

An analysis of students' awareness of vocabulary learning strategies in English instruction at the second grade of SMAN 2 Tembilahan

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ABSTRACT

Keywords:

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Kata Kunci:

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The problem addressed in this research was that the second-grade students of SMAN 2 Tembilahan still experienced difficulties in their awareness of learning strategies. Therefore, the purpose of this research was to determine the students' awareness of vocabulary learning strategies in English instruction. This study employed a descriptive quantitative design. The researcher distributed a questionnaire to 30 respondents to answer the research question. The sample was selected using total sampling, as it consisted of only 30 students. After collecting the data, the researcher found that the students' awareness of vocabulary learning strategies in English instruction among second-grade students at SMAN 2 Tembilahan was categorized as "Good." This indicates that most students already had a good level of awareness regarding strategies to improve their vocabulary.

ABSTRAK

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INTRODUCTION

Discussing English vocabulary acquisition cannot be separated from the strategies used to obtain it. Having appropriate strategies in language learning is an essential requirement for achieving learning goals, particularly in vocabulary learning. The use of strategies makes vocabulary learning more effective because vocabulary acquisition is not a temporary activity but a continuous process (Saengpakdeejit, 2014). However, many

An analysis of students' awareness of vocabulary learning strategies in English instruction at the second grade of SMAN 2 Tembilahan language learners are not aware of the strategies they employ, as being conscious of learning processes and strategy use is itself challenging.

Awareness is another crucial aspect that must be developed in English learning. Since awareness contributes to successful learning, learners are expected to regulate and monitor their awareness. According to Pradita (2018), individuals who possess self-awareness are better able to understand the purpose of their actions and learning processes.

This issue was also observed among students in Tembilahan. During a pre-observation conducted at SMAN 2 Tembilahan, particularly among second-grade students, several phenomena indicating problems related to learning awareness were identified. Some students experienced difficulties in using vocabulary when writing essays in English classes, struggled to use vocabulary in spoken communication and had difficulty distinguishing vocabulary types or using words appropriately in context. Furthermore, they appeared to lack awareness of vocabulary learning strategies. Based on these observations, further investigation was considered necessary; therefore, this study examines students' vocabulary learning strategy awareness in English instruction among second-grade students at SMAN 2 Tembilahan.

In the context of English instruction, students' awareness of vocabulary learning strategies plays an important role in supporting their language development. This awareness influences how students select, apply, and evaluate strategies that help them acquire new vocabulary effectively. Therefore, before discussing the types of strategies used by learners, it is necessary to clarify what is meant by learning strategies themselves. This section discusses the definition of learning strategies, learning strategy awareness (LSA), and kinds of vocabulary learning strategies (VLS).

Definition of Learning Strategy

Learning is the process through which students construct their own understanding or ideas (Rahmayanti, 2016), and it represents behavioral changes involving cognitive, affective, and psychomotor domains (Hermawan & Subagyo, 2017). Fatimah et al. (2018) further explain that learning involves behavioral change through interaction between individuals and their environment. To achieve optimal results, learners require strategies. Learning strategies are deliberate and dynamic processes used to solve learning problems

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and improve efficiency. Chamot (2004, as cited in Sihotang et al., 2017) defines them as conscious thoughts and actions taken to achieve learning goals, while Oxford (1990, as cited in Mufidah, 2017) considers them behaviors used to make learning more successful and enjoyable. Thus, learning strategy can be understood as implementing planned actions involving objectives, materials, methods, and evaluation to achieve learning goals

Kinds of Learning Strategy

Several linguists have proposed classifications of vocabulary learning strategies, including Gu and Johnson (1996), Nation (2001), and Schmitt (1997). This study adopts Schmitt's classification because it offers detailed categorization. Strategies are divided into discovery and consolidation dimensions. Discovery strategies help learners identify meanings of new words and include determination strategies, which rely on contextual inference or references, and social strategies, which involve interaction with others. Consolidation strategies aim to retain vocabulary knowledge and include social collaboration, memory strategies using mnemonic associations, cognitive strategies involving repetition or note-taking, and metacognitive strategies involving planning, monitoring, and evaluation of learning processes

Learning Strategy Awareness

Self-awareness is a cognitive process influenced by memory, thoughts, emotions, and sensations that affect mental life and personal goals (Solso, as cited in Pradita, 2018). Awareness refers to consciously recognizing and understanding something, and students' awareness involves reflecting on attitudes, responsibilities, and learning behaviors. Strategy awareness is therefore essential to ensure learners recognize available vocabulary learning strategies and apply them effectively. Goleman (2016, as cited in Nugrawati, 2016) identifies emotional self-awareness, accurate self-awareness, and self-confidence as key components contributing to understanding emotions, recognizing strengths and limitations, and maintaining self-worth. With awareness of strategies, learners are expected to enhance their language competence and interaction abilities.

Kinds of Vocabulary Learning Strategy (VLS)

Vocabulary refers to a list of words along with their meanings, yet vocabulary mastery involves more than dictionary definitions. Schmitt (2000) emphasizes understanding register, collocations, grammatical patterns, and usage frequency. Hornby

An analysis of students' awareness of vocabulary learning strategies in English instruction at the second grade of SMAN 2 Tembilahan (1984, as cited in Sihotang et al., 2017) defines vocabulary as the total number of words in a language or known by an individual. Word meaning depends on context and relationships with referents (Schmitt, 2000, as cited in Ortalisje, 2020). Word knowledge includes aspects such as frequency, domain, collocation, morphology, semantics, and equivalents in the first language (Schmitt, 1997, as cited in Ortalisje, 2020).

Learners possess different levels of language learning ability, requiring varied strategies for effective acquisition. Strategy awareness enables learners to utilize vocabulary learning strategies effectively, supporting language development. Wallace and Fisher (1987, as cited in Pradita, 2018) describe consciousness as mental energy enabling action and knowledge creation, while Chamot (2004, as cited in Sihotang et al., 2017) highlights the influence of learner goals, contexts, and cultural values on strategy choice. Previous studies in Indonesia have explored vocabulary learning strategies and their relationship to language proficiency and usage (Rodliyah & Holidazia, 2020), underscoring the importance of continued investigation into awareness in vocabulary learning contexts.

METHOD

A descriptive quantitative design was employed in this study. The sample of the study was 30 students at second Grade at SMAN 2 Tembilahan. Data were collected using a questionnaire which was distributed to the sample. The questionnaire consisted of 16 items, where it has been divided based on 3 indicators, they are Emotional Self-Awareness in Vocabulary Learning Strategy, Accurate self-Awareness in Vocabulary Learning Strategy and Self-Confidence in Vocabulary Learning Strategy. The collected data were analyzed by calculating the mean score of all questionnaire responses.

RESULT AND DISCUSSION

From the result of the questionnaire, it was found that Students' awareness of vocabulary learning strategies in English instruction at the second grade of SMAN 2 Tembilahan is categorized into "Good" level. It can be interpreted that, most students at SMAN 2 already had a good level of awareness about the strategy to improve their vocabulary.

Although students generally demonstrated good awareness in improving their speaking skill independently, but they have still tried to correct the way they speak in

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front of the class. However, the findings suggest that students aim to improve their English use but require development in additional aspects beyond vocabulary.

Based on the finding above, the researcher assumes that this low result can be because of many factors. The existence of students' awareness in using vocabulary cannot be separated from the factors that influence it. Factors are things (circumstances, events) that contribute to (influence) the occurrence of something (KBBI Daring). As Zhihong Bai (2018: 851-852) said that the factors that influence students' awareness of using vocabulary are divided into two, namely Individual Factors and Environmental Factors.

Individual Factors

The differences between learners are manifested in several aspects, including concepts, attitudes, and personal emotions. The first thing that learners should pay attention to is their views on vocabulary learning. If learners focus on vocabulary, they will use more cognitive strategies and memory strategies. If they pay attention to the function of vocabulary, they will use less cognitive, memory and other strategies, and more use of communication strategies. The age, learning motivation, personality and personality differences, and gender differences of students will also affect vocabulary learning strategies.

The Factor of Age

Age is an important factor affecting vocabulary learning strategies. Young learners tend to rely more on specific learning tasks to use strategies. However, adult learners can use strategies cleverly. Adult learning strategies are more complicated than children. They always use more learning strategies.

The Learning Motivation

Motivation has a very significant role in determining the results of the learning process (Wahyuni, 2020: 1). This is in line with what Emda (2017: 172) said that motivation is one of the factors that encourage students to want to learn. The learning motivation of learners is very important for any type of learning, including vocabulary learning. Motivation determines how much attention the learner is willing to pay, how to complete the learning task, and how much sense of accomplishment is required. Researchers found that learning motivation is closely related to the use and choice of learning strategies. Learners with strong vocabulary learning motivation use more

An analysis of students' awareness of vocabulary learning strategies in English instruction at the second grade of SMAN 2 Tembilahan strategies than learners with low motivation. Different vocabulary learning motivations influence learners to choose different learning strategies. In the teaching of foreign language vocabulary learning strategies, if learners ignore their learning motivation, it will lead to the failure of strategies in teaching. Therefore, in strategy teaching, teachers should understand learners' learning motivations and stimulate their enthusiasm for vocabulary learning.

Conversely, the use of corresponding learning strategies can improve learners' ability to actively complete vocabulary learning tasks. Therefore, an understanding of how to motivate students is also an ability that must be possessed by teachers because teachers are the main role models for students in achieving these learning goals. Learning motivation means something which can push students to learn directly in an internal power. Learning motivation is a complex mental activity. As a way to stimulate and guide students' learning, it plays an important role in students' learning. The learner's behavior is very important, it determines the enthusiasm, tendency, choice and consciousness of individual activities.

The Personality Difference among Students

Every student is an individual, with his own life and growth environment, forming a unique personality and individual differences. It also changed the interests and needs of different people. A study shows that most teachers and learners believe that personality factors play an important role in foreign language learning. The different personalities of students will have varying degrees of impact on English vocabulary learning. Researchers also found that some personality traits are related to learners' strategic choices. Some researchers have proposed hypotheses about the relationship between strategy use and personality. They pointed out that each character has a tendency to use certain learning strategies. For example, researchers generally believe that extroverted learners will use more emotional and visual strategies. Others believe that emotional learners use more vocabulary learning strategies than thinking learners. Although these preliminary research conclusions need to be further confirmed, the influence of learners' personality characteristics on their learning strategies and teaching cannot be ignored.

The Differences of Gender

In vocabulary learning, gender differences have attracted more and more attention from researchers. Studies have shown that gender differences can cause male and female learners to use different vocabulary learning strategies. They report that female learners use more social strategies and more frequently than male learners. Oxford found that although many female learners use learning strategies more frequently than male learners, after strategy training, male learners show considerable advantages in the use of strategies. However, so far, gender differences have received little attention in the teaching and research of strategies. If researchers and teachers can consider gender factors in their teaching strategies and distinguish between men and women, then they can achieve better teaching effects in their strategies.

Social Environmental Factors

Since language is a social phenomenon in human communication and it is closely related to society, the use of learning strategies in vocabulary learning is restricted by the social environment. Therefore, the social environment influences learners' strategies to a large extent. This is bound to indirectly affect the learners' mentality and the use of learning strategies.

From some of the explanations above, it can be concluded that individual factors and social environmental factors are two important factors that influence students' awareness of using vocabulary in learning English. Individual factors that include age, learning motivation, personality differences among students, and gender differences help independence for students in producing a more effective English learning process, while the social environmental factor is a determinant of the outcomes of the English learning process. So, the better the two factors, the better the vocabulary learning outcomes obtained by students. And vice versa, if both of these factors are low, then the results obtained will be low as well.

CONCLUSION

This research was aimed at investigating the Students' vocabulary learning strategy awareness on English Instruction at the second grade of SMAN 2 Tembilahan. To answer this problem, the researcher used questionnaire as research instrument. The

An analysis of students' awareness of vocabulary learning strategies in English instruction at the second grade of SMAN 2 Tembilahan instrument was answered by 30 samples where they are students of second grade in this school.

After conducting the research and getting the data, the researcher concludes that students' awareness of vocabulary learning strategies was at a good level. It can be interpreted that, most of students of SMAN 2 Tembilahan have good awareness in learning especially in learning vocabulary. This is evident from their responses in one of the questionnaire statement that most of them agree that they have their own strategy in understanding vocabulary.

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