VOCABULARY LEARNING STRATEGIES AMONG BRUNEIAN UNIVERSITY STUDENTS OF FRENCH, GERMAN, JAPANESE AND VIETNAMESE

COLOMBO, O.[1*] – HUSZKA, B.[1] – TRAN TRONG, N.[1] – AKITA, Y.[1]

[1] *Language Centre, Universiti Brunei Darussalam, Jalan Tungku Link, Brunei Darussalam.*

**Corresponding author*
e-mail: omar.colombo[at]ubd.edu.bn

(Received 03rd January 2025; revised 26th March 2025; accepted 04th April 2025)

Abstract. This study explores the frequently employed Vocabulary Learning Strategies (VLS) among Bruneian university students learning foreign languages (FLs), including French, German, Japanese, and Vietnamese, and examines the relationship between VLS and the targeted FL. Scholars assert that mastering vocabulary is the paramount communication skill in FL. Consequently, learners must employ VLS to store and utilize new words effectively. However, students encounter challenges in learning, retaining, and applying FL vocabulary. Recognising the critical role of vocabulary knowledge in FL learning, this research addresses gaps in the existing literature regarding VLS application by Bruneian students and the comparative application of VLS across different FLs. Utilising Schmitt taxonomy, which classifies VLSs into Discovery (Determination, Discovery-Social) and Consolidation (Consolidation-Social, Memory, Cognitive, Metacognitive) strategies, a revised questionnaire was administered to 418 students. Learners rated their use of 65 VLS based on a 5-point Likert scale. Descriptive statistical analysis and MANOVA tests were conducted to interpret the data and identify any covariance between FL and VLS usage. The findings revealed the students' preference for rote, cross-language, and technology-based individual VLS. Overall, Bruneian learners were moderate VLS users, with Japanese learners employing VLS the most, followed by French, Vietnamese, and German learners. Statistically significant relationships were observed, such as the correlations between Japanese learners and Consolidation strategies, Vietnamese learners and Social strategies, and Japanese and French learners and Metacognitive strategies. The study underscores the importance of social-interactive, communicative, and blended teaching approaches and recommends incorporating VLS training on a short-term basis to enhance students' FL vocabulary and self-confidence in FL learning.
Keywords: *Bruneian students, foreign language acquisition, learning skills enhancement, vocabulary learning strategies*

Introduction

Wilkins (1972) asserts that "While without grammar very little can be conveyed, without vocabulary nothing can be conveyed." Vocabulary acquisition is crucial; however, it remains one of the most challenging aspects of Foreign Language (FL) learning. This learning challenge partially arises from the impossibility of a language teacher teaching every new word during class time (Lee, 2007). Students should be able to apply Vocabulary Learning Strategies (VLS) that facilitate "the acquisition, storage, retrieval, and use of [vocabulary] information" (Oxford, 1990). Active and independent development of learning strategies can enhance both the quality of learning (Nation, 2001; Oxford, 1990) and language competence (Lestari and Puspitasari, 2021). Students choose strategies that they consider to be the most appropriate and beneficial (Nation, 2005, 2001; Schmitt and Schmitt, 1995; Oxford and Scarcella, 1994). However, whereas learners with advanced language proficiency can utilise the most suitable learning strategies for particular contexts or tasks, less proficient students rather depend on the same strategy in every context, which may prove ineffective and result in

negative consequences (Nel, 2008; Errey and Schollaert, 2003). Sanaoui (1993) identified two primary vocabulary learning approaches utilised by English as a Second Language (ESL) students: structured and unstructured. The difference was that structured learners applied systematic and organised methods for acquiring and reviewing vocabulary both within and beyond their ESL classes, in contrast to unstructured learners who did not utilise such approaches (Lessard-Clouston, 1994).

This study investigates the most commonly utilised vocabulary learning strategies by university students of FLs in Brunei Darussalam, which is a field of study that has been certainly under-researched. The objective of this study is to determine if Bruneian students utilise vocabulary learning strategies in a structured manner. Moreover, to our knowledge, limited studies have comparatively analysed the use of VLS by learners of various FLs. This research examines the gaps in the literature concerning the application of VLS by Bruneian students in four foreign/third languages: French, German, Japanese, and Vietnamese. This study aims to examine potential covariances between FLs and learners' use of VLS. This study addresses two research questions based on the aforementioned points: (1) What are the most commonly utilised vocabulary learning strategies among Bruneian students studying French, German, Japanese, and Vietnamese? Did students predominantly utilise certain and various kinds of vocabulary learning strategies? (2) Is there any correlation between the type of foreign language (French, German, Japanese, and Vietnamese) and the use of vocabulary learning strategies by students?

Review of literature

Vocabulary acquisition strategies

In recent decades, numerous studies have been conducted to look into the application of VLS by FL learners. Scholars categorised a diverse array of VLS taxonomies. The predominant VLS taxonomies include those proposed by Gu (2018; 2003), Nation (2001), Schmitt and McCarthy (1998), Gu and Johnson (1996), O'malley and Chamot (1990), as well as Oxford (1990). This study utilises the taxonomy proposed by Schmitt (1997), which categorises 58 individual VLS into two primary groups within his Vocabulary Learning Strategies Questionnaire (VLSQ). Fourteen individual VLS are categorised under Discovery (DIS) and are utilised by students to ascertain the meaning of newly encountered words. Students utilise 44 Consolidation (CON) VLS to consolidate, modify, enrich, memorise, and retrieve new vocabulary. According to Schmitt and McCarthy (1998) taxonomy, DIS strategies comprise two subcategories, while CON strategies encompass four groups. This document presents a summary of Schmitt and McCarthy (1998) taxonomy of six VLS subcategories.

Discovery-Determination (DIS-DET, 9 statements) are learning strategies that assist learners in independently uncovering the meanings of newly encountered words. This is achieved through the analysis of discourse elements, contextual meanings, cross-language cognates, and the utilisation of dictionaries and translators. Students utilise social VLS to explore (Discovery-Social, DIS-SOC, 5 statements) and reinforce (Consolidation-Social, CON-SOC, 3 statements) newly acquired vocabulary through interactions with peers, friends, and teachers. Through Consolidation-Memory (CON-MEM, 27 statements) VLS, learners associate their lexicon with new vocabulary. CON-MEM strategies are linked to comprehensive mental and morphosemantic processes, including the promotion of verbal and visual imagery and the organisation of new words

into specific morphosemantic categories. Consolidation-Cognitive (CON-COG, 9 statements) strategies do not facilitate extensive mental processing; instead, they encompass mechanical mental operations such as traditional note-taking, glossary utilisation, and oral and written repetitions. Finally, the Consolidation-Metacognitive (CON-MET, 5 statements) subcategory pertains to strategies that enable learners to oversee their FL acquisition. This includes recognising decision-making processes and self-evaluating their learning activities while utilising multimedia resources (e.g., films, songs) in the designated FL, as well as practicing newly acquired vocabulary.

The educational context of foreign languages in the research study

Since gaining independence in 1984, Brunei Darussalam has established a bilingual education program that emphasises Malay and English. In 2009, Brunei implemented the National Education System for the 21st century to equip students with critical thinking, effective communication, teamwork skills, and moral values. This commitment also encompasses higher education, as Brunei collaborates with other nations in the instruction of FLs. This research examined the main public university that offers a variety of FLs. Courses are organised in accordance with the Common European Framework of Reference for Languages (Council of Europe, 2001). Semesters last 14 weeks, comprising 56 instructional hours, and cater to various learning styles while emphasising communication skills. This section of the paper analyses the challenges associated with vocabulary acquisition, along with the teaching and learning methodologies utilised by the lecturers of the four FLs discussed in this study.

Challenges in vocabulary acquisition for learners across four languages

The French, German, Japanese, and Vietnamese languages present unique vocabulary acquisition challenges for students. French is considered one of the most challenging languages for anglophone learners to master in terms of vocabulary, primarily due to its phonetic complexities, such as silent vowels and consonants, spelling irregularities, and a binary masculine/feminine gender system (Adigwe and Anukwu, 2015). The French lecturer has implemented a hybrid strategy that integrates both face-to-face and remote learning to address these issues. Face-to-face classes utilise a task-based approach, allowing students to collaborate in peer groups on communicative, social, and pragmatic tasks as social actors. Multimedia technologies facilitate remote learning by offering exercises for independent study. The lecturer of German utilises a communicative approach in his classes. He integrates real-life scenarios that students face in their daily lives into his classes, enhancing the relevance of new vocabulary to their experiences. The incorporation of new vocabulary in daily contexts facilitates learners' ability to infer meanings using contextual clues and German-English cognates. The course enhances vocabulary acquisition via videos and short films, while listening, reading comprehension, and vocabulary assessments facilitate the retention of new words and expressions.

Japanese instruction incorporates communicative methodologies alongside blended learning approaches. Vocabulary acquisition in Japanese presents a considerable challenge owing to the intricate nature of Kanji characters and the diverse levels of politeness and honorific language (Maruki, 2022), necessitating that learners commit these terms to memory. The lecturer utilises technology, including Quizlet, to facilitate vocabulary acquisition and integrate in-class activities that emphasise communicative

pair work and supplementary exercises. Vietnamese students face significant challenges stemming from the tonal characteristics of the language and its extensive vocabulary influenced by Chinese. Mispronunciation and unfamiliar intonations frequently result in misunderstanding and diminished comprehension. The Vietnamese lecturer has thus employed an interactive teaching approach, utilising role plays, collaborative projects, and cultural exchanges to promote active language use in the classroom. Rivers (1987) posits that interactive classes emphasise intentional communication, placing less emphasis on grammar and engaging students in collaborative activities and purposeful tasks for practical applications.

Methods of teaching and learning

The lecturers in each of the four languages employ various methodologies in teaching and learning to meet the language learning and vocabulary acquisition needs of their students. French, German, Japanese, and Vietnamese courses employ a task-based communicative methodology. The predominant pedagogical method in Vietnamese education is the interactive approach, which employs real-life tasks to enhance communication skills. Students engage in collaborative activities in groups, partake in role-playing exercises, and create projects to improve their language proficiency in both academic and future professional settings. Lecturers of these languages also effectively employ remote learning tools. Students utilise Canvas and Google Drive to access supplementary resources, including lexical exercises, videos, and audio tracks that support their learning. In French, remote teaching enhances the frequency of interactions between the lecturer and students, thereby facilitating regular assessments of their learning progress. Videos and short films, available at all times, further enhance vocabulary acquisition from the German classroom.

Materials and Methods

Instrument: Vocabulary Learning Strategies Questionnaire (VLSQ)

Schmitt and McCarthy (1998) Vocabulary Learning Strategies Questionnaire (VLSQ) was chosen as the instrument to examine the use of VLS by Bruneian learners. Schmitt and McCarthy (1998) VLSQ needed to correspond with the four FL learning objectives of this study. Based on the research of previous scholars (Yip et al., 2021; Laffey, 2020; Lam and Kuan, 2019; Vo and Jaturapitakkul, 2016), certain unfamiliar VLS strategies were removed from the questionnaire, while others were adjusted. Examples and illustrations were incorporated to enhance the clarity of the statements. The survey included advancements in technology related to computers, applications, and Internet-based systems. The most recent version of the VLSQ comprises 65 statements. Among the 18 Discovery strategies, there were 13 Determination strategies (DIS-DET) and 5 Social Discovery strategies (DIS-SOC). The 47 Consolidation Strategies comprise 3 Social Consolidation (CON-SOC), 27 Memory (CON-MEM), 10 Cognitive (CON-COG), and 7 Metacognitive (CON-MET) subgroup strategies. The survey's reliability was confirmed by experts and native speakers of French, German, Japanese, and Vietnamese. A preliminary investigation involving 75 Vietnamese language students was conducted in December 2023 at the Bruneian university targeted in this study. The Cronbach Alpha reliability coefficient for the questionnaire was

notably high at .923. The survey was subsequently converted into a Qualtrics online format to facilitate distribution among students.

Procedure and data analysis

In the second semester of the academic year 2023/2024, lecturers of French, German, and Vietnamese distributed the VLSQ link to students via WhatsApp, while Japanese lecturers utilised the Canvas platform. Students finished the survey in a duration ranging from 15 to 25 minutes. Participants agreed to participate in this study by voluntarily filling out the questionnaire. The students' anonymity has been strictly maintained. Learners provided information regarding their demographic, educational, and linguistic backgrounds. Subsequently, they assessed the usefulness of each VLS using a 5-point Likert scale, from 1 (never used) to 5 (always used). Descriptive statistics, including mean and standard deviation, were computed using the Statistical Package for Social Science (SPSS) Version 20 software to assess the frequency of VLS usage. The internal consistency coefficients, measured by Cronbach's Alpha, were high for the DIS VLS category (0.70), the CON category (0.89), and the overall VLSQ (0.90). The scores utilised for interpreting students' VLS employment are based on Oxford (1990) framework: a mean of 3.50-5.00 signifies high strategy use, 2.50-3.49 indicates medium use, and 1.00-2.49 reflects low use. This paper presents the overall results of the survey, with a primary focus on students' perceptions of the most useful individual VLS. Multiple Analysis of Variance (MANOVA) tests were conducted to examine the potential influence of the FL type on students' use of VLS.

Study participants

A total of 418 Bruneian students participated in the survey about VLS usage. The majority of participants were female (68.40%, N=286) and aged between 17 and 22 years (83.50%, N=239). Of the participants, 99.50% (N=416) were enrolled in an undergraduate program, with 34.20% (N=143) in their first year and 47.10% (N=197) in their second year. The fields of study included sciences (35.20%, N=147), arts and social sciences (32.80%, N=137), health sciences (14.40%, N=60), business and economics (13.40%, N=56), and digital sciences (4.30%, N=18). All students had an anglophone language background. Participants reported proficiency in three to seven native and FLs, including one of the four third languages examined in this study, with over half (63.20%, N=264) speaking three or four languages. Among the participants, the language target was an elective module: 30.60% (N=128) studied Japanese, 28.70% (N=120) studied Vietnamese, 25.40% (N=106) studied French, and 15.30% (N=64) studied German. The participants were classified as beginner or intermediate learners of the targeted FL, as their studies primarily spanned one semester (69.10%, N=289), two semesters (16.5%, N=69), and rarely three semesters (8.60%, N=36).

Results and Discussion

This section of the paper seeks to answer the first research question regarding the most frequently utilised vocabulary learning strategies (VLS) among Bruneian students, and to determine their classification as structured users of VLS, as defined by Sanaoui (1993). The second research question addresses the correlation between the type of FL

and students' utilisation of VLS. Findings from the data are presented and discussed in the subsequent stages of analysis.

Question 1: Overall usage of vocabulary learning strategies by Bruneian students

The most commonly employed individual vocabulary learning strategies: Summary finding

Table 1 presents frequency statistics for individual VLS among students, including mean scores and standard deviations for each strategy. Findings are arranged in order of decreasing mean values. Findings indicate that learners utilised twenty-four VLS (15.50%) out of sixty-five: nine CON-MEM, seven DIS-DET, five CON-COG, and one each of DIS-SOC, CON-SOC, and CON-MET. A mean range of 4.52 < 3.50, coupled with a mean difference of 1.02, indicates a moderate level of variability in VLS usage. Standard deviations between 0.77 and 1.45 reflect varying degrees of consensus regarding Bruneian students' perceptions of the most valued VLS. In alignment with previous research (Laffey, 2020), Bruneian learners exhibited a greater utilisation of novel technological VLS to ascertain word meanings. This included the use of online translators (DIS-DET_10, the most highly rated strategy by students), dictionaries (DIS-DET_9), and smartphone dictionary applications (DIS-DET_8). Research in Southeast Asia (Tahmina, 2023; Asgari and Mustapha, 2011) indicates that learners frequently utilise dictionary-based strategies, which teachers often promote (Asgari and Mustapha, 2011) to enhance students' self-learning abilities (Rabadi, 2016) and vocabulary knowledge (Hayati and Fattahzadeh, 2006; Walz, 1990).

Table 1. *Descriptive statistics for individual VLS frequency utilised by Bruneian students, arranged in descending order (N=418).*

VLS item	Statement	M	SD
DIS-DET_10	I use an online translator (*Google Translate*, *Papago*, *DeepL Translator*, *Generative AI*, etc.) to find out the meaning of the new word.	4.52	.85
CON-COG_55	I take notes in class.	4.50	.79
CON-MEM_37	I pronounce a new word aloud when trying to memorize it.	4.40	.89
CON-MEM_35	I study the sound (pronunciation) of the new word.	4.38	.77
CON-COG_49	I say the word repeatedly to memorize it.	4.33	.96
DIS-DET_9	I use an online dictionary (*Google Dictionary*, *Dictionary.com*, *Reverso*, etc.) to find out the meaning of the new word.	4.26	1.08
CON-MEM_36	I write the new word down together with its pronunciation.	4.12	1.10
DIS-DET_3	I relate the new word to a similar one in another known language (cognates, similar words; or words with similar sound).	3.91	1.08
CON-MEM_34	I study the spelling/writing form of the new word.	3.87	1.02
CON-MEM_48	Apart from the meaning of the new word, I pay attention to how it is used (its functions; the context/situation in which the word might be used).	3.86	.99
CON-MET_63	I learn from errors in vocabulary usage that I make.	3.84	.98
DIS-DET_6	I guess the new word from textual context, or from context clues.	3.83	1.02
CON-MEM_38	I visualize the form, spelling, or characters of the new word.	3.77	1.12
DIS-SOC_17	I ask classmates or friends for the meaning of the new word.	3.75	1.13
DIS-DET_8	I use a smartphone dictionary app to find out the meaning of the new word.	3.75	1.45
CON-COG_50	I write the word repeatedly to memorize it.	3.69	1.27
CON-MEM_45	I relate the new words to the language I know (cognates, similar words; or words with similar sound).	3.67	1.18
DIS-DET_5	I relate the new word with available pictures and/or gestures.	3.66	1.09
CON-MEM_23	I visualize the new word to help me to remember it: I imagine the word’s meaning.	3.56	1.19
CON-SOC_21	I interact with other learners of the foreign language.	3.55	1.19
CON-COG_51	I keep my personal vocabulary notebook to study/revise new words.	3.52	1.38
CON-COG_52	I use the vocabulary section in my textbook to study/revise new words.	3.50	1.28
DIS-DET_4	I relate the new word (form and/or sound) to a similar known word(s) in the same foreign language.	3.50	1.11
CON-MEM_32	I use the new word in sentences so that I can remember it.	3.50	1.11

Learners often employed cognitive strategies that included traditional vocabulary learning exercises (Lam and Kuan, 2019), which are the most commonly utilised by FL learners (Schmitt and McCarthy, 1998): Note-taking during classes (CON-COG_55), which is the second most utilised VLS by learners, rote-repetition exercises (CON-COG_49; CON-COG_50), and the use of personal vocabulary notebooks (CON-COG_51) or glossaries provided by FL coursebooks (CON-COG_52). Cross-language cognates (DIS-DET_3; CON-MEM_45) and interlinguistic comparisons (DIS-DET_4) emerged as the most frequently utilised and valued strategies. Students may engage in interlinguistic transfers among French, German, and English, as well as between Vietnamese and Mandarin. Learners often inferred the meaning of words from their textual contexts (DIS-DET_6). Interlinguistic and cross-language comparative strategies, in conjunction with guessing strategies, can enhance learners' training and foster their self-confidence, as well as improve their self-assessment skills (Yip et al., 2021). Overall, learners demonstrated a greater utilisation of MEM strategies that engaged mental processes, specifically focussing on the analysis of orthographical and/or phonological forms (Schmitt and McCarthy, 1998). CON-MEM 23 and strategies 34 to 38 (*Table 1*) pertain to vocabulary writing, visual, and auditory representations, directly influencing students' sensory experiences (Yip et al., 2021). These strategies enable students to visualise words and evaluate their vocabulary knowledge deficiencies. Students utilised strategies that involved grouping or relating vocabulary items, which included the new word (CON-MEM_32, and CON-MEM_48). This suggests that students sought to memorise, recall, or retrieve new words in relation to their existing vocabulary knowledge, thereby reducing cognitive load (Yip et al., 2021; Lam and Kuan, 2019), particularly when learning FLs such as French, Japanese, and Vietnamese, which contain numerous homophones and polysemous vocabulary items.

Bruneian students infrequently utilise SOC strategies. Students may disclose difficulties primarily when they encounter significant challenges in learning unfamiliar vocabulary (Asgari and Mustapha, 2011). They rarely sought assistance from peers to identify (DIS-SOC_17) and reinforce (CON-SOC_21) the newly targeted word. Students value peer learning at the same FL proficiency level (Lam and Kuan, 2019), facilitating the enhancement of cooperative learning (Vo and Jaturapitakkul, 2016). The participants exhibited a limited tendency to seek assistance from the lecturers. Research has identified various emotional, cultural, and learning factors among Asian learners that influence the student-teacher relationship. Students frequently highlight the difference between teachers and students in their cultural backgrounds, indicating that Asian learners may experience shyness or fear of making mistakes in the presence of their teacher (Lam and Kuan, 2019). Laffey (2020) posited that the limited reliance of English as a FL (EFL) Korean learners on their teachers is likely associated with both the cultural and learning approaches of Asian students, as well as the autonomy in learning skills exhibited by university students when interpreting word meanings. The findings indicate that Bruneian learners demonstrated advanced self-learning skills in discovering word meanings through their independent consultation of learning sources.

Table 2 provides an overview of the participants' general utilisation of the VLS. The findings of the cross VLS subcategories indicate a mean range of 3.35 < 2.99. Standard deviations of .45 and .81 suggest significant variability in the data distribution and varying frequencies in the use of VLS. The results indicate that Bruneian students were generally moderate users of VLS. Consequently, they recognised the effectiveness of strategies for discovering (DIS VLS subcategories) and consolidating (CON VLS

subcategories) their vocabulary knowledge. Determination (DIS-DET) emerged as the most favoured type of VLS among students. A mean of 3.35 indicates that Bruneian students exhibited moderate to high levels of independence in learning the meanings of new words. This finding aligns with the results of Baharudin and Ismail (2014). The prevalent application of DET strategies can be attributed to several factors. In the contemporary technological landscape, Bruneian learners have widespread access to the Internet and advanced communication devices, including online and smartphone dictionaries and translators. Bruneian students often utilise multiple languages to navigate the multilingual context of Brunei (Chew et al., 2023). This indicates that learners regularly engage in autonomous interlinguistic and translinguistic transfer strategies when interpreting newly encountered vocabulary.

***Table 2**. Overall descriptive statistics for VLS frequency by subcategory, arranged in descending order (N=418).*

VLS subcategories	M	SD
Discovery-Determination (DIS-DET)	3.35	.45
Consolidation-Cognitive (CON-COG)	3.25	.62
Discovery-Social (DIS-SOC)	3.14	.81
Consolidation-Memory (CON-MEM)	3.07	.54
Consolidation-Metacognitive (CON-MET)	3.07	.66
Consolidation-Social (CON-SOC)	2.99	.81

The Cognitive VLS (CON-COG) were identified as the preferred consolidation strategies, taking up the second position. These findings align with multiple studies regarding the VLS employed by Asian students (Yip et al., 2021; Lam and Kuan, 2019; Lee et al., 2019; Vo and Jaturapitakkul, 2016; Hsu, 2012). Kudo (1999) posited that certain cognitively less demanding strategies, including mechanical repetition (COG strategies), the use of bilingual dictionaries, and contextual guessing (DET strategies), are frequently employed by FL learners. In-depth strategies, such as mnemonic (MEM) techniques, require higher levels of selective attention, cognitive effort, and extended learning periods from students. According to Vo and Jaturapitakkul (2016) as well as Wenden (1987), cognitive strategies facilitate vocabulary understanding and recall for learners who recognise the significance of FL acquisition, requiring less mental effort. Lam and Kuan (2019) asserted that the preference for cognitive rote strategies aligns with students acquiring a completely new language. This analysis aligns with the educational context of the current research, as Bruneian students frequently encounter a new FL as novices and may initially favour the use of mechanical and familiar cognitive strategies.

Social strategies garnered moderate to low attention from students. DIS-SOC strategies ranked as the third most commonly employed vocabulary learning strategies, whereas CON-SOC strategies were the least favoured. The findings align with multiple studies indicating that Asian learners frequently generally avoid SOC strategies (Al-Omairi, 2020; Besthia, 2018; Vo and Jaturapitakkul, 2016; Amirian and Heshmatifar, 2013; Yeh and Wang, 2004). The CON-MEM and CON-MET strategies, which require significant mental effort, ranked equally in the fourth and fifth positions. The low application of these strategies is common among Asian learners of a FL (Ta'amneh, 2021; Yip et al., 2021; Al-Omairi, 2020; Karacan and Dikilitas, 2020; Lam and Kuan, 2019; Besthia, 2018; Rabadi, 2016; Baharudin and Ismail, 2014; Amirian and Heshmatifar, 2013; Al-Khasawneh, 2012; Hsu, 2012). MET strategies are intricate as

they compel students to oversee their FL learning through continuous planning and monitoring of their progress (Harris, 2003), as well as addressing learning challenges. Moreover, the participants in this study likely lacked knowledge of MET strategies, leading them to favour alternative strategies. It can be concluded that Bruneian students exhibited moderate structuring in their learning approaches, as evidenced by their overall moderate use of VLS and a higher utilisation rate of only 15.50% of the individual vocabulary strategies outlined in the questionnaire.

Question 2: The effect of the targeted foreign language on vocabulary learning strategy utilisation

The MANOVA test showed a statistically significant interaction effect of the targeted FLs (French, German, Japanese, and Vietnamese) on the usage of VLS (Wilks' Lambda Targeted FL/VLS usage: Λ=.73, F(18, 1157)=7.63, p=.00, Partial Eta Squared=.10). The results of a series of Tukey Post Hoc tests across languages, as presented in *Table 3*, indicate that Japanese and Vietnamese FLs strongly influenced the use of both Social (DIS-SOC and CON-SOC) and CON strategies.

***Table 3**. Results of the Tukey Post Hoc tests for multiple comparisons between languages across the categories and subcategories of Vocabulary Learning Strategies utilised by students (N=418).*

DV VLS	Factors: FLL targeted		Turkey HSD		
	FLL targeted 1	FLL targeted 2	MD	SE	P
CON	Japanese (N=128; M=3.17, SD=.47)	German (N=64; M=2.97, SD=.46)	.20	.07	.03
DIS-SOC	Vietnamese (N=120; M=3.44, SD=.86)	French (N=106; M=3.08, SD=.78)	.35	.10	.00
		German (N=64; M=3.00, SD=.77)	.44	.12	.00
		Japanese (N=128; M=3.00, SD=.75)	.44	.10	.00
CON-SOC	German (N=64; M=2.58, SD=.72)	French (N=106; M=2.99, SD=.77)	-.41	.12	.00
		Japanese (N=128; M=2.93, SD=.77)	-.36	.12	.02
		Vietnamese (N=120; M=3.26, SD=.84)	-.68	.12	.00
	Vietnamese (N=120; M=3.26, SD=.84)	French (N=106; M=2.99, SD=.77)	.27	.10	.05
		Japanese (N=128; M=2.93, SD=.77)	.33	.10	.01
CON-COG	Japanese (N=128; M=3.30, SD=.65)	French (N=106; M=3.10, SD=.63)	.20	.08	.05
	Vietnamese (N=120; M=3.40, SD=.54)	French (N=106; M=3.10, SD=.63)	.30	.08	.00
		German (N=64; M=3.11 SD=.61)	.29	.09	.01
CON-MET	Japanese (N=128; M=3.31, SD=.57)	French (N=106; M=3.10, SD=.70)	.21	.08	.05
		German (N=64; M=3.00, SD=.58)	.31	.10	.01
		Vietnamese (N=120; M=2.83, SD=.65)	.48	.08	.00
	French (N=106; M=3.10, SD=.70)	Vietnamese (N=120; M=2.83, SD=.65)	.27	.08	.01

Note: DV=Dependent Variable; FLL=Foreign Language (Targeted) Learning; MD=Mean Difference; SE=Standard (Std) Error; Correlations are significant at the 0.05 level (2-tailed).

The students of Japanese exhibited the highest usage of VLS, with an aggregated DIS-CON score of M=3.21 (SD=.44). In comparison, Vietnamese students had a mean of M=3.19 (SD=.46), French students achieved M=3.13 (SD=.44), and German students recorded M=3.03 (SD=.42). The mean differences across languages were as follows: Japanese/German=.18, Japanese/French=.08, and Japanese/Vietnamese=.02. Additionally, Japanese learners exhibited the highest utilisation of CON strategies (Japanese, M=3.17, SD=.47; Vietnamese, M=3.12, SD=.47; French, M=3.08, SD=.50; German, M=2.97, SD=.46). The mean differences in CON strategy use across languages were as follows: Japanese/German=.20, Japanese/French=.09, Japanese/Vietnamese=.05. Learners of Japanese and French found CON-MET strategies to be especially beneficial, with the following mean differences across languages: Japanese/Vietnamese=.48, Japanese/German=.31, Japanese/French=.21; French/Vietnamese=.27; French/German=.10. The significance of CON-MET strategies may stem from several factors. The Japanese language and culture, including films, television series, and music, enjoy significant popularity in Southeast Asia. Bruneian learners of Japanese frequently utilised Japanese online media to acquire new vocabulary, employing resources such as songs, films, podcasts, and news in the Japanese language (CON-MET_59: Japanese, M=3.90, SD=1.10). Additionally, learners of French and Japanese demonstrated greater engagement with the targeted FL online learning resources and websites (CON-MET_65: Japanese, M=3.83, SD=.97; French, M=3.16, SD=1.45). They also exhibited autonomous learning by correcting their vocabulary usage errors (CON-MET_63: French, M=3.97, SD=1.02; Japanese, M=3.77, SD=.93). The findings indicate that the blended teaching and learning approach utilised by lecturers was incorporated into the students' autonomous learning of the targeted FL. *Table 3* indicates that learners of Japanese and Vietnamese exhibited the highest utilisation of CON-COG strategies. This was associated with the frequent use of traditional vocabulary rote exercises (CON-COG_49 and CON-COG_50), glossaries (CON-COG_52), personal notebooks (CON-COG_51), and note-taking during the FL course (CON-COG_55).

Students of Vietnamese demonstrated a preference for the interactive social strategies, with an aggregated DIS-SOC/CON-SOC mean of 3.35, compared to 3.04 for French, 2.96 for German, and 2.79 for Japanese. The mean differences across languages were as follows: Vietnamese/Japanese=.56, Vietnamese/German=.39, and Vietnamese/French=.31. It can be concluded that Vietnamese students have likely integrated the social-interactive approach from their lecturers into their learning strategies.

Conclusion

This study identified two significant implications for teaching and learning among Bruneian learners of the targeted FLs. (1) Enhancement of VLS variety utilisation. Students exhibited a moderate level of structure in their use of VLS and demonstrated a preference for rote learning, cross-language strategies, and technology-based individual VLS. Nonetheless, the findings of this paper have heightened the awareness of the lecturers-researchers regarding the limitations in the VLS employed by Bruneian students. Consequently, lecturers ought to implement short term VLS trainings to improve students' self-confidence and their FL vocabulary acquisition skills. Lecturers should prioritise memory and metacognitive strategies to improve students' vocabulary

learning skills, so that they can become autonomous and efficient FL learners. (2) Sharing of teaching approaches. The findings highlighted the significance of the teaching approaches utilised by the researcher-lecturers. Students appeared to gain advantages from the blended methodologies of French, German, and Japanese FL instruction. Online learning improved students' use of metacognitive strategies. The social-interactive approach employed by the Vietnamese lecturer promotes the utilisation of social strategies among learners. This study concludes by recommending that instructors communicate their teaching and learning methodologies through the promotion of qualitative social-interactive, communicative, and blended teaching approaches. By considering these objectives, lecturers can enhance their support for students in vocabulary acquisition and foster greater awareness of foreign languages and cultures. In the future, researchers suggest further investigations on the role played by VLS in the FL courses. Given the correlations between the type of FL and the use of VLS by students highlighted in this paper, further studies should be carried out on the potential influence of other students' sociodemographic, educational, and linguistic factors in vocabulary learning.

Acknowledgement

This research is self-funded.

Conflict of interest

The authors confirm that there is no conflict of interest involve with any parties in this research study.

REFERENCES

[1] Adigwe, J.C., Anukwu, A.U. (2015): Learning French as a second language: Challenges for a native English speaker. – Continental Journal of Arts and Humanities 7(1): 21-29.
[2] Al-Khasawneh, F.M. (2012): Vocabulary learning strategies: A case of Jordan University of Science and Technology. – English for Specific Purposes World 12(34): 1-15.
[3] Al-Omairi, M. (2020): The use of vocabulary learning strategies by EFL and EAP undergraduate university learners' in the Iraqi context. – Arab World English Journal (AWEJ) 9p.
[4] Amirian, S.M.R., Heshmatifar, Z. (2013): A survey on vocabulary learning strategies: A case of Iranian EFL university students. – Journal of Language Teaching and Research 4(3): 636-641.
[5] Asgari, A., Mustapha, G.B. (2011): The type of vocabulary learning strategies used by ESL students in University Putra Malaysia. – English Language Teaching 4(2): 84-90.
[6] Baharudin, H., Ismail, Z. (2014): Vocabulary Learning Strategies and Arabic Vocabulary Size among Pre-University Students in Malaysia. – International Education Studies 7(13): 219-226.
[7] Besthia, W. (2018): A survey on vocabulary learning strategies: A case of Indonesian EFL university students. – Journal of Research & Method in Education 8(5): 636-641.
[8] Chew, F.P., Min, S., Yap, T.T. (2023): Factors influencing the Mandarin teachers' intercultural teaching beliefs and practices. – Kasetsart Journal of Social Sciences 44(2): 455-464.

[9] Council of Europe (2001): Common European framework of reference for languages: Learning, teaching, assessment. – Cambridge University Press 273p.
[10] Errey, L., Schollaert, R. (Eds.) (2003): Whose learning is it anyway? Developing learner autonomy through task-based language learning (No. 10). – Garant Publishers 158p.
[11] Gu, P.Y. (2018): Validation of an online questionnaire of vocabulary learning strategies for ESL learners. – Studies in Second Language Learning and Teaching 8(2): 325-350.
[12] Gu, P.Y. (2003): Fine brush and freehand 1: The vocabulary-learning art of two successful Chinese EFL learners. – TESOL Quarterly 37(1): 73-104.
[13] Gu, Y., Johnson, R.K. (1996): Vocabulary learning strategies and language learning outcomes. – Language Learning 46(4): 643-679.
[14] Hayati, M., Fattahzadeh, A. (2006): The effect of monolingual and bilingual dictionaries on vocabulary recall and retention of EFL learners. – The Reading Matrix 6(2): 125-134.
[15] Harris, V. (2003): Adapting classroom-based strategy instruction to a distance learning context. – TESL-Electronic Journal 7(2): 1-19.
[16] Hsu, J.F. (2012): Learning Chinese characters: A comparative study of the learning strategies of Western students and Eastern Asian students in Taiwan. – Colorado State University 107p.
[17] Karacan, C., Dikilitas, K. (2020): Vocabulary learning strategies of Italian-Turkish bilingual students: Impact of simultaneous and sequential acquisition. – Sustainable Multilingualism 17(1): 1-70.
[18] Kudo, Y. (1999): L2 vocabulary learning strategies. – University of Hawai'I 46p.
[19] Lam, K.C., Kuan, W.L. (2019): Vocabulary Learning Strategies: The Case of Mandarin Learners in Sarawak. – Human Behavior, Development & Society 20(3): 62-72.
[20] Laffey, D. (2020): Vocabulary learning strategies preferred by Korean university students. – English Teaching 75(4): 81-100.
[21] Lee, S. (2007): Vocabulary learning strategies of Korean university students: Strategy use, vocabulary size, and gender. – ENGLISH TEACHING (영어교육) 62(1): 149-169.
[22] Lee, H.L., Chin Siao, M., Mahama, T., Chua Hui, W., Hasan Muhammad, M. (2019): Analysis on Vocabulary Learning Strategies in Mandarin among University Students across Three Different Disciplines. – In Third Languages Teaching and Learning, Penerbit UMK 11p.
[23] Lessard-Clouston, M. (1994): Challenging student approaches to ESL vocabulary development. – TESL Canada Journal 12(1): 69-80.
[24] Lestari, E.M.I., Puspitasari, D. (2021): Vocabulary learning strategies by JFL good learners in the digital Era. – Izumi 10(1): 156-170.
[25] Maruki, Y. (2022): Keigo to use and to be used: Reevaluation of keigo learning in Japanese language classes. – Journal of Japanese Language Education and Linguistics 6(2): 142-153.
[26] Nation, I.S.P. (2005): Teaching and learning vocabulary. – In Handbook of Research in Second Language Teaching and Learning, Routledge 14p.
[27] Nation, I.S.P. (2001): Learning vocabulary in another language. – Cambridge: Cambridge University Press 10: 126-132.
[28] Nel, C. (2008): Learning style and good language learners. – Cambridge University Press 11p.
[29] O'malley, J.M., Chamot, A.U. (1990): Learning strategies in second language acquisition. – Cambridge University Press 260p.
[30] Oxford, R.L. (1990): Language learning strategies: What every teacher should know. – Heinle & Heinle 342p.
[31] Oxford, R.L., Scarcella, R.C. (1994): Second language vocabulary learning among adults: State of the art in vocabulary instruction. – System 22(2): 231-243.
[32] Rabadi, R.I. (2016): Vocabulary learning strategies employed by undergraduate EFL Jordanian students. – English Language and Literature Studies 6(1): 47-58.

[33] Rivers, W.M. (Ed.) (1987): Interactive language teaching. – Cambridge University Press 10p.
[34] Sanaoui, R. (1993): Vocabulary learning and teaching in French as a second language classrooms. – University of Toronto 406p.
[35] Schmitt, N., McCarthy, M. (Eds.) (1998): Vocabulary: Description, acquisition and pedagogy. – Cambridge University Press 393p.
[36] Schmitt, N., Schmitt, D. (1995): Vocabulary notebooks: Theoretical underpinnings and practical suggestions. – ELT Journal 49(2): 133-143.
[37] Ta'amneh, M.A.A.A. (2021): An analysis of various vocabulary learning strategies used by EFL university students. – Journal of Applied Linguistics and Language Research 8(3): 77-88.
[38] Tahmina, T. (2023): Vocabulary learning strategies used by the high-proficiency learners. – ELS Journal on Interdisciplinary Studies in Humanities 6(1): 93-101.
[39] Vo, T.D., Jaturapitakkul, N. (2016): The Use of Vocabulary Learning Strategies by Thai EFL Learners Studying Vietnamese as a Third Language. – LEARN Journal: Language Education and Acquisition Research Network 9(2): 105-121.
[40] Walz, J. (1990): The dictionary as a secondary source in language learning. – The French Review 64(1): 79-94.
[41] Wenden, A.L. (1987): Conceptual background and utility. – Learner Strategies in Language Learning 5: 3-13.
[42] Wilkins, D.A. (1972): Linguistics in language teaching: London. – Arnold: Word 243p.
[43] Yeh, C.Y., Wang, Y.H. (2004): An investigation into vocabulary learning strategies used by senior high school students in Taiwan. – Taiwan Journal of TESOL 1(2): 1-44.
[44] Yip, Y.C., Saad, N.S.M., Baharun, H., Ibrahim, M., Chua, N.A. (2021): Mandarin Vocabulary Learning Strategies among Islamic Science University of Malaysia (USIM) Mandarin Learners. – Asian Journal of Research in Education and Social Sciences 3(3): 163-176.