



Research Article

AN INVESTIGATION INTO VOCABULARY LEARNING STRATEGIES OF KOREAN AND UZBEK LEARNERS OF ENGLISH

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Gulnorakhon Muminova

Lecturer of Fergana State University, Uzbekistan

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ABSTRACT

Vocabulary learning strategies facilitate the language learning process and help learners to improve their language proficiency. This study focused on investigating the least and most commonly used VLS by Korean and Uzbek learners of the English language and discovering the differences in the use of VLS between two ethnic groups. The data was collected through an online questionnaire which was adopted from Schmitt's Vocabulary learning strategy taxonomy. The subjects of the study consisted of 236 Korean and Uzbek English language learners. After the collection of data, descriptive and frequency analysis were conducted on SPSS to find statistically significant differences according to ethnic groups.

Results reveal some interesting findings. Korean and Uzbek respondents showed a similar preference in their responses in the memory and metacognitive domains. Differences were found in the use of individual items of vocabulary learning strategies.

KEYWORDS

Vocabulary learning strategies (VLS), Determination, Social, Cognitive, Memory, Metacognitive strategies, ethnic groups.

INTRODUCTION

It is not a secret that English is the most widely used language in the world. For this reason, people in Uzbekistan and Korea are very eager to learn the English language. In both countries governments pay great attention improving both teaching and learning the English language from kindergarten to university.

Second, foreign language acquisition cannot be done without strong vocabulary knowledge. Therefore, vocabulary has been recognized as having a vital role in the field of language learning. Harmon, Wood, and Keser (2009) state that learners' vocabulary development is a crucial aspect of their language development. If students have a deep and rich vocabulary, they can convey messages easily and effectively. However, learners struggle with memorizing words. It is observed that students spend much time memorizing new words and they quickly forget them in a short time. The problem is that language learners are not aware of the vocabulary learning strategies (VLSs) in word memorization. To overcome these barriers and facilitate the learning process, instructors need to teach students VLSs. In addition, language learners

need to be taught vocabulary learning strategies to learn how to discover the meaning of new words, how to store them in their memory, and how to consolidate them. Cameron (2001) believes that learners cannot use vocabulary learning strategies themselves; they need to be trained to use the strategies effectively.

This study compares the use of the VLS by Korean and Uzbekistan English language learners from English and Non-English majors. As learning strategies highly depend on individual needs and preferences (Yu-jin2010), a uniform way of teaching and using strategy is not suitable for all students and could impede the learning process. Therefore, firstly this study was designed to investigate and compare the VLS use and preference of Korean and Uzbekistan EFL learners. Secondly, the current paper aimed to teach and help them the strategies of learning vocabulary that would lead achieving success in language acquisition.

The main purposes of the study are as follows:

1. To investigate the most and least frequently used Vocabulary learning strategies by Korean EFL learners.

2. To investigate the most and least frequently used Vocabulary learning strategies by Uzbek EFL learners.
3. To find out differences and similarities in the use of VLS between Korean and Uzbek students.

METHODOLOGY

Participants

The population for this study was a total of two hundred thirty-six Korean and Uzbek university students. Specifically, two hundred thirty-six participants comprised of one hundred six Uzbek students and one hundred thirty Korean students.

Instrument

The data of the present study was collected from the participants by administering the Vocabulary Learning Strategy Questionnaire. The Vocabulary Learning Strategies Questionnaire (VLSQ) was designed by Schmitt (1997) and adapted by Omar (2016). The main reason behind choosing Schmitt's questionnaire was that it is the most comprehensive one and it includes five clearly defined categories. It is a 5-point Likert scale questionnaire that consists of 37 items.

Procedure

Quantitative data analysis was carried out to meet the objectives of the study. The electronic questionnaire was utilized due to the outbreak of COVID 19. The participants were required to complete the questionnaire based on a five-point Likert scale: 1-I never use this strategy, 2-I rarely use this strategy, 3-I sometimes use this strategy, 4-I often use this strategy, 5-I always use this strategy.

Data analysis

After the data was collected, the researcher analyzed them using Statistical Package for Social Sciences (SPSS). Descriptive statistics was used to find the answer for research questions. The mean, standard deviation, minimum, maximum of each item were examined to describe the data. Lastly, Independent T-test was utilized to get a complete analysis. The Cronbach's alpha measured the internal consistency and reliability coefficients of questions and answers in the questionnaire.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

Descriptive statistics were utilized to find out the first and second research objective.

<Table 1> The results of the questionnaire according to five categories in the Korean context (N =130)

Domains	M	SD
Determination Domain	3.12	.733
Social Domain	2.31	.818
Memory Domain	3.30	.688
Cognitive Domain	3.01	.768
Metacognitive Domain	3.28	.790

As it was depicted in Table 1, Korean participants use strategies in all of the five domains. However, according to the mean value of participants for each category of the VLSQ, the Memory domain

was found as the most used VLS among all of the domains (M=3.30), while the least used strategies belonged to the Social domain which had a mean score of 2.31.

<Table 2> The results of the questionnaire according to five categories in the Uzbek context (N =106)

Domains	M	SD
Determination Domain	3.08	.820
Social Domain	2.49	.789
Memory Domain	3.28	.999
Cognitive Domain	3.01	.896
Metacognitive Domain	3.28	.854

The results indicate that Memory strategies and Metacognitive strategies were identified as the most frequently used categories of VLS among Uzbek EFL learners as both domains had the same mean of 3.28. Participants show a clear

preference for these strategies. It is interesting to note that similar to Korean participants, Uzbek EFL learners were also less eager to use social strategies in their vocabulary learning.

<Table 3> The Results of Independent t-test according to five domains: Ethnic groups

Domains	Nation	N	M	SD	t	p
Determination	Uzbek	106	3.08	.820	-.327	.744
	Korean	130	3.12	.733		
Social	Uzbek	106	2.49	.790	1.787	.075
	Korean	130	2.31	.817		
Memory	Uzbek	106	3.28	.999	-.055	.956
	Korean	130	3.29	.688		
Cognitive	Uzbek	106	3.01	.896	.021	.983
	Korean	130	3.01	.767		
Metacognitive	Uzbek	106	3.28	.854	.021	.983
	Korean	130	3.28	.789		

The given Table provides the result of the Independent T-test analysis on the comparison of VLS use of the two nations. It is observed that all

other domains namely the Determination Domain ($t=-.327$, $p=.744$), Memory Domain ($t=-.055$, $p=.956$), Cognitive Domain ($t=.021$, $p<.983$), and

Metacognitive Domain ($t=.021$, $p=.983$) have higher results than the standard P-value ($p<.050$). Therefore, we can conclude that there are no statistically significant differences between the two nations regarding the preference of Vocabulary learning strategies according to domains.

CONCLUSION

According to the survey results, the overall findings indicated that Korean and Uzbek participants approved of all strategies. As we mentioned above, the current study investigated the most and least frequently used vocabulary learning strategies by Korean and Uzbek EFL learners. According to result analysis by category in the Korean context, Korean participants were highly interested in employing vocabulary learning strategies related to the Memory and Metacognitive domains. In this case, we found the same results in the Uzbek context too. Another similarity between the Uzbek and the Korean context is encountered in the use of the Social Domain. According to the findings presented above, Social strategies were the least preferred strategies in both ethnic groups.

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