

Vocabulary Learning Strategies of Engineering Students

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This synopsis presents the results of a study which investigated the vocabulary learning strategies (VLSs) of engineering students at the University of Moratuwa. How the students learned technical terms, why they did not use VLSs and whether they used the VLSs in the vocabulary learning strategy inventory (VLSI) of Schmitt (1997) were part of the research problem while the classification of the VLSs, enumerating the number of VLSs used, assessment of the most used VLSs, evaluating the most widely used digital strategies and comparing the most widely used VLSs were the objectives. The students' use of technical VLSs and their beliefs on the importance of learning technical terms too were investigated. The sample included two hundred and eighty-six (286) engineering students between the ages 20-23 from all the provinces of Sri Lanka reading for their first degree in engineering. The data were collected through three data collection instruments. Qualitative analyses and quantitative analyses were used to describe and count the type of VLSs. A pretest and midtest were used to collect data. A modified version of Schmitt's (1997) VLSI was used as the primary data collection instrument which was administered after the pretest and midtest. Findings reported that the students used electronic devices to learn technical terms. Male and female students used digital strategies with average frequencies of 3.50 (SD=.49) and 2.87 (SD=.61) respectively. Female students used digital strategies with a mean of 3.50 (SD=.49) followed by a mean of 2.87 (SD=.61) respectively for male students. In digital strategies, female students used digital strategies more than male students. Metacognitive strategies are the least frequently used type of VLSs by the female as well as male students. Digital strategies were the most commonly used VLSs while the second most widely used strategies were the determination strategies. A statistical analysis confirmed the differences between female and male students in the frequency of use of VLSs. The results revealed that the difference between female and male was significant ($p < .05$) in favour of females in the use of digital VLSs. The findings indicated that the students used a variety of technical VLSs and the traditional paper dictionary was no longer preferred as digital devices are convenient and mobile. Findings further reported that digital strategies are more frequently used than other traditional strategies.

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