

VOCABULARY LEARNING STRATEGIES EMPLOYED BY THE STUDENTS OF UNIVERSITY OF JAFFNA

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Abstract - Vocabulary knowledge facilitates the learners of English as a Second Language (ESL) to communicate effectively, conveying their ideas in both oral and written form. Learners with insufficient vocabulary knowledge often find difficulties in expressing their views and ideas. Numerous strategies are employed by the ESL learners to determine the meaning of new words and consolidate them. The purpose of this study was to investigate about the strategies used by the ESL learners to develop their vocabulary. The subjects of the study included sixty five first year students of Faculty of Management Studies and Commerce, University of Jaffna, Sri Lanka and they belonged to a diverse mix of ethnic groups and cultures. Data were collected through a triangulated approach employing focused group interviews, questionnaires and classroom observations. Questionnaires, which were administered using the Google Forms, consisted of three parts: demographic information about the subjects, vocabulary learning experiences of the participants and their reflections on the strategies used in vocabulary enrichment. The results indicate that the memorization strategy, though considered as a traditional way of learning, is still used widely among the tertiary level learners. The results also suggest that students don't prefer cognitive or meta-cognitive strategies as they deal with hard working and independent learning. Language teachers need to be aware of the significance of vocabulary learning strategies and guide the learners with various strategies to produce independent and self-directed learners during the process of learning English as a Second Language.

Keywords: vocabulary learning strategies, English as a Second Language, independent and self-directed learners