

A Comparative Analysis of Vocabulary Learning Strategies among EFL Freshmen and Senior Medical Sciences Students across Different Fields of Study

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Abstract : Learning strategies play an important role in the development of language skills. Vocabulary learning strategies as the backbone of these strategies have become a major part of English language teaching. This study is a comparative analysis of Vocabulary Learning Strategies (VLS) use and preference among freshmen and senior EFL medical sciences students with different fields of study. 449 students (236 freshman and 213 seniors) participated in the study. 64.6% were female and 35.4% were male. The instrument utilized in this research was a questionnaire consisting of 41 items related to the students' approach to vocabulary learning. The items were classified under eight sections as dictionary strategies, guessing strategies, study preferences, memory strategies, autonomy, note-taking strategies, selective attention, and social strategies. The participants were asked to answer each item with a 5-point Likert-style frequency scale as follows: 1) I never or almost never do this, 2) I don't usually do this, 3) I sometimes do this, 4) I usually do this, and 5) I always or almost always do this. The results indicated that freshmen students and particularly surgical technology students used more strategies compared to the seniors. Overall guessing and dictionary strategies were the most frequently used strategies among all the learners ($p=0/000$). The mean and standard deviation of using VLS in the students who had no previous history of participating in the private English language classes was less than the students who had attended these type of classes ($p=0/000$). Female students tended to use social and study preference strategies whereas male students used mostly guessing and dictionary strategies. It can be concluded that the senior students under instruction from the university have learned to rely on themselves and choose the autonomous strategies more, while freshmen students use more strategies that are related to the study preferences.

Keywords : vocabulary learning strategies, medical sciences, students, linguistics

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