THE USE OF VOCABULARY LEARNING STRATEGIES AMONG ESL UNDERGRADUATES

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Abstract: Students need to take control of their learning process by knowing when, where and how to use appropriate learning strategies for effective learning to take place. One of the language learning strategies learners need to take into consideration is vocabulary learning strategy (VLS) as vocabulary is one of the crucial elements that learners need to master in language learning. Vocabulary learning strategies if used effectively will help learners to master a wide range of vocabulary. This study aims to identify the types of VLS which are frequently used among ESL undergraduates according to learners' gender. Forty ESL undergraduates from various disciplines at a local university were involved in this study and data were collected to achieve the main objective of the study. The survey design was employed, and data were analyzed quantitatively using descriptive analysis to measure the frequency and percentage to identify the most frequent use of VLS and whether it differs with the undergraduates' gender. The findings of this study found that male undergraduates used VLS more than female undergraduates and memory and social strategy was the most frequently used by female undergraduates while male undergraduates used more of cognitive and metacognitive strategy. Therefore, the findings of the study are indeed beneficial for learners to know which VLS suit them and how they can acquire a vast amount of vocabulary during their second language learning process by applying those vocabulary strategies.

Keywords: Disciplines, English As A Second Language (ESL), Language Learning, Undergraduates, Vocabulary Learning Strategies

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Introduction

In educational context, it is crucial that learners know how to go through the proper learning process in order to be successful in language learning. One of the key in successful learning is to know how to use the right strategies. There are many various types of strategies which learners can use in their language learning process, such as social strategy, memory strategy, cognitive strategy and metacognitive strategy. These are the basic strategies that can be used by learners as Oxford (1989) states that learners at all levels use strategies in learning a

language. In additional Chamot and Kupper (1989) mentioned that more effective language learning can be achieved if proper and correct use of learning strategies are applied by learners into their learning process. This refers to learners who are learning English as a Second Language (ESL) or English as a Foreign Language (EFL) in Malaysia since English is widely used in Malaysian educational context, from primary level up until tertiary level. According to Zhi-liang (2010), effective vocabulary acquisition plays a great role in language learning; without it, the four skills of language leacrning consist of reading, writing, speaking and listening may not be successfully achieved. This is agreed by and Manuel (2017) who also mentioned that language acquisition can only be achieved successfully with effective vocabulary acquisition. There are many researches which has been done in ESL field regarding this issue, however, more research still needs to be done since there are still less research on vocabulary learning strategies (VLS) used among Malaysian ESL undergraduates.

As learners who study English as a Second Language (ESL) or English as a Foreign Language (EFL) in Malaysia, it is important to have vast amount if vocabulary as it will be so much useful in their daily communication in the target language. Having lack of vocabulary in the target language will lead learners to difficulty when it comes to choosing the right words. Unfortunately, not all learners are well aware of the problem. Thus, English vocabulary skills is one of the important skills learners need to take into account in learning English, especially for those who are in the tertiary level. This matter is due to most of the reading materials which learners are assigned to are written in English. According to Baba (2009) and Boonkongsaen (2014), L2 learners are well aware that they will face difficulty in producing good quality composition with their limited vocabulary. Learners can only be able to choose the right words to be used in conveying meanings and ideas in their writing if they have sufficient storage of vocabulary. Therefore, it is imperative that learners have vast amount of vocabulary knowledge in order for them to be successful in their English learning performance.

Although knowing how to acquire wide range of vocabulary is important for language learners, it is the skills that make the learning process somehow challenging. Not all learners find it easy to acquire sufficient amount of vocabulary in certain period of time. According to Ghazal (2010), "vocabulary learning is one of the major challenges that foreign language learners face during the process of learning a language". It is a continual process of encountering new vocabulary items in meaningful and comprehensible language contexts (Harmon, Wood and Kiser, 2009). In order to enhance learners' vocabulary, Schmitt (1997) stated that language learners employ quite a number of learning strategies in the context of vocabulary learning. Learner use different kind of strategies in learning a language, specifically focusing on learning vocabularies, for examples, memory strategy is used by learners in memorising vocabularies while social strategy is used by learners to learn to interact using new words that they learnt. However, there are still not much research on vocabulary learning strategies was intensely carried out. Hence, this study pays more attention on to identify the use of vocabulary learning strategies among ESL learners in Malaysia according to their gender.

A study done by Boonkongsaen in 2012 states that gender receives the most attention from the researchers in the same field. However, the results are still indecisive. For instance, Catalan's findings (2003) revealed that Spanish female and male students differ significantly in strategy employing. On the other hand, Tsai and Chang (2009) discovered the opposite results in which Chinese female and male students showed no significant difference of their VLS use. Therefore, the relationship between students' choices of VLS and gender is still complex. However, according to Sunderland (2000), it has almost become common sensible that generally, female students are more successful in language learning than their male counterparts. Therefore, it is essential to probe on vocabulary learning strategies among

Malaysian ESL learners across different disciplines and how VLS can be relate to the variables of the ESL learners, such as learners' gender.

The purpose of the study is to provide an understanding on the Vocabulary Learning Strategies (VLS) used by ESL undergraduates across different disciplines in Universiti Putra Malaysia (UPM). More specifically, the study intends to identify the frequently used of VLS by ESL undergraduates and to examine whether the use of VLS among ESL undergraduates differ by their gender.

Therefore, the research questions for this study are:
  i.   What is the most frequent VLS used by ESL undergraduates in UPM?
  ii.   Is the frequent use of VLS the same regardless of the learners' gender or is it differ according to the learners' gender?
        The hypothesis tested in this study is:
  i.   Ho – All strategies are used equally by ESL undergraduates in UPM regardless of learners' gender.

Literature Review

Language Learning Strategies (LLS)
One of the earliest researchers in this field, Rubin (1975) has provided an explanation on learning strategies as "the techniques or devices which a learner may use to acquire knowledge". In 1981, Rubin has identified two kinds of learning strategies which contributed directly and indirectly to learning. She has divided the direct learning strategies into six types; clarification/verification, monitoring, memorization, guessing/inductive inferencing, deductive reasoning and lastly, practice while for the indirect learning strategies, she divided them into two types, which are creating opportunities for practice and also production tricks.

It is crucial that language learners know the right learning strategies when learning a language as language learning strategies enable learners to have full responsibility of their own learning progress and there is significant evidence that effective strategy use can be taught to the learners.

Therefore, there are several different learning strategies to be applied by the language learners when they encounter learning tasks such as reading or writing. Language learners will be successful in the tasks due to use of an appropriate language learning strategy (Donato, 1994). Oxford (1990: 9) claims that language learning strategies have the following features:
  1. Contribute to the main goal, communicative competence.
  2. Allow learners to become more self-directed.
  3. Expand the role of teachers.
  4. Are problem-oriented.
  5. Are specific actions taken by the learners.
  6. Involve many aspects of the learners, not just the cognitive.
  7. Support learning both directly and indirectly.
  8. Are not always observable.
  9. Are often conscious.
  10. Can be taught.
  11. Are flexible.
  12. Are influenced by a variety of factors.
(Source: Oxford, 1990)

Classification of Language Learning Strategies

Many researchers such as Rubin (1975) and Stern (1975) had recognised lists of learning strategies that are applied by successful ESL/EFL learners. As indicated, there are many language learning strategies which have been studied and classified in various ways by many researchers in their past studies. Research into language learning strategies can provide different points of view to conduct further research into the process of ESL/EFL learning and the complicated system of language learning strategies. The classification of language learning strategies is shown below:

Language Learning Strategies Classification	Researcher (s) and Year
1. Active task approach 2. Realisation of language as a means of system 3. Realisation of language as a means of communication and interaction 4. Management of affective demands 5. Monitoring L2 performance	Naiman (1978)
1. Strategies that directly affect learning • Clarification/verification • Monitoring • Memorisation • Guessing/inductive inferencing • Deductive reasoning • Practice 2. Processes that contribute indirectly to learning • Creates opportunity for practice • Production tricks	Rubin (1981)
1. Cognitive strategies 2. Metacognitive strategies 3. Social-affective strategies	Brown & Palinscar (1982) O' Malley et al. (1985)
Direct strategies 1. Memory strategies 2. Cognitive strategies 3. Compensation strategies Indirect strategies 1. Metacognitive strategies 2. Affective strategies 3. Social strategies	Oxford (1990)

Factors Affecting Language Learning Strategies (LLS)

In recent years, theorist of Second Language Acquisition (SLA) have given some consideration to individual differences in their research. It is agreed that different people will have their own ways in choosing the suitable learning strategies, however, it is depending on their characteristics, traits and also their temperaments.

One of the most popular researchers in Second Language Acquisition (SLA), Oxford (1990) stated that there are some factors related to the learners' choices of language learning strategies, includes gender, motivation, learning styles, language learning proficiency, aptitude and career orientation. Male learners might want to employ learning strategies differently as compared to female learners. Learners' motivation also plays a role in choosing language learning strategies. Learners with higher motivation tend to use variety types of language learning strategies as they know, the more language learning strategies that they use, the more knowledge and information they will gain whereas learners with low motivation will not be able to use more language learning strategies as they are demotivated in not just choosing the suitable language learning strategies, but also to undergo the language learning process itself. Language learners' learning styles can also affect their choice of language learning strategies, for instance, learners who are rather introvert will choose learning strategies which does not really require them to mingle around with people, such as memory cognitive strategies whereas extrovert learners will prefer social strategy so that they could learn and at the same time, mingle with people around them. Other than that, learners with different language learning proficiency will choose different language learning strategies to suit the level of proficiency; learners with high proficiency of English will tend to choose more than one strategies while those with low English proficiency will choose less strategies. Aptitude and career orientation also contribute as one of the factors which affect learners' choice of language learning strategies. Lastly, there are also many factors that can influence learners in employing language learning strategies, for examples, sex, age, motivation, attitude, learning styles, cultural differences and language proficiency.

Vocabulary Learning Strategies (VLS)

According to Oxford Advanced Learners Dictionary, vocabulary is defined as all the words that a person knows or uses, or all the words in a particular language; the words that people use when they are talking about a particular subject. Furthermore, vocabulary is the centre focal point of acquisition in learning any language. As put forward by McCarthy (1992) "without words to express a wider range of meanings, communication in L2 just cannot happen in any meaningful way". This is due to vocabulary has been gradually recognised as important in the use of language in which insufficient vocabulary knowledge led to learners having difficulties in their language learning.

Vocabulary learning strategies (VLS) are the first step taken by language learners in acquiring new words. There are quite a numbers of different vocabulary learning strategies as demonstrated by the classification of vocabulary learning strategies as proposed by different researchers such as Nation (2001) and Gu (2003). In addition, Schmitt has developed a wide-ranging inventory of vocabulary learning strategies in 1997.

This study has applied the definition that is suggested by Schmitt (1997) who saw it as two main groups of strategies which are Discovery Strategies and Consolidation Strategies then he categorized vocabulary learning strategies into five sub-categories; Determination strategies, Social strategies, Memory strategies, Cognitive strategies and Metacognitive strategies.

Schmitt's five major strategies maintained their application in an ESL/EFL environment due to the fact that he established his taxonomy using Japanese L2 learners. Similarly, the present study has used Malaysian second language learners as samples of the study as according to Schmitt (2000), the use of VLSs counts on numbers of factors such as learners' proficiency levels, learners' learning motivation, and learners' culture.

Vocabulary Learning Strategies and Language Learning Outcomes

This study was done by Gu and Johnson in 1996 where it concerned about the vocabulary learning strategies used by students in the Chinese university of English and the relationship between their strategies and outcomes in learning English. The researcher has asked 850 students majoring in non-English courses in Beijing Normal University to complete a set of vocabulary learning questionnaire. The researcher has correlated all replies to the questionnaire with results on a vocabulary size test and on the College English Test (CETBAND2). Respondents has reported using a wide variety of vocabulary learning strategies and those strategies which are contextual guessing, skilful use of dictionaries, note-taking, paying attention to word formation, contextual encoding, and activation of newly learned words were also positively correlated with the two test scores.

However, visual repetition of new words was the strongest negative predictor for both vocabulary size and general proficiency. Furthermore, strategies aiming at vocabulary retention only related more to vocabulary size than to English proficiency. Meaning to say that it focuses more on the number of vocabulary rather than how proficient the students are in English. The researcher has identified five approaches to learning. These strategy combinations, rather than individual strategies, may have made the difference in these students' learning.

Factors Affecting Vocabulary Learning Strategies: A Synthesized Study

This research was done by Boonkongsaen in 2012 on the factors affecting vocabulary learning strategies. This paper aimed to synthesize the findings of the empirical research works carried out in Thailand and in other countries across the world. During the last two decades or more and present the overview of factors that may affect learners' vocabulary learning strategies (VLS) use.

In the study, Boonkongsaen has pointed out several factors that affect the learners' use of VLS such as social and situational factors. The frequency and type of VLS employed by the learners has been found to vary depending on such factors. The factors affecting learners' VLS use have been grouped under Ellis's framework (1994). There are three broad categories which have been identified in the study: learner individual difference factors, social and situational factors, and learners' learning outcomes. The learner individual difference factors comprise one sort of the variation in the use of VLS. These factors include belief, attitude, motivation and language learning experience. As for the social and situational factors, it comprised the field of study, course type, class level, gender and language learning environment. Lastly, the language learning outcomes. Different researchers use different mean as a predictor of learners' learning outcomes, such as students' language achievement, language proficiency and vocabulary knowledge. Arising out of the research findings, gender exhibits a strong relationship with the students' choice of strategy use. In the study, the researcher had concluded that the relationship between students' choices of VLS use and gender is still complex as until now, researcher still couldn't find the relation between learner's gender with the choice of learning strategies. The researcher suggested that language teachers in learning contexts should take gender into account when teaching VLS to the students as both female and male students may differ in the type of VLS the use in their contexts.

Methodology

Research Design
This research employed a survey design as the aim is to identify the types of VLS which are frequently used among ESL undergraduates and its relationship with learners' gender.

Samples
This study required ESL undergraduates studying in different faculties as the respondents. As the population under this study was undergraduates studying in both science and social science streams in a public university, a stratified random sampling was employed to ensure that learners studying in all faculties would not being excluded. A total of 40 undergraduates from all faculties participated in the study. The participants consist of 21 males (52.5%) and 19 females (47.5%). In regards to the learners' vocabulary level, the Malaysian University English Test (MUET) which is a test of English language proficiency and largely for universities admissions was taken into consideration to classify the learners into three levels of proficiency, which are elementary, intermediate and advanced based on their scores obtained through the MUET. The statistics for the MUET results showed that 50% of the participant scored Band 1 or 2 and the other 50% scored Band 3 or 4.

Instrument
The research instrument used to gather data was an inventory of Vocabulary Learning Strategies in English language. It was adopted by Kudo in 1999. The set of VLS questionnaire was used to identify the types of vocabulary learning strategies used among ESL undergraduates and its relationship with learners' gender. The questionnaire was adopted in the study as it dealt with vocabulary learning strategy of Asian ESL/EFL learners and it has been widely tested with Japanese learners by Kudo in 1999 and Korean learners by Schmitt in 1997 as a pilot study. From their pilot study, it was apparent that their questionnaire is appropriate for ESL learners in Malaysia as the reliability of the questionnaire is .895. Using a ready-made instrument is in line with the suggestion given by Seliger & Shohamy (1989) who suggest that using a ready-made instrument developed by the experts has more advantage that developing a new instrument.

Procedure
The selected respondents were given a short brief regarding the questionnaires and they were given thirty minutes to respond to the questionnaires. After thirty minutes, the researcher immediately collects the questionnaire to ensure a 100% return rate. After that, the researcher runs a descriptive analysis to measure the difference in the frequency and also the percentages in order to identify the use of the VLS among ESL undergraduates according to learners' gender.

Data Analysis
The research data were analysed via descriptive statistics in terms of frequency and percentage. Descriptive analysis was used to describe the respondents' demographic data and the vocabulary learning strategies used by the respondents were analysed using frequency and percentage. Lastly, the frequency used of the VLS was then discussed according to the respondents' gender.

Findings and Discussions

Findings were presented according to the two different levels of data analysis; the most frequent use of VLS by the four main categories (Table 2, 3, 4 and 5); and the most frequent use of VLS according to undergraduates' gender (Table 6, 7, 8 and 9).

ESL Undergraduates' Demographic Data

Table 1: Demographic Profile (n=40)

Profile	Frequency	Percentage (%)
Gender		
Male	21	52.5
Female	19	47.5
Age (years)		
20	3	7.5
21	22	55.0
22	12	30.0
23	3	7.5
Discipline		
Science	7	17.5
Social Science	33	82.5
First Language		
Malay	25	62.5
Chinese	6	15.0
Tamil	5	12.5
Others	4	10.0
MUET Grade		
1 or 2	20	50.0
3 or 4	20	50.0
5 or 6	0	0

Based on the demographic profile above (Table 1), 52.55% of the respondents were male undergraduates and the rest were female undergraduates. 22 of the respondents were 21 years old, 12 were 22 years old and the rest of the 3 respondents were 20 and 23 years old respectively. Since the study required undergraduates studying in both science and social science streams, there were 33 of the respondents who were in social science stream and the rest of the respondents were in the science stream. Most of the respondents speak Malay as their first language while the rest of the them speak Chinese, Tamil and other languages as their first language. Finally, is the respondents' MUET grade. 50% of the test scored were elementary students where they scored Band 1 or 2 for the MUET while the other half of the respondents scored Band 3 or 4 and were put in the category of intermediate.

Variation in the Undergraduates' Reported Most Frequent Use of VLSs by the Four Categories

Table 2: Memory Strategy

Questionnaire items	Never	Seldom	Occasionally	Often	Usually	Always
Use 'scales' for gradable adjectives	1 (2.5%)	2 (5%)	18 (45%)	9 (22.5%)	8 (20%)	2 (5%)

Table 2 showed the most frequent use of VLS for memory strategy by both male and female undergraduates.

Table 3: Social Strategy

Questionnaire items	Never	Seldom	Occasionally	Often	Usually	Always
Study and practice meaning in a group outside of class	0 (0%)	4 (10%)	10 (25%)	19 (47.5%)	6 (15%)	1 (2.5%)

Table 3 showed the most frequent use of VLS for social strategy by both male and female undergraduates.

Table 4: Cognitive Strategy

Questionnaire items	Never	Seldom	Occasionally	Often	Usually	Always
Do written repetition	2 (5%)	3 (7.5%)	8 (20%)	19 (47.5%)	8 (20%)	0 (0%)
Do verbal repetition	1 (2.5%)	5 (12.5%)	7 (17.5%)	19 (47.5%)	7 (17.5%)	1 (2.5%)

Table 4 showed the most frequent use of VLS for cognitive strategy by both male and female undergraduates.

Table 5: Metacognitive Strategy

Questionnaire items	Never	Seldom	Occasionally	Often	Usually	Always
Learn word from paper tests (learn from failure)	1 (2.5%)	1 (2.5%)	7 (17.5%)	19 (47.5%)	10 (25%)	2 (5%)
Skip or pass new words	1 (2.5%)	4 (10%)	8 (20%)	19 (47.5%)	7 (17.5%)	1 (2.5%)

Table 5 showed the most frequent use of VLS for metacognitive strategy by both male and female undergraduates.

According to Table 2, the item "Use 'scales' for gradable adjectives" was the most frequent item used by the ESL undergraduates under memory strategy which is 45%. In table 3, the highest percentage for the most frequent VLS used was 47.5%, which was the "Study and practice meaning in a group outside of class" item. Meanwhile in table 4 and table 5, there were two items which were most frequent by the ESL undergraduates respectively; in table 4, "Do written repetition" and "Do verbal repetition" received the highest percentage for the VLSs items used, which were 47.5% respectively. Lastly, in table 5, 47.5% were also considered the highest use for two items in VLSs respectively, which were "Learn word from paper tests (learn from failure)" and "Skip or pass new words".

Variation in the Undergraduates' Reported Most Frequent Use of VLSs by Gender

Table 6: Most Frequent Use of VLSs by Gender

Strategy	Questionnaire items	Used by Male (Count)	Used by Female (Count)	Overall count	Overall percentage (%)
Memory Strategy	Use 'scales' for gradable adjectives	7	11	18	45%

Social Strategy	Study and practice meaning in a group outside of class	9	10	19	47.5%
Cognitive Strategy	Do written repetition	11	8	19	47.5%
	Do verbal repetition	11	8	19	47.5%
Metacognitive Strategy	Learn word from paper tests (learn from failure)	10	9	19	47.5%
	Skip or pass new words	11	8	19	47.5%

Based on Table 6 which was the memory strategy, we can see that female undergraduates used the memory strategy more than male undergraduates with the ration count of 11:7. The case is similar with the item most frequently used in Table 7, the social strategy. In Table 7, the ratio counts for the item used by the female undergraduates compared to male undergraduates were 10:9 where 10 female undergraduates used the item "Study and practice meaning in a group outside of class" most frequent than their male counterparts.

As we can see in Table 8 and Table 9 which were cognitive strategy and metacognitive strategy, we can see the contrast in the ration count where the male undergraduates used both strategies more frequent than their female friends. For Table 8 and Table 9, the ratio count was 11:8 & 11:8 and 10:9 & 11:8 respectively.

The findings of the study had answered first research question which is the frequently used of VLS by ESL undergraduates. The frequently used of strategies by ESL undergraduates are the cognitive and metacognitive strategy which is in line with the research done by Kamalizad in 2014.

As for the second research question, the findings of the study showed that the use of VLS among ESL undergraduates differ by their gender. This is because from the findings, we can see that male undergraduates used more of the vocabulary learning strategies than their female counterparts hence, the research hypothesis was accepted.

It can be concluded that female undergraduates used more of the memory and social strategy than male undergraduates while male undergraduates used more of the cognitive and metacognitive strategy than their female counterparts. Hence, the null hypothesis was rejected.

Discussions
The findings of the present study found that Cognitive Strategies and Metacognitive Strategies were reported as the most frequently-used strategies by the ESL undergraduates among all the four vocabulary learning strategies based on Schmitt's taxonomy. The second most frequently-used strategies were the Social Strategies and Memory Strategies were the least frequently used strategies.

The Most Frequent Use of VLSs

Table 6 show the most frequent use of VLS by the ESL undergraduates. From the results, it shows that the cognitive strategy and metacognitive strategy are the most frequent use strategies by the male undergraduates with the overall count of 19 (47.5%) respectively   The memory strategy is seen to be the least used of VLS among the ESL undergraduates with the overall count of 18 (45%). The item "Use 'scales' for gradable adjectives" is the least used by the ESL undergraduates. The finding of this study is in line with a study done by Wang in 2018. The study is about Vocabulary-Learning Strategies of Students Learning Chinese as a Foreign Language in an Intensive-Training Setting. In the study, Wang has found that 20 strategies were used most frequently by the students in learning Chinese vocabulary words and among the 20 strategies, the majority of the strategies were metacognitive strategies. To support the findings, a study done by Kamalizad in 2013 showed similar results which the study is about Comparing Iranian English learners with other Asian background EFL learners on their strategy use pattern The study results showed that metacognitive strategies were most favoured by Iranian participants in this study. Similarly, in several other studies with Asian EFL participants, including Iranian ones, the same result was obtained (Oh, 1992; Park, 1997; Riazi & Rahimi, 2005; Zare, 2011) to name a few. Other than that, similar result was shown from a study done by Zarei in 2013 where the study is about Exploring Gender Effects on Language Learning Strategies. In the study, the students reported using metacognitive strategies with the highest frequency.

VLSs and Gender

On the other hand, this section discusses whether there is any statistically significant difference in the use of VLS among male and female undergraduates in UPM. Table 6, reveals that there are greater percentages of the use of VLS among male undergraduates than their female counterparts. This is in line with the findings of a study done by Ok in 2003. In his study of the Korean secondary school students Ok found that females showed significantly higher levels of strategy use than males. However, this is in contrast with a study done by Zarei in 2013 where in the study, males scored significantly higher than females in terms of frequency of strategy use in all the six categories, except social categories that both males and females had equal frequencies whereas in the present study, female undergraduates use more of memory and social strategy than strategies used most by the male undergraduates, which are the cognitive and metacognitive strategies.

The most possible explanation for the frequent use of VLSs among male undergraduates as compared to female undergraduates using the three strategies mentioned in the discussion earlier, is because males in tertiary levels are likely learn through their surroundings while females often learn from classes they've attended, books they read and notes they've taken down in class. They often study and acquire new vocabulary based on whatever that they have encountered before, for instance males do verbal and written repetition when they are studying. Other than that, males learn from past failure but if they do not know the new words that they encountered, they will just skip or pass new words and use those that they know or have learnt before as they do not really try to understand and find out the meaning of the new words they encountered, unlike females who usually will struggle in learning something new.

This explanation is indeed in contrast with the frequent use of VLSs among female undergraduates. Based on the table, it shows that females use more of the memory strategy and social strategy than their male counterparts. This is due to females mingle around with their friends more often than males not just to have fun, instead they mingle around with their friends for study and revision purposes. Females often hold study groups when it comes to studying

for examinations and they learn better with the help of their friends, which is why from Table 6, it shows that female undergraduates use the item "Study and practice meaning in a group outside of class" with higher count than their male counterparts.

Conclusions, Implication and Recommendations
This study which was carried out in a Malaysian local university has managed to document another case of Vocabulary Learning Strategies used among ESL undergraduates. The major finding of this study was that cognitive strategy and metacognitive strategy were the most popular strategies used by the ESL undergraduates, whereas memory strategy was the least popular used.

Even though the findings of this study can enlighten English educators and offer them a deeper understanding as to how to design more effective vocabulary learning tasks to better fit tertiary level ESL undergraduates, it does not seem to be certain and conclusive plus, the need to carry out more studies with larger population seems to be necessary. Based on the results and discussions, effective learning can be achieved by assigning learners in groups regardless of gender and to have them to learn through outdoor activities since both male and female learners learn better through their surroundings and environment. It would be better if the educators could assign tasks to learners in class according to their gender so that learners can learn better, especially when learners have to work in groups.

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