A Study of Vocabulary Learning Strategies by Using Japanese Passages for Third- Year Business Japanese Students

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Abstract

The purposes of this research were 1) to study strategies of Japanese vocabulary learning of third-year Business Japanese students, 2) to compare Japanese vocabulary learning strategies of students in Japanese minors and 3) to study supplemental data from an interview.

The samples of this research were 68 third- year Business Japanese students in second semester of 2015 academic year derived through Simple Random Sampling technique. The research instruments employing in this study were a questionnaire and an interview. The questionnaire consisted of seven aspects; Discovery Strategies, Social Strategies, Support Strategies, Memory Strategies, Cognitive Strategies, Meta-Cognitive Strategies and Affective Strategies. The research results were 1) Japanese vocabulary learning strategies in overall were at high level, 2) There were some significant differences in Japanese vocabulary learning strategies of the samplings' minors, and 3) Japanese vocabulary learning strategies were essential to the students as these can enhance the students' motivation in learning Japanese as well as create the positive learning environment.

Keywords: *Vocabulary Learning Strategies, Japanese Vocabulary Learning*

Introduction

Vocabulary is central to language and is of great significance to language learners. Words are the building blocks of a language since they label objects, actions and ideas (Pulido, 2007). Recently, there has been an increasing interest in vocabulary learning strategies given that they are found to facilitate second language vocabulary learning. Therefore, successful vocabulary learners are found to be active strategy users who are conscious of their learning and took steps to regulate it.

Sokmen (1997), moreover, advocates that it is imperative to help learners learn how to acquire vocabulary on their own as it is impossible for students to learn all the vocabulary they need in the classroom. This is related to the idea of Cunningsworth (1995) who states that helping learners develop their own vocabulary learning strategies is a powerful approach, which can be based on sensitization to the systems of vocabulary, encouragement of sound dictionary skills and reflection on effective learning techniques.

College of General Education and Languages emphasizes on significance of Japanese and English instruction, especially Japanese language as the graduates are required to communicate in Japanese language fluently. In this case, Japanese vocabulary, then, has played a crucial role in Japanese teaching-learning instruction. The students are able to be acquainted with a wide range of Japanese vocabulary to use in different situations. Consequently, in this study, the researcher focused on investigating Japanese vocabulary learning strategies. The result of the research will be guideline to improve and develop teaching and learning process about Japanese language learning in next occasion.

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Research purposes

1) To study strategies of Japanese vocabulary learning of third-year Business Japanese students
2) To compare Japanese vocabulary learning strategies of students in Japanese minors
3) To study supplemental data from an interview

Methodology

Population and Samples

This research was to study a study of vocabulary learning strategies by using Japanese passages for third- year Business Japanese students which consisted of population and samples as follows:

Population of this research was 68 third- year Business Japanese students in second semester of 2015 academic year derived through Simple Random Sampling technique. The instruments used for gathering the data were the rating-scale and open-ended questionnaire. The statistics used for analysing the data were frequency, percentage, mean, standard deviation, t-test, and content analysis.

Instrumentation

The instrument used in this study is a questionnaire. The questionnaire was constructed by the researcher, based on a study of vocabulary learning strategies by using Japanese passages for third- year Business Japanese students.

The first part (Part 1) of this questionnaire asks for the demographic information on their minors. The participants were asked to report their information by ticking in only one box.

The second part (Part 2) concerns a study of vocabulary learning strategies by using Japanese passages for third- year Business Japanese students. This part comprises 47 items of a study of vocabulary learning strategies in 6major areas: 8 items of discovery strategies, 4 items of Social strategies, 7 items of support strategies, 9 items of memory strategies. 5 items of cognitive strategies, 9 items of meta-cognitive strategies, and 5 items of affective strategies. The participants were asked to check by ticking in only one box under the four levels of importance on each item in Part 2 to indicate their vocabulary learning strategies in each area listed in the questionnaire.

The four levels of using vocabulary learning strategies in the questionnaire are "highest level", "high level", "low level", and "lowest level". Responses from the student questionnaires were subsequently coded. The data of the students' coded responses were statistically calculated and analysed. The computation of Cranach's Alpha as a measure of reliability was employed to indicate how reliable the research questionnaire results are. Reliability is defined as the proportion of the students' responses to each item in the questionnaire and the reliability coefficient or calculated alpha is a lower bound of the true reliability of the research instrument, or the questionnaire. The descriptive statistics is also used to determine the individual summary statistics for each of the 47 items in the questionnaire.

The third part (Part 3) asks for more opinions and suggestions of vocabulary learning strategieswhich based on open-ended questions.

Data collection

Using vocabulary learning strategies were accessed through the questionnaire in the second semester of 2015 academic year.

The administration of the research questionnaire was conducted in Japanese classes. Part 1 concerns the demographic variables about their minors. The 47 items of Part 2 cover vocabulary learning strategies. Therefore, the participants were requested to consider each item carefully and indicate how important each item was for their study. A total of 68 third-year students from Business Administration completed the questionnaire.

The analyses of the research data were conducted by means of descriptive statistics. The descriptive statistical analyses of the frequencies and percentages of the students' responses were employed to report their demographic variables and to indicate the rank order of the items in each area listed in the questionnaire. The frequency distributions were analyzed to determine the proportions of the students' responses to the four levels of vocabulary learning strategies on the 47 items in 6 major areas: 8 items of discovery strategies, 4 items of Social strategies, 7 items of support strategies, 9 items of memory strategies. 5 items of cognitive strategies, 9 items of meta-cognitive strategies, and 5 items of affective strategies.

Data Analysis from Questionnaire

Data analysis from questionnaire both single item and whole questionnaire which presented a form of rating scale. These rating scales were calculated to find out mean and standard deviation and then translated as follows:

1.00 <=   <1.75   refers to students lowest level of vocabulary learning strategies.
1.76<=   < 2.50   refers to students had the low level of vocabulary learning strategies.
2.51 <=   < 3.25   refers to students had the high level of vocabulary learning strategies.
3.26 <=   < 4.00   refers to students had the highest level of vocabulary learning strategies.

The statistics used for analysing the data

The collected data was analysed using a computer program. The statistics used for analysing the data were frequency, percentage, mean, standard deviation, t-test, and content analysis.

Results

Results of Data Analysis

Phase 1: The results of demographic variable of TNI undergraduate students about vocabulary learning strategies

The analysis of the data from the students' questionnaire reported by TNI undergraduate students in the 2015 academic year is presented in the first section deals with the demographic variables from the students' responses to Part 1 of the questionnaire as following table.

Table 1: Table of the results of demographic data of respondents

Minors	persons	percent
Japanese	39	57.40
Others	29	42.60
Total	**68**	**100**

Table showed that percentages of TNI undergraduate respondents in minors ranged from 57.40% for Japanese minors and 42.60% for other minors.

Phase 2: Satisfaction of a study of vocabulary learning strategies by using Japanese passages

Table2: Table of mean and standard deviation of vocabulary learning strategies by using Japanese passages

Components	$\bar{x}$	S.D.	Level
Discovery strategies	2.73	0.52	high
Social strategies	2.56	0.60	high
Support strategies	2.68	0.58	high
Memory strategies	2.65	0.48	high
Cognitive strategies	2.54	0.52	high
Meta-cognitive strategies	2.52	0.59	high
Affective strategies	2.86	0.60	high
Total	**2.65**	**0.56**	**high**

The table above indicated that TNI students had high level of vocabulary learning strategies in overall ($\bar{x}$=2.65). When considered in each aspect, it was found that the students had high levels of Affective strategies ($\bar{x}$=2.86), Discovery strategies ($\bar{x}$=2.73), Support strategies ($\bar{x}$=2.68), Memory strategies ($\bar{x}$=2.65), Social strategies ($\bar{x}$=2.56), Cognitive strategies ($\bar{x}$=2.54), Meta-cognitive strategies ($\bar{x}$=2.52) respectively.

Phase 3: The results of the comparison of vocabulary learning strategies by using Japanese passages

Table 3:Table of mean and standard deviation of vocabulary learning strategies by using Japanese passagestowards their minors

Components	Japanese		Others		t	p
	$\bar{x}$	S.D.	$\bar{x}$	S.D.		
Discovery strategies	2.92	0.39	2.59	0.56	-2.756	0.245
Social strategies	2.51	0.51	2.60	0.66	0.662	0.100
Support strategies	2.45	0.40	2.96	0.66	3.188	0.050

Memory strategies	2.61	0.39	2.68	0.54	0.637	0.087
Cognitive strategies	2.47	0.38	2.59	0.61	1.045	0.008
Meta-cognitive strategies	2.56	0.25	2.50	0.75	-0.427	0.000
Affective strategies	2.67	0.55	2.99	0.62	2.213	0.568
Total	**2.60**	**0.41**	**2.70**	**0.63**	**0.652**	**0.151**

The table showed that students with different minors had no statistically significant differences at 0.05 level in total. When considered in each aspect, it was found that there werestatistically significant differences at 0.05 level in Support strategies, Cognitive strategies and Meta-cognitive strategies. For the rest, there were no statistically significant differences.

Phase 4: The results of suggestions of Thai-Nichi Institute of Technology studentsabout vocabulary learning strategies by using Japanese passages

TNI students had supplemental suggestions and opinions as following:

1. Using Japanese-Thai dictionary from a smart phone should be applied to assist searching new vocabulary immediately.
2. Japanese vocabulary learning strategies were essential to the students as these can enhance the students' motivation in learning Japanese as well as create the positive learning environment.
3. Using strategies about guesting meaning from the context could enhance remembering ability of the learners.

Conclusions
According to the study and data analysis, the results of this study were concluded as follows:

Phase 1: The results of demographic variable of TNI undergraduate students about vocabulary learning strategies

Percentages of TNI undergraduate respondents in minors ranged from 57.40% for Japanese minors and 42.60% for other minors.

Phase 2: Satisfaction of a study of vocabulary learning strategies by using Japanese passages

TNI students had high level of vocabulary learning strategies in overall ($\bar{x}$=2.65) When considered in each aspect, it was found that the students had high levels of Affective strategies($\bar{x}$=2.86), Discovery strategies ($\bar{x}$=2.73), Support strategies ($\bar{x}$=2.68), Memory strategies ($\bar{x}$=2.65), Social strategies ($\bar{x}$=2.56), Cognitive strategies ($\bar{x}$=2.54), Meta-cognitive strategies ($\bar{x}$=2.52) respectively.

Phase 3: The results of the comparison of vocabulary learning strategies by using Japanese passages

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3. Using strategies about guesting meaning from the context could enhance remembering ability of the learners.

Discussion

According to the study and data analysis the results of this study could be discussed as follows:

The results of using 6 vocabulary leaning strategies using Japanese passages for third-year business Japanese students were at high level. In this way, it might be because Japanese lecturers and students have to set goals in learning Japanese vocabulary together. The students are assigned to learn Japanese vocabulary in different ways both in class and outside class. These, then, might be an important factor to motivate the students to learn and memorize new and various Japanese vocabulary. This is related to Dornyei (2003)'s point of view who stipulates that the learners may be highly motivated in learning vocabulary in case of finding the chance of getting a task done properly such as a completion of task as meaningful and significant.

Moreover, Wills and Hodson (1999) highlight that vocabulary learning strategies was a kind of self-regulated learning. It includes the attempt to plan, check, monitor, select, revise, and evaluate. For instance, for vocabulary learning strategies, learners would clarify the objectives of an anticipated task, and attend to specific aspects of language input or situational details that assisted in understanding the task.

Acknowledgements

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