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Metacognitive Strategy Preference in Vocabulary Learning among Thai EFL Learners at Nakhonratchasima Rajabhat University

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ABSTRACT

This study aimed to investigate the use of metacognitive strategies in vocabulary learning by the first year students from the Faculty of Management Sciences at Nakhonratchasima Rajabhat University, Thailand. Precisely, it tried to examine Thai EFL learners’ use of metacognitive strategies including planning, monitoring and evaluating in vocabulary learning. To achieve this aim, an adapted version of the questionnaire was used as the instrument to study what metacognitive strategies in vocabulary that EFL learners at the university frequently used to discover the meaning of English vocabulary. The sample groups were 53 first year Management Sciences students. There were 26 students (experimental group) and 27 students (control group) selected according to the purposive sampling. The research instruments used in the study was metacognitive strategy in vocabulary learning questionnaire. The statistical methods used for analyzing the collected data were descriptive statistics (mean (\bar{x}), a standard deviation (SD), and Independent Sample t Test). The findings of the study revealed that the evaluating strategy were the most preferred both by the control group and experimental group. In general, the use of metacognitive strategies in vocabulary reported by the control group and experimental group that there was a significant difference at $p < .05$.

Keywords: *Metacognitive Strategies, Vocabulary Learning*

INTRODUCTION

This article intended to present an overview of metacognitive vocabulary strategies (MVS) preferences of EFL learners. Critically, there are still problems of using traditional methods in learning vocabulary. This generally means that most of teachers in the language classroom do not realize whether these methods can be facilitative in vocabulary teaching. It is important to stress that teachers should be the first people who are interested in teaching vocabulary. In fact, teachers do not only assist their students to acquire a large number of words that suit to their grade levels, but also seek strategies to help them remember words in their memory appropriately (Carter & McCarthy, 1988). In trying to accomplish vocabulary learning, they should bring effective technique of teaching vocabulary learning strategies in order to help students to create beneficial activity and task easily. Thus, teachers need to pay attention to cope with metacognitive vocabulary learning strategies because they are obviously shown as better ways to fulfill the gap of students’ vocabulary knowledge. Likewise, Bandura (1986); cited in Heidari; Izadi and Ahmadian (2012) mentioned that self-efficacy affects students’ effort to choose challenge work or activity that they can manage it or avoid to do it. Essentially, students can learn how to invest their lives to gain more about vocabulary knowledge by themselves because teachers could not teach all words all the time outside the English classroom. Indeed, EFL



teachers should focus more on determining the effective ways to increase self-efficacy for the students because self-efficacy deals with a strong influence on putting effort or doing challenge thing by themselves.

LITERATURE & THEORY

Vocabulary Learning Strategies

It is widely acknowledge that to accomplish language learning, it is important to stress that vocabulary strategies are significant classifications for students enhancement of English language learning. Obviously, “Vocabulary learning strategies are a part of language learning strategies which in turn are a part of general learning strategies” (Nation, 2001, p.217). The development of vocabulary learning strategies are the key concept that extends to the successful of vocabulary learning for language learners. So far, a number of well-known scholars have attempted to classify vocabulary learning strategies that their consideration deals with vocabulary learning process in terms of L1 and L2 learner characters and concerned on study focus (Fan, 2003). Due to the strategies for combining with vocabulary learning, from this viewpoint, to increase vocabulary knowledge, vocabulary learning strategies has special aspect on autonomous and suitable ways to integrate vocabulary knowledge (Kafipour & Naveh (2011). Believing in the significance of vocabulary learning strategies used in vocabulary, vocabulary learning strategies will assist students discover the meaning and remember more than some other strategies. Considering the importance of vocabulary learning strategies, it is believed that if students do not use vocabulary learning strategies, they could not become proficient autonomous learner (Mokhtar, Rawian, Yahaya, Abdullah & Mahamed, 2009). Hence, there is a value in being able to utilize a variety of strategies. To illustrate, in the classroom, vocabulary learning strategies are associated with the strategies to accomplish in doing things such as doing language activities

Metacognitive Strategies (MET)

Beyond the definition of metacognitive strategies, there are two different classifications of metacognitive strategy. O’Malley and Chamot (1990) broadly classified three categories: planning, monitoring and evaluating. Oxford (1990) classified into three groups: 1) centering one’s learning, 2) arranging and planning one’s learning and 3) evaluating one’s learning. The classifications of metacognitive strategies are provided by well-known scholars; they can be adopted and applied to all language skills. Certainly, the definitions and classifications of metacognitive strategies of O’Malley and Chamot (1990) are more widely accepted and adopted by many researchers in many educational studies in terms of metacognitive strategy training model.

Relevant Studies and Discussion

To illustrate, Nation (2001) regards the vocabulary learning strategies which are divided into three general class planning, sources, processes. Therefore, if teachers know the significance of metacognitive strategies, they could help students become effective learners, thus they need to provide effective strategies use into their daily classroom activities. Beyond the significance of strategies training, there are many beneficial strategies for foreign language learning. There are well known experts emphasizing the metacognitive model of strategic learning e.g. in Oxford (1990) or O’Malley and Chamot (1990), the model includes plan, monitor and evaluation. In the study of Ping & Siraj (2012) suggested that students need to focus on active use of both cognitive and enhance metacognitive awareness and manage how to use strategy for improving (self-efficacy) and motivation in vocabulary learning. Due to the importance of metacognitive vocabulary strategies, this present study revealed metacognitive vocabulary strategy preference of Thai EFL students, especially for Nakhonratchasima Rahabhat University (NRRU) students.



Objective of the Study

The main purpose of this study is to determine metacognitive vocabulary strategy preferences of EFL students.

METHODS

The quasi-experimental design is used in order to conduct the study in a natural setting. The participants were separated into two groups: The experimental group (26 students), and the control group (27 students). The sample groups were 53 first year Management Sciences students. There were 26 students (experimental group) from computer science and 27 students (control group) from management science who were selected according to the purposive sampling.

The questionnaire of metacognitive used in the study was to elicit what types of vocabulary learning strategies were used by the participants and to investigate the student’s attitudes toward metacognitive vocabulary strategies. The questionnaire was translated to Thai and was constructed using the Five Point Likert Scale and. It was designed as close-ended questions: Questions related to the attitudes toward metacognitive vocabulary learning strategy. The validity of questionnaire was checked by three specialists and tested for qualification in terms of the index of item objective of congruence IOC (0.5-1). The data obtained from questionnaire was analyzed with the computation software for statistical analyses (SPSS). An independent t-test was used to analyze the comparison of vocabulary learning strategies of two sample groups.

RESULTS

The data obtained from the questionnaire were analyzed using a quantitative analysis. What follows were the results of the data analysis.

Table 1: The comparisons of metacognitive strategies used by the students in the control group and experimental group

Type of MVS	Control		Experimental		t	df	Sig (2-tailed)
	M	SD	M	SD			
Planning	3.82	0.756	4.30	0.644	2.45**	51	.018
Monitoring	3.93	0.696	4.30	0.545	2.14**	51	.037
Evaluating	4.13	0.672	4.63	0.566	2.96**	51	.005
Overall	3.97	0.647	4.39	0.494	2.64**	51	.005

* p<.05

As shown in Table 1, as mentioned, the questionnaire was divided into three parts of metacognitive vocabulary learning strategies used, to discover the kinds of metacognitive vocabulary learning strategies used by students while learning, students were assigned to answer the questionnaire at the end of the study. Data from the questionnaire was analyzed for the mean scores and a standard deviation, and t-test analysis was applied. As the table 1 illustrated the mean of the experimental group was significantly higher than the mean of the control group



$t(51)=2.64, p<0.01$, two tailed. The variance of the two groups was significantly different ($p < 0.05$). To be specific, the order that the experimental group preferred to use metacognitive vocabulary strategies was as follows: Evaluating 4.63 (SD=0.566), followed by Planning 4.30 (SD= 0.644) and Monitoring 4.30 (SD=0.545) and the control group preferred to use Evaluating 4.13 (SD= 0.672), followed by Monitoring 3.93 (SD= 0.696) and Planning 3.82 (SD=0.756). The results as shown in the table 1, for the students in experimental group, they demonstrated the highest use of three sub-strategies followed by evaluating, planning and monitoring, specifically evaluating strategies in which the students reported as the best strategy. The increase in the use of metacognitive vocabulary strategies could signify that the strategies have an impact on the abilities of the students in experimental group leading to enlarge in metacognitive vocabulary strategies use. While the results show the difference of all three sub-categories of metacognitive vocabulary strategy training increased. In fact, the number of metacognitive vocabulary learning strategies usage of the students in control group also reported the most used of evaluating but monitoring reported as the lowest used.

The results of the comparisons of the metacognitive strategies used by the students in the control group and experimental group in the table 1 indicated that the two groups have the same choices of using metacognitive vocabulary strategies. Moreover, it can be asserted that majority of students tended to use a greater variety of metacognitive vocabulary strategies and that they had positive attitudes towards metacognitive vocabulary strategies.

CONCLUSION AND FUTURE WORK

It is also important to highlight these findings of this study were in line with the results of Diaz (2015) conducted training in metacognitive strategies for students' vocabulary improvement by using learning journals. The study showed that the students could utilize their vocabulary learning process effectively when using different vocabulary strategies and figuring the connection of metacognitive strategies. According to O'Malley and Chamot (1990), the integration of metacognitive strategies effectively influences vocabulary knowledge. Thus

Moreover, the results of the current study are similar to the research done by Wanpen, Songkoontod, Nonkhetkhon (2012), which focused on the employ of technical vocabulary learning strategies. The results showed that students who used technical vocabulary learning strategies outperformed students who insufficiency strategies knowledge, these results imply that students who see merit in strategies can use them effectively. Ellis (1994), as cited in Morin & Goebel (2008) mentioned that in fact, successful students use metacognitive knowledge in order to select various learning strategies that raise their second language acquisition. Through this study, the results implied that two groups of students reported widely used the strategies; however, this study did not separate them into two groups: successful and unsuccessful.

The metacognitive vocabulary strategies of the students should be regarded as a needed aspect of vocabulary learning that deserves future consideration. Undoubtedly, the preference of the students can be shaped by their teachers. Thus, students should be trained, as well as a move toward training independent and active learners should be considered. Through this study, it is hoped that teachers will effectively train and lead their students to greater development in learning vocabulary. However, the results of this study cannot actually be generalized to other students. Therefore, it is suggested that further study involving metacognitive should investigate in a larger sample group. Moreover, in this study only quantitative data collection was used. It is recommended that in future work qualitative data should be collected and interpreted in order to get more detailed thoughts and feelings of the students related to their strategy preferences, which will assist to uncover the problematic concept of vocabulary learning in the EFL contexts.



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