McCarthy, 1988). "Vocabulary is central to language and it is critical to the typical language learner", (Zimmerman, 1998:5). Although it has been an indispensable part of language teaching and learning, it is said that vocabulary teaching has not been responsive to problems in the area, and teachers are not fully recognized the great communicative advantage in developing an extensive vocabulary and seen as an important factor in language competence. However, vocabulary learning in second language (L2) is hard to remember because of its size and quantity, and learners need to use deliberate learning strategies (Hadi ur Rahman & Xihuang, 2020). Past researcher also points out that the appropriate choice and deployment of strategies can make a big difference in determining if vocabulary learning becomes an efficient or inefficient, and even pleasant or frustrating experience (Gu, 2018). It is also noted that teaching vocabulary should not only consist of teaching specific words but also aim at equipping learners with strategies necessary to expand their vocabulary knowledge (Hulstjin & Laufer 2001, as cited in Morin & Goebel, 2008). These scholars' statements sum up the importance of vocabulary as a very essential component of any language in the world as well as the core of language learning and communication.

### **Literature Review**

Even if the grammar is excellent, it is believed that the learner will not be able to communicate their meaning without a wide vocabulary. The question is how one learner increase their vocabulary knowledge? According to Pemberton (2003), in the basic of learning vocabulary learner need to decide which words are worth learning and this involve words that can be guessed from context and words that are common which learner had encountered them frequently. The assumption was that if the characteristics of good language learners can be differentiated from the less successful learners, the performance of the latter ones can be enhanced and learning can be facilitated (Stern, 1975; Rubin, 1987; Kolemén, 2021 in Jaikrishnan & Ismail, 2021). These studies eventually created the path for LLS research.). Wakely (2003) in Nazri (2006), propose that learners who are specializing in one area of study should begin by learning their general vocabulary first, and later move on to study the specialist vocabulary. He further suggests that, it is advisable for this to take place after 1,500 to 2,000 general words have been learnt. Since the English vocabulary size is enormous and its acquisition is time consuming, it is an absolutely impossible task to learn all its words. He emphasizes that it is commonly agreed that a threshold of around 2,000 to 3,000 words is a requirement for average learner to progress in their vocabulary learning (Wakely, 2003).

The vocabulary acquisition divided into passive vocabulary and an active vocabulary. Passive vocabulary contains all the words that learner understands when they engage in reading and listening, however these words might not be used by learners in writing and speaking thus they tend to forget the words. On the other hand, active vocabulary involves all the words that the learner understands and uses (Pemberton, 2003 as cited in Mayuree, 2007). He further highlights that special problem involved in vocabulary understanding are in the area of idiomatic usage, false cognates, polysemous and distinction between homophones. However, these problems can be solved if the learners learned vocabulary by context and the use of dictionary. Remembering vocabulary and vocabulary learning has largely been construed as a memory problem and seems to be another difficulty for vocabulary learners. One of the biggest problems with vocabulary learning is that what is learned today is often forgotten tomorrow. Based on this concerned, he suggested several methods for reducing the forgetting problem. Several methods highlighted such as learner are encouraged to learn

words repeatedly with increasing intervals between learning sessions, spend more time on the words that are difficult and finally decide on which words learner wants to concentrate on (Pemberton, 2003 as cited in Mayuree, 2007). Rohmatillah (2017) as cited in Afzal (2019), asserts that without learning the vocabulary, communication in the second language becomes harder. Further, vocabulary knowledge is an integral part of the language; it is central to communicative competence.

### **Problem Statement**

The difficulties in acquiring a large number of vocabulary items may be due to the least systematized of teaching vocabulary and the least well-catered of all aspects of learning a second language and foreign language, such as listening, speaking, writing, grammar and pronunciation.

As mentioned by Graves (2016) he says that vocabulary is tremendously important in learning to read, applied in all subjects and achieving world beyond school. In Malaysia, English is the compulsory course for students. However, vocabulary becomes the bottleneck in English learning and acquisition for many students and their speed of vocabulary improvement is relatively slow (Nazri, 2006). There is a large gap between the students' English ability and requirements settled in the syllabus. The current situation is, to some extent, caused by many teachers' neglect in vocabulary teaching. According to Ghalebi et al (2020), educators are conscious of the vocabulary learning challenges encountered by different learners. Some problems encountered are large number of words, word families, multiple word units needed to learn and use. Of course, many students just memorize new words mechanically and there is no systematic research in vocabulary learning. In Malaysian universities and schools, many English teachers and educators think that students can gain vocabulary acquisition by themselves and believe that every new word appearing in the text is marked with phonetic symbol and its meaning, so it is unnecessary to devote great efforts to teach vocabulary. The only focus is on the conceptual meaning and neglects other aspects of vocabulary such as connotation, collocation, denotation, synonyms and others. Furthermore, many teachers and educators are still practicing the traditional teaching methods such as rote learning which are proved to be time-consuming and inefficient by many researchers. In the context of English as a second language (ESL) in Malaysia, it is found that very few empirical research works has been conducted to investigate vocabulary learning strategies employed by students at any level of education. It is also noted that, age of students is seen as an important factor that may predict the students' success in vocabulary learning. However, the researcher has also considered that other factors such as students' gender, different type of faculties, previous language learning experience, type of course taken and levels of language proficiency are worth investigating since they may have some relationship with students' vocabulary learning strategies.

### **Purpose of the Study**

*The purpose of the study is to identify the least and the most use of vocabulary learning strategies*

preferred by high, medium and low proficiency learners. Specifically, the research questions of the study are:

- What are the most frequently used vocabulary learning strategies among high, medium and low ESL proficiency learners?
- What are the least frequently used vocabulary learning strategies among high, medium and low ESL proficiency learners?
- Are there any differences between high, medium and low proficiency learners in their use of vocabulary learning strategy?
- What are the differences between male and female learners in their use of vocabulary learning strategy?

### **Methodology**

#### *Participant of the Study*

The participants for this study were 283 diploma students of Mara University of Technology Perak. These students were selected from five different courses namely Faculty of Art and Design (AD), Faculty of Business Management (BM), Faculty of Computer and Mathematical Science (CS) and Faculty of Architecture, Planning and Surveying (FSPU), Faculty of Accountancy (AC). The respondents comprised of 172 female respondents and 111 male respondents aged that ranged between 19 – 22 years old. They had 11 years of ESL learning background previously that was from their primary and secondary education. These are semester two students who are currently taking Preparatory Course for MUET (Bel 260) which is an Intermediate English compulsory course. In order to determine their current levels of English language proficiency, and to group them in specific levels, their pre-requisite Consolidating Language Skills (Bel 120) from semester one result will be used to determine their high and low proficiency level in English. This selection was purported to enable a distinctive sampling of VLS employed by the said populace; to be exact and to gauge the most and the least frequently used VLS by high and low proficiency learners and by gender; and whether there were any differences between the said groups in their use of VLS.

### **Instrument**

In this study, structured questionnaire is the main instrument use in the present investigation because survey concern descriptive studies. Therefore, the researcher decided to adopt questionnaire on Vocabulary Learning Strategies Questionnaire (VLSQ) proposed by Gu & Johnson (1996) and was used to elicit students' preferences of vocabulary learning strategies. The question written in English language consisted of two parts. The first part (Section A) is demographic contained eight questions which seek to find out about the students' personal background such as their previous school, course taken, age, gender, English proficiency etc. The second part (Section B) consisted of 54 questions which grouped under 7 major parts namely 1) Metacognitive Regulation (MET), 2) Guessing Strategies (GUES), 3) Dictionary Strategies (DICT), 4) Note-Taking Strategies (NOTE), 5) Rehearsal Strategies (REHEA), 6) Encoding Strategies (ENCOD), 7) Activation Strategies (ACTIV). Each part comprised of several subcategories (see Appendix I). The questions were presented using 4-point Likert scales to indicate the frequency (Always=1 to Never=4) as such Likert Scale rating from (1) Always, (2)

Often, (3) Sometimes and (4) Never). The VLSQ enabled the researcher to look at the clustering of the various strategies of the learners in learning English vocabulary.

### **Data Collection and Analysis Procedure**

Data of the study was analyzed using descriptive statistics where frequency counts were tabulated and converted to percentages. To achieve the research purpose in terms of analysis and interpretation of the data obtained through the written strategy questionnaire, different statistical methods with the assistance of SPSS software were used. These include: - (1) frequency (2) cross tabulation, (3) an analysis of variance (ANOVA).

### **Results and Discussion**

#### *Student Profile*

Based on the findings on demographic and students' background, out of 283 respondents, it was discovered that these diploma students came from different courses under different faculties. The largest number of respondents came from the Office Management Course (OM) 19.79%, followed by Building Survey (BS) 14.13%. The lowest respondents came from Civil Engineering (CV) 0.35 and Science Quantitative (QS%) 2.12% respectively. It was also revealed that only 35 (11%) students came boarding school such as The Malays College (MCKK), Maktab Rendah Sains Mara (MRSM) or Sekolah Menengah Agama (SMA) which is also known school for the high achievers. The majority of the students which is 217 or (77%) were actually from public schools and this school is not really meant for the low achievers but also for the advanced and the intermediate and finally technical and vocational school were (12%). This school is for those interested in technical skills such as electrical, wiring, cooking, automotive etc. This can be concluded that these students were a mix of advanced, intermediate and lower level students. Their level of English proficiency levels was referred to their previous grade obtained during Part 1 results. The result is based on the average grade point and level of English proficiency measured as 3.67 – 4.00 (high), 2.67 – 3.33 (medium) and 1.67 -2.33 (low) Majority of the students were belonged to the medium or intermediate English language proficiency (60.71%), whereas lower proficiency learners were (18.25%) and high achievers were (21.03%). These concludes that majority were an intermediate learner where their grades ranged from 2.67 -3.33 average point.

**Research Question 1**

What are the most frequently used VLS among high, medium and low proficiency learners?

Table 1

*The most frequently used VLS by high and low English Proficiency Learners*

VLS Strategies Used	Category	English Proficiency (%)			Total (%) (n=246)
		High (n=53)	Medium (n=148)	Low (n=45)	
I know what clues I should use in guessing the meaning of a particular word.	MET (SE)	66.0	50.7	40.0	52.0
I use various means to make clear vocabulary items that I am not quite clear.	MET (SI)	56.6	43.2	46.7	46.7
I look for any definitions or contextual clues to guess meaning.	GUES(WC)	*77.4	*59.5	55.6	*62.6
When not knowing a word prevents me from understanding a whole sentence, I look it up.	DICT(DS)	*90.6	*73.0	*64.4	*75.2
When looking up a word in the dictionary, I read simple sentences illustrating various meaning of the word.	DICT(EDS)	*75.5	55.4	*64.4	*61.4
I take down grammatical information about a word when I look it up.	NOTE(UON T)	37.7	43.9	37.8	41.5
I write the new words on one side of a card and their explanations on the other.	REHEA(UW L)	35.8	27.0	28.9	29.3
When I try to remember a word, I repeat its pronunciation in my mind.	REHEA(OR)	52.8	*66.2	*60.0	*62.2

I remember the words that sound similar eg. pray-prey. ENCOD(AE) 73.6 48.6 48.9 54.1

To answer Research Question 1, the finding above indicates that out of 246 students, 53 respondents are high proficiency learners, whereas 148 were belonging to the medium proficiency learners and the remaining 45 respondents were low level learners. Overall, out of 246 respondents, most of the respondent from three different proficiency learners preferred to use DICT(DS) (75.2%), GUES(WC) (62.6%) and REHEA(OR) (62.2%). It is also revealed that, the most frequently used of VLS among high proficiency respondents derives from dictionary strategies; dictionary strategies for comprehension DICT(DS), which is (90.6%). dictionary strategies; dictionary strategies for comprehension DICT(DS), which is (90.6%), "When not knowing a word prevents me from understanding a whole sentence or even a whole paragraph, I look it up". This follow by using extended dictionary strategies DICT(EDS) that is (75.5%). "when looking up a word in the dictionary, I read sample sentences illustrating various meanings of the word". Finally guessing strategies in wider context GUES(WC) which is (77.4%) "I look for any definitions or paraphrases in the contextual clues to guess meaning". These three top options denote that many high proficiency learners greatly prefer vocabulary learning through using dictionaries as they appear to be intriguing and helpful as well as using guessing strategies in wider context. This simply means that the learners have went through many reading materials and taking a risk to guess difficult words using contextual clues provided in the text.

## Research Question 2

What are the least frequently used VLS among high, medium and low proficiency learners?

Table 2

*The least frequently used VLS by high, medium and low proficiency learners*

VLS Strategies Used	Category	English Proficiency (%)			
		High (n=53)	Medium (n=148)	Low (n=45)	Total (%) (n=246)
I know what clues I should use in guessing the meaning of a particular word.	MET (SE)	34.6	52.7	60.9	50.4
I use various means to make clear vocabulary items that I am not quite clear.	MET (SI)	44.2	60.1	54.3	55.7
I look for any definitions or contextual clues to guess meaning.	GUES(WC)	23.1	43.9	45.7	39.8

When not knowing a word prevents me from understanding a whole sentence, I look it up.	DICT(DS)	9.6	30.4	37.0	27.2
I write down the English synonyms(s) eg. “happy” – “joy” or explanations.	NOTE(MONT)	48.1	*75.0	*73.9	*69.1
I take down grammatical information about a word when I look it up.	NOTE(UONT)	*63.5	59.5	63.0	61.0
I write the new words on one side of a card and their explanations on the other.	REHEA(UWL)	*65.4	*76.4	71.9	*73.2
I attach physical sensations to certain words (eg. “smelly” is related to rotten egg) when I try to remember them.	ENCOD(A)	*67.3	*71.6	*76.1	*71.5
I memorize the commonly used stems and prefixes eg, prefix dis, un, and stem words eg. like, satisfy etc.	ENCOD(UWS)	*63.5	69.6	63.0	67.1

In response to Research Question 2, the findings revealed that, rehearsal strategies REHEA(UWL) which is (73.2%), encoding strategies ENCOD(A) (71.5%) and NOTE(MONT) (69.1%) strategies occupy the three spots denoting the least frequently employed VLS among high, medium and low proficiency learners. It was found out that out of 52 respondents of high English proficiency learners, almost (67.3%) disfavor using encoding strategies ENCOD(A) which is “I attach physical sensations to certain words (eg. “smelly” is related to rotten egg) when I try to remember them”. This result shows that these good students are unlikely to use their five senses to find the meaning of a word. This is very much contradicting with the characteristics of a good language learners as defined by Ellis (1994); that successful language learners often pay enormous attention to meaning and words. Other least strategies used by high proficiency learner were rehearsal strategies REHEA(UWL) which is (65.4%) that is “I write the new words on one side of a card and their explanations on the other”. This result suggests that this group of learners’ disfavours learning new words by means of writing or making notes about them. The final strategies that is less favored by the high proficiency learners is note-taking strategies NOTE(UONT) and encoding strategies ENCOD(UWS) both respectively (63.5%). This results are also contradicts with Gu & Johnson (1996) who describe that efficient language learners as “Active Strategy Users”, that they are capable of applying a wide variety of strategies as well as “self-initiation and high flexibility” ability in learning



vocabulary. The fact that a dictionary strategy appears to be among the most frequently used of VLS in (Table 1) indicates that these learners largely prefer learning vocabulary by using dictionary strategies to look for comprehension as well as employed extended dictionary strategies such as looking up a word in the dictionary and look for sample sentences that illustrates various meaning of the words.

### Research Question 3

Are there any differences between high, medium and low proficiency learners?

Table 3

*ANOVA for Relationship Between VLS and English Proficiency*

#### ANOVA<sup>b</sup>

Model		Sum of Squares	df	Mean Square	F	Sig.
1	Regression	14.066	19	.740	2.027	.008 <sup>a</sup>
	Residual	84.739	232	.365		
	Total	98.806	251			

a. Predictors: (Constant), ACTIV(CS), MET(SE), DICT(DS), REHEA(OR), MET(SI), REHEA(UWL), GUES(WC), ENCOD(UWS), NOTE(MONT), DICT(EDS), REHEA(VR), ENCOD(VE), GUES(IC), NOTE(UONT), ENCODE(SE), ENCODE(A), ENCODE(AE), ENCOD(CE), DICT(LUS)

b. Dependent Variable English Proficiency

Table 3, show a results of significant level between the learner vocabulary learning strategy and the English proficiency level. From the analysis of variance (ANOVA), it is reported that the students' vocabulary learning strategy (VLS) has a statistical significant effect on the students VLS which is (sig = .008). The P value is set at (> 0.05). Thus, the overall result shows that there is significant effect between the their use of vocabulary learning strategy and their English proficiency level. Hence, it can be concluded that, the learners' use of vocabulary learning strategies was largely determined by the learners' English proficiency level.

Table 4

*Differences between high, medium and low proficiency learners with their use of VLS*

Vocabulary Strategy question (VLSQ)	Learning	English Proficiency (%)			Total (%) (n = 246)	(n)
		High (=53)	(n = 148)	Medium (n = 45)		
MET(SE)		66.0	50.7	40.0	52.0	
MET(SI)		56.6	43.2	46.7	46.7	
GUES(WC)		*77.4	*59.5	55.6	*62.6	
GUES(IC)		52.8	37.8	42.2	41.9	
DICT(DS)		*90.6	*73.0	*64.4	*75.2	
DICT(EDS)		*75.5	55.4	*64.4	61.4	
DICT(LUS)		52.8	33.8	26.7	36.6	
NOTE(MONT)		52.8	28.4	26.7	33.3	
NOTE(UONT)		37.7	43.9	37.8	41.5	
REHEA(UWL)		35.8	27.0	28.9	29.3	
REHEA(OR)		52.8	*66.2	*60.0	*62.2	
REHEA(VR)		47.2	34.5	31.1	36.6	
ENCOD(A)		34.0	31.8	24.4	30.9	
ENCOD(VE)		50.9	47.3	40.0	46.7	
ENCOD(AE)		73.6	48.6	48.9	54.1	
ENCOD(UWS)		37.7	33.8	37.8	35.4	
ENCOD(SE)		52.8	38.5	48.9	43.5	
ENCOD(CE)		60.4	43.2	37.8	45.9	
ACTIV(CS)		47.2	44.6	48.9	45.9	

Source: Data Analysis

In response to Research Question 3, it can be seen from Table 4, that out of 246 respondents, overall respondents use of VLS are DICT(DS) (75.2%), GUESS(WC) (62.6%) AND REHEA(OR) (62.2%). The finding result show that, basically the high, medium and low learners are similar in their use of VLS in terms of dictionary and extended dictionary strategies DICT(DS) and DICT(EDS). However, only the high and medium proficiency learners preferred to use guessing in context strategy GUESS(WC). From the finding, it is also discovered that the medium and low learners prefer to use rehearsal and oral repetition strategy REHEA(OR), unlike their high learners counterparts. This variation reveal that the high proficiency learners have similarity with the medium proficiency learners, and this could be due to their small average differences between the advanced and the intermediate learners. A gap between the high and low learners were presented in the results which shows that there is one differences between the high and low learners in their use of VLS compared to the three most preferred VLS use among the learners. It is also believed that, the similarity of one strategy that is rehearsal strategy between the medium and low learners might indicate that they are close in range in their proficiency level. This might indicate that, the average and poor learners prefer to use oral repetition strategy which is a simple repetitive behaviour the words to themselves rather than other more high stake strategies such as guessing in contenxt, note-taking strategies or encoding strategies.

**Research Question 4**

What are the differences between male and female learners in their use of vocabulary learning strategy?

Table 5

*ANOVA Table for Relationship between VLS and gender*

**ANOVA<sup>b</sup>**

Model		Sum of Squares	df	Mean Square	F	Sig.
1	Regression	5.927	19	312	1.333	.162 <sup>a</sup>
	Residual	61.536	263	234		
	Total	67.463	282			

c. Predictors: (Constant), ACTIV(CS), DICT(LUS), MET(SI), REHEA(OR), MET(SE), DICT(DS), REHEA(VR), REHEA(UWL), GUES(WC), DICT(EDS), ENCOD(VE), GUES(IC), ENCOD(SE), NOTE(UONT), ENCODE(AE), ENCOD(A), ENCOD(CE), NOTE(MONT), ENCOD(UWS)

## d. Dependent Variable Gender

Based on Table 5, the results from the analysis of variance (ANOVA) reveal that there is no significant difference between the frequency of students' vocabulary learning strategy (VLS) use with gender (sig = 0.162). The P value is set at (> 0.05). Therefore, the overall result shows that this study has no statistical significant effect between the vocabulary learning strategy and gender. Hence, it can be concluded that, the preferences use of VLS among female and male in this study is not determined by their gender differences.

Table 6

*ANOVA Table for Relationship between VLS and gender*

Vocabulary Learning Strategy question (VLSQ)	Gender (%)		Total (%) (n = 246)
	Male (n = 106)	Female (n = 170)	
MET(SE)	49.1	51.2	50.4
MET(SI)	49.1	45.3	46.7
GUES(WC)	*65.1	62.4	*63.4
GUES(IC)	37.7	42.9	40.9
DICT(DS)	*75.5	*74.7	*75.0
DICT(EDS)	*58.5	*64.1	*62.0
DICT(LUS)	36.8	35.9	36.2
NOTE(MONT)	27.4	36.5	33.0
NOTE(UONT)	41.5	40.0	40.6
REHEA(UWL)	23.6	33.5	29.7
REHEA(OR)	54.7	*66.5	*62.0
REHEA(VR)	27.4	42.4	36.6
ENCOD(A)	29.2	32.4	31.2
ENCOD(VE)	42.5	49.4	46.7
ENCOD(AE)	51.9	55.3	54.0
ENCOD(UWS)	39.6	31.8	34.8
ENCOD(SE)	43.4	41.8	42.4
ENCOD(CE)	42.5	48.2	46.0
ACTIV(CS)	48.1	45.3	46.4

Source: Data Analysis

In response to Research Question 4 and based on the finding from the survey, it can be seen from Table 6, that the overall respondents from both gender preferred to use the dictionary DICT(DS) strategy (75%), then followed by guessing in wider context strategy GUES(WC) which is (63.4%). Finally, the respondents favour extended dictionary strategy DICT(EDS) and rehearsing and oral repetition strategy REHEA(OR) both are (62.2%). Based on the finding, it is also noted that most male students preferred to use dictionary strategy DICT(DS) which is (75.5%), followed by GUES(WC)(65.25%) and extended dictionary strategy DICT(EDS) which is (58.5%). Whereas, the female respondents have the similar preferences of VLS strategies used which is they favor using dictionary DICT(DS) (74.7%) as well as extended dictionary strategy DICT(EDS) (64.1%). The only differences between male and female used of VLS is that female respondents preferred to use the rehearsal and oral repetition strategy REHEA(OR) which is (64.1%) which is contradict with male learners where they prefer to use guessing in wider context strategy compared to female which is repetition strategy. This differences might be due to the nature of the different gender which said that male prefer to guess the meaning using contextual clues or guessing in context whilst female prefer to use repetition such as repeat the words or sentences many times in order to remember them.

### Conclusion

Based on the findings, it was obvious that the respondents employed a limited number of VLS when trying to learn English vocabulary. Out of seven VLS tested, only guessing GUESS(WC), rehearsing REHEA(OR) and dictionary strategies DICT(DS) were preferred. Other than the three preferred VLS, the other four VLS were not the preference of the participants. One of non-favored strategies is metacognitive regulation MET(SE) or learning from natural exposure. Finally, activation strategies ACTIV(CS) were also ignored by the respondents. Activation strategies are strategies ESL learners use to interact with other people in order to discover or practice new words. For VLS, rather than being used individually, multiple vocabulary learning strategies are often used concurrently. This means that active management of strategy use is important. The implications for teaching derived from the study is that; teacher and educator themselves should have a good command of language and accustomed to vocabulary learning strategies. This means that, teacher should go learn different method and equipped themselves with different methodological training and learn new techniques to support learning. Then, language teacher needs to be creative to inculcate awareness in motivating their students to combine different strategies when learning the vocabulary. It is also important to tell the students to choose strategies that suit their learning style. Apart from that, future research may also utilize qualitative methods which include interviews with teacher and students, observation and journal writing.

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