

Vocabulary Learning Strategies of Graduate Paramedical Students: An Analysis Based on Cognitive Linguistics

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Abstract

Words play an important part in utilising a language efficiently. An advanced level of learning the English language for a professional purpose involves the need to understand and remember words that are extremely important to perform the task correctly and efficiently. The paramedical students need the perfect register and the passive language for their specialization and using the correct word at the appropriate situation is a question of life and death. The task of learning vocabulary for occupational or specific purpose needs specific strategies. The assessment has been carried out using a Schmitt's tool VLSQ (Vocabulary Learning Strategy Questionnaire) to analyse the various ways in which the paramedical students learn and develop their vocabulary. This research is based on theoretical approach of Cognitive linguistics that studies language as it relates to cognition that takes the psychological and anthropological dimensions into significant consideration. The results show that only rote memory method is highly used by them and that the cognitive and metacognitive modes of vocabulary learning strategies to be known to them and that the teachers handling the paramedical students should focus on sharpening their cognitive and metacognitive domains in recording the registers.

Keywords: *second language, learning strategies, vocabulary, ESP, mentalism theory.*

1. INTRODUCTION

Learning English in India as a second language has emphatically been drifted in this modern age. English which was mainly learnt as a second language handed down to the Indians by the British colonials has now taken a completely distinct and also additional purpose in the life of graduate students, besides just learning their core subjects in English. The curriculum of Indian schools and colleges includes English as a compulsory subject. Universities and colleges frame English language to be compulsorily taught as it is

considered to be the magical door to employment opportunities. As Graddol (2010) rightly points out that majority of Indians 'believe in the transformative power of English', further continues to say that throughout India, there is a belief of the same among almost all castes and classes in both rural and urban areas. English is seen not just as a useful skill, but a symbol of better life, a pathway out of poverty and oppression (Graddol p.120).

In this context, teaching English has become very interesting and challenging job these days,

as the professors have the vital task of helping the students communicate well in the international language. This research paper is mainly focusing on the vocabulary learning strategies of the paramedical graduates which in turn blesses their communication skills.

To begin with one should understand that there are so many factors that affect the process of learning a second language, including attitude, self-confidence, motivation, duration of exposure to the language, classroom conditions, environment, family background, and availability of competent teachers (Verghese, 2009). The successful acquisition of a second language seems to some extent, contingent upon learners' views of the language learning environment, the learning situation, and how they view the target language and its speakers (Narayanan et al. 2008). Pooja Khalia (2017) has a strong opinion that “most of the students’ study English not as a language to be ‘learned’ but as a subject to be ‘passed; which later becomes a long dark tunnel for such learners.” She goes on to highlight the irony of the situation faced by the assistant professors of colleges who facilitate a large group of students who:

After spending 10-12 crucial years of their life learning English language from I to +2, still remain tongue-tied and the same heritage of functionally illiterate learners in English is passed on to the colleges and the most affected ones are the students who lack confidence and motivation.

Most of the paramedical medical graduate students come from their native/regional language background and have studied English as Second Language. They have mostly used only the memorization skill in their high school to pass their examination and score high marks. When they come to an advanced level of

education, they realise their lack of knowledge in their vocabulary and their communicative skills. They know the grammar rules but they do not know how to use them effectively in their daily conversation. They also realise the need to enhance their vocabulary and communicative competence. The universities and colleges provide them chance to learn the global language, so that they can get placed well and also perform their duties correctly, as they have to use their second language in their work environment too. The English professors, therefore, have the immense task of preparing a specific syllabus to cater to their needs and help them effectively.

Having these things in mind and understanding the need, the researcher took measures to analyse the vocabulary learning strategies of the undergraduate paramedical students. 57 students from two streams were assessed circulating the questionnaire. This would enable the better understanding that a serious recommendation for drastic and effective changes be brought in framing a syllabus for specific purpose targeting the improvement of students’ language skills inclusive of both vocabulary though which their communication skills get enhanced.

1.1. Language Learning and Linguistics

Language learning strategies became the main research theme in the 1970s; and vocabulary learning strategy has been the main component. Studies done by O’Malley and Chamot (1986) confirm that most language learning strategies can be used for vocabulary tasks. Vocabulary is one of the three key factors for language learning. It is the base to make sentences and express thoughts and meanings, and a key requirement of verbal communication, so a big amount of stable vocabulary is significant and essential.

The research on the vocabulary learning strategies have not been in the forefront of language research in India, as many teachers, learners and other linguists have taken it for granted and the need of teaching the students different strategies for expanding their vocabulary has not been seriously taught in the higher educational level. English is now the global language and it is being used effectively in many professions. Medical tourism and the advancement of medical sciences all over the world demands the need of effective communication skills in English for those who work in this field. The need for using the appropriate word in the correct situation is vital and graduate students in professional colleges have come to understand the value of developing their vocabulary for occupational purposes. Teaching and learning vocabulary strategies are now being explored to teach effectively and for the students to gain more knowledge that they can use in their future is becoming very important.

Vocabulary is significant according to the students' educational level as it measures the students' level of knowledge of the language. The different methods of teaching English as a second language in the beginning like the Direct method etc. didn't emphasize the learning of vocabulary. In 1984, Swan and Walter in their course book, Cambridge English Course brought out the importance of learning vocabulary by making the statement in their introduction to the book that "vocabulary acquisition is the largest and most important task facing the language learner." Course books began to include activities that especially targeted vocabulary.

Linguistic theories and language learning and teaching go hand in hand. The development of linguistic theories helped the teaching of a language more effectively. The Cognitive

Linguistics has also opened new vistas for language learners and teachers. It is useful as it explores and understands the relationship between language, cognition and their intersections and provides relevance in the areas of language acquisition and language pedagogy. The usage-based principle in CL connects well with second language acquisition. In the usage-based model of language, students acquire knowledge of the language through use (Bybee 1995; Croft 2000; Langacker 2000). In the CL view, language is seen as a product of human mind through conceptualization mediated by the precise nature of our bodies and our unique neuro-anatomical architecture (Lakoff & Johnson 1980). According to Littlemore and Jucheng-Grundmann (2010: 2), these concepts correspond to the key cognitive processes involved in "extracting language knowledge from language use", which, therefore, inevitably have a natural impact on second language learning and teaching says Han Luo in her chapter, "Cognitive Linguistics and Second Language Acquisition" in the book, *Routledge Handbook of Cognitive Linguistics* (556 - 561).

2. Background literature

The Oxford Handbook of Cognitive Linguistics edited by Dirk Geeraerts and Hubert Cuyckens is a condensed and information packed book on cognitive linguistics which is a vast subject. The book clearly explains how this linguistic approach is a broad-based framework by not using just one single theory but rather a cluster of compatible approaches. Xu Wen and John R. Taylor have also edited a concise and comprehensive book titled, *The Routledge handbook of Cognitive Linguistics* that is informative, pragmatic and easy to understand and use. Jeannette Littlemore's book, *Applying Cognitive Linguistics to Second*

Language Learning and Teaching is a more practical and easier book to understand. The writer has packed a lot of information that is essential to understand why and how to apply this approach in second language acquisition.

Cognitive Linguistic Approaches to Teaching Vocabulary and Phraseology, edited by Frank Boers and Seth Lindstromberg talks about how second language learners need to increase their vocabulary by innovative methods besides the usual rote-learning and familiar means of promoting of noticing. The volumes speak about alternative methods by exploring the presence of linguistic motivation and systematic non-arbitrariness in the lexicon. It is an interesting book for linguists and researchers in Second Language Acquisition.

Rebecca L. Oxford's Language Learning Strategies: What Every Teacher Should Know is a very well written book about the study of the techniques that learners can use in order to master a second language. She presents a four-level taxonomy of learning strategies. She has done an in-depth study of the subject and presented her facts. Steven A. Stahl has published his well-known book, Vocabulary Development (1999) that reviews the literature on vocabulary development. He significantly points out that, "vocabulary knowledge is knowledge; the knowledge of a word not only implies a definition, but also implies how that word fits into the world." Learning Strategies in Second Language Acquisition by J. Michael O'Malley and Ann Uhl Chamot classifies the learning strategies in second language learning and also shows why and how learning is affected in a positive manner when such strategies are put into practice. It is also essential to note that their material in the book is based on current research in Second Language Acquisition and Cognitive Linguistics.

Davies & Pearse (2000) in their book, Success in English Teaching write about the amalgamation of the four-language skills training, in which the teacher needs to establish a positive atmosphere, plan appropriate activities, encourage learners and deal with problems sensitively. English for Specific Purposes: A Learner-centred Approach, written by the well-known writers Hutchison, T. and Waters, A. (1987) needs no introduction. Pattison (1987) identified two sets of teaching having opposing goals: Set 1-Accuracy Knowledge about language Academic achievement Cognitive aims, and Set 2 – Fluency Skill in using language Social and personal development Affective aims.

Graddol (2010) has done a thorough, interesting and illuminating study on the importance of English learning in India. In his book, English Next India Graddol states that most of the university students are struggling to learn because 'the double burden of mastering their subjects and thinking in a foreign language is far too great a strain on them' (p. 101). He also says that English represents an aspirational language for many. Nidhi Sharma and Prabavathy in their book English Language Teaching: Past, Present and Future emphasises the need for innovation and creativity in English language teaching in India, with reference to redesigning the ESL books, using the modern and novel trends in language teaching and digital social reading etc. A number of international research papers published in important journals have also been accessed, read and quoted in this paper. Aravind, B. R. & V. Rajasekaran have done a research article on "A descriptive study on ESL Learners' Vocabulary Knowledge through Cognitive and Metacognitive Strategies," which is interesting and thought-provoking.

3. Cognitive Linguistics

Linguistic theory on language learning has moved up three stages. We have moved from Saussure's structuralism to Chomsky's TG and now to Cognitive Linguistics. Ungerer and Schmid have made a significant observation in their book, *An Introduction to Cognitive Stylistics*, that Cognitive linguistics is one of the most significant interdisciplinary branches of cognitive science, and is strongly related to cognitive psychology and linguistics. It is an important approach to language, which perceives language as a kind of cognitive action, and investigates and analyses the formation, the meaning, and the rules of language with cognition as its departure. Concisely, cognitive linguistics is an approach that is "based on our experience of the world and the way we perceive and conceptualize it" (Ungerer and Schmid, 2001, p. F36).

Cognitive linguistics is the study of language in its cognitive function, where cognitive refers to the crucial role of intermediate informational structures in our encounters with the world. Cognitive Linguistics is cognitive in the same way that cognitive psychology is: by assuming that our interaction with the world is mediated through informational structures in the mind. Language, then, is seen as a repository of world knowledge, a structured collection of meaningful categories that help us deal with new experiences and store information about old ones, says Dirk Geeraerts and Hubert Cuyckens in their (5) chapter, "Introducing Cognitive Linguistics" in the book, *The Oxford Handbook of Cognitive Linguistics*.

Cognitive Linguistics has two main purposes. The first one is to study how cognitive mechanisms like memory, categorisation, metaphor, metonyms, attention and imagery are used during language behaviour and the

second purpose is to develop psychologically viable models of language that cover the broadest possible range of linguistic phenomena, including idioms and figurative language, says Xu Wen and John Taylor in their introduction to the book, *The Routledge Book of Cognitive Linguistics*.

Cognitive linguistics believes that language is not an autonomous cognitive faculty, but a main part of human cognition. It also gives importance to meaning, meaning construction, semantic structure as a conceptual structure; meaning is encyclopaedic; grammar is meaningful and finally that knowledge of language basically emerges from language use (1-3). Cognitive linguistics believes that language is more usage-based and is a product of physical interaction with the world and that language is inherently meaningful although grammatical meanings are more abstract than lexical meanings. We keep modifying our mental lexicon in response to the language that we hear and use. Therefore, we can understand that language knowledge is usage-based, that our knowledge of language is 'derived from and informed by language use' says Evans and Green (2011 p.111). In our cognitive process we use comparison, categorization, pattern-finding and blending.

A major contribution made by Cognitive linguistics in second language teaching and learning is to suggest ways in which the relationship between grammatical expressions and their original lexical meanings can be taught clearly in the language classroom to enhance learning and memorization, says Jeannette Littlemore in her interesting book, *Applying Cognitive Linguistics to Second Language Learning and Teaching*. She goes on to say that the language we encounter every day serves as an input, we learn from and the build in a meaningful relationship with the language

we use and that it supports in modifying our mental lexicon. Therefore, knowledge and learning are usage-based (1-4).

Cognitive linguistics considers that language is an integral part of cognition and it is more usage-based than just a human ability to speak and language is motivated and symbolic. Understanding language as motivated and not arbitrary has a lot of benefits in teaching English as a second language and for the development of communicative strategies. Vocabulary learning is interconnected with the cognitive linguistics, as it can be seen that the key concept of usage-based knowledge helps in learning vocabulary. The methodology of cognitive linguistics is usage-based as it is basically concerned with the characterization of language as it is spoken and understood and also with the dynamics of its use (Langacker 1988b, 2000, Barlow and Kemmer 2000, Tomasello 2000). Cognitive Linguistics recognises the centrality of meaning to linguistic organization.

4. Vocabulary Learning Strategies in ESL

Well-known linguists, researchers and language educators equally concur on the significance of strategies in vocabulary learning. "Vocabulary is central to language and of critical importance to the typical language learner" says Zimmerman (1997: 5), yet, it is often side-lined due to the great significance that teachers, professors, facilitators, and researchers conferred on syntax and phonology. Rebecca L. Oxford, in her interesting book, *Language Learning Strategies: What Every Teacher Should Know*, has stated that strategies can be channelized mentally as well as physically. Scafaru and Tofan (2006) expressed that good learners know how to use varied strategies than merely

depending on one strategy. Schmitt, (2000) stated that in the learning process of vocabulary, strategies play a primary role. Most of the studies on vocabulary learning strategies have found that dictionary strategies are of much use. One can agree with this statement that, "without grammar, very little can be conveyed; without vocabulary, nothing can be conveyed" (Wilkins 1972, p. 111).

Hedge (2000) mentions that despite the traditional methodology, the modern teaching faculty are laying more emphasis on how the learners' mental lexicon is organized. They study what strategies learners use to acquire vocabularies and why and how some words are easier to learn than others. Hedge also goes on to point out that linguistic studies focus on lexical system and acquisition studies focus on how vocabulary is learned. The idea of how vocabulary is learned is principally related to strategies used by learners as well as approaches to teaching vocabulary. Nation (2001) defines vocabulary learning strategies by the important features like choice, complexity that consists of various steps; the need for knowledge and training to attain it; and these can increase the students' efficiency of vocabulary learning and use. Using the vocabulary, they learn is of paramount importance. Vocabulary learning strategies are a part of language learning strategies which in turn are a part of general learning strategies (Nation 2001, p. 217).

Asgari and Ghazali (2011) express clearly that the learning process will become more efficient and effective when learners apply strategies, enabling them to become more proficient language users. Nation (2001), Schmitt (2000) and Thornbury (2002) believe that strategies in vocabulary learning enable learners to take an interesting, responsible and independent role in their language learning. Gradually, they

become autonomous learners. Nation (2001) opines that when learners have a good knowledge of VLS and the ability to use them, they can acquire a significant of vocabulary. Additionally, VLS are proven to be meaningful and encouraging for students of different language proficiency levels (Nation, 2001).

Recent research in Second Language Acquisition and English as Foreign Language has clearly revealed the importance of using task-based learning activities, which stimulate cognitive involvement in students. In vocabulary learning it is known as task-induced involvement (Laufer and Hulstijn 2001), which can be used to teach communicative competence. It has been revealed that cognitive linguistic inspired teaching techniques helps graduate students to expand their vocabulary in more effective ways. This is a rich and varied approach which helps teaching and learning vocabulary. Research reveals that the development of vocabulary and activation of prior knowledge or schema are necessary ingredients for all students in becoming successful readers, they are particularly significant for bilingual students who need additional teaching support in these areas (Anderson, 1999; Huckin, Haynes, &Coady, 1993).

5. Classification of Vocabulary Learning Strategies (VSL)

Language learning strategies are the mechanisms used to accomplish a task, comprehend an objective and attain a goal. Different vocabulary learning strategies are applied for different purposes. Learning strategies develop metacognitive functions like planning, evaluating, emotional, social and other functions as well. This involves both metacognitive and cognitive aspects. That's why Rebecca Oxford (2001) is of the strong

opinion that factors such as the degree of awareness, stage of learning, task requirements, teacher's expectations, age, sex, learning style, personality traits, motivation level, purpose of learning the language greatly influence the choice of strategies (13). She also confirms that cognitive strategies help students to understand and produce new language by many different means.

The predominant methods of learning strategies are cognitive and metacognitive strategies. According to O'Malley and Chamot (1990) cognitive strategy helps the learner interact with the material by manipulating it mentally, that is by making mental images or physically by taking notes. O'Malley and Chamot also affirm that metacognitive strategies include planning for learning, monitoring comprehension and production, and evaluating how well a learning objective has been achieved. According to them cognitive strategies consist mainly of translating and analysing and metacognitive strategy consists chiefly of planning and organizing. It is worth mentioning here that Chamot and O'Malley (1987 & 1996) are the pioneers of the Cognitive Academic Language Learning Approach which was developed by them in 1987. It is based upon cognitive learning in which bilingual learners apply prior knowledge and other strategies, such as making inferences and monitoring comprehension to content area subjects. CALLA is based on the perception that active learners are productive learners, strategies can be learned; academic content learning is more valuable and successful with strategy use, and learning strategies lead to transference to new learning.

Anderson (2002) has categorized the strategies based on previous research, and he has proposed five main mechanisms for metacognition. They are preparing and

planning for learning; selecting and using learning strategies; monitoring strategy use; orchestrating various strategies, and finally, evaluating strategy use and learning. O'Malley, J. M., and Chamotte, A. U. (1987), in their journal article "The cognitive academic language learning approach: A bridge to the mainstream" gives us a very detailed classification of strategies and also a list of strategies that function as metacognitive strategies. Cohen, A. D., and Dörnyei, Z. (2002) in their chapter "Focus on the language learner: Motivation, styles and strategies." in the book, *An Introduction to Applied Linguistics*, accentuate the significance of self-motivation in adopting learning strategies. (pp. 179-190).

Metacognitive strategy includes activities like planning a learning task by the professor, monitoring comprehension and evaluating the progress of the students towards the achievement of the task. Most commonly, students are taught what to think, but not how to think; what to learn but not how to learn. Ioana Boghian in her journal article, "Metacognitive Learning Strategies in Teaching English as a Foreign Language" (2016) highlights three basic things that students have to inculcate in themselves namely, the need for self-awareness, learning more about how to acquire a language, and preparing and planning for effective learning (p 57). Metacognitive strategies are those strategies which involve self-reflection and thinking about reading and learning. The three characteristics of metacognition include: Declarative knowledge, that is, knowing what the strategy is; procedural knowledge, that is, knowing how the strategy works and conditional knowledge; knowing why the strategy is used (Paris, Cross, & Lipson, 1984) Cognitive and metacognitive processes help the student in understanding what they have;

strategies that can help them improve their skills; and complete the tasks given to them. It is, therefore, important to teach cognitive skills and also build the students' metacognitive skills. This will help them to evaluate their progress and develop their language skills.

When the graduate students adopt certain learning strategies, they become better learners by achieving skills in using the learning strategies and they also help them to become independent and confident learners. These strategies also motivate them to understand the various strategies and use the strategy that will help them improve their language skills.

Schmitt (2000) categorizes the strategies into five distinctive methods such as Determination, Social, Memory, Cognitive and Metacognitive strategies. Schmitt's Taxonomy of Vocabulary Learning Strategies (1997) was based on Oxford's (1990) social, memory, cognitive, and metacognitive categories. Schmitt classifies vocabulary learning strategies into two divisions namely discovery strategies and consolidation strategies. The research study investigates cognitive and metacognitive strategies of ESL learners' which comes under consolidation strategies of Schmitt's taxonomy of vocabulary learning strategies. Cognitive strategies include mechanical means of learning vocabulary. Metacognitive strategies used by learners to manage and assess their individual learning process in vocabulary.

The aim of this research paper is to analyse which strategy is much used by the graduate students and which will be of immense use to help them learn new vocabulary for their occupational purposes and use them effectively. Though there are many scholars who have done a similar study, it can be clearly seen that there has not been any research based on the need for learning vocabulary for the

paramedical students in Tamil Nādu, India. Therefore, an effort with challenges has been taken to find out the same. Based on the experience of forming a specific syllabus to teach them language and communication skills, and the dire need to analyse and pinpoint specific vocabulary learning strategies for the students who learn English as second language.

5.1. Related Studies on Vocabulary Learning Strategies

A number of studies have been conducted to investigate the use of VLS by English as a foreign language and English as a second language. Behbahani (2016) used the VLS for 76 international students at Eastern Mediterranean University (EMU), North Cyprus. Manuel (2016) conducted a study to investigate the use of VLS by 60 Angolan EFL university students at Agostinho Neto University. AVLS study was done by Asgari and Ghazali (2011) and they explored the use of VLS by ESL students in Universiti Putra Malaysia (UPM). Hendrawaty (2015) did a study on the use of VLS by 137 EFL third semester undergraduate students at Indraprasta PGRI University. Riankamol (2008) explored the use of VLS by 27 students at TriamUdomsuksa School in Thailand by using a 25-item questionnaire based on Schmitt's (1997) Taxonomy of VLS. Soureshjani (2011) sought to find out whether there was any significant difference by gender in the use of VLS. A questionnaire was adapted from Schmitt (2000) and it was employed using 110 Iranian students consisting of 50 males and 60 females. Subon (2013) investigated the use of VLS among 88 Form Six students comprising of 36 male students and 52 female students in a secondary school in Samarahan.

It can be unmistakably and distinctly noted that this test has not been conducted for paramedical

students in India. The need for this investigation is a high priority and the results can definitely benefit and support professors and institutions to bring about the necessary change to facilitate effective vocabulary learning strategies and help the graduate students to increase their efficiency in learning the language.

6. Research Objectives

Research on learning strategies consist of three main directions according to Benson (2011).

The objectives of the current study are:

- To study what kind of learning strategies the students use.
- To find out the most used strategy by students.
- To find out the significant difference, if any in the causes of learning vocabulary with regard to medium of instruction at school, their residential area and gender.

7. Research Questions

- ☐ Why do paramedical graduate students have problems with vocabulary learning?
- ☐ What kind of demographic variables play a significant role in learning vocabulary?
- ☐ What is the most popular strategy used by the students?
- ☐ Why do paramedical graduate students need to follow a specific vocabulary learning strategy?
- ☐ How will cognitive and metacognitive strategies help the students?

8. Research Significance

Most often the study of vocabulary and the aim of developing the vocabulary of students are

vastly neglected or taken for granted. Teachers and professors often fail to highlight the importance of building their vocabulary. William Dharma Raja and Selvi. K (2011) in their research article, "Causes of Problems in Learning English as a Second Language as Perceived by Higher Secondary Students" comment that most of the students' study English from the examination point of view, so they are not able to produce even a single sentence without grammatical error. Furthermore, adequate practice is not given to students to learn a language. Exposure too is far less to them.

When students come to do their paramedical graduate studies, many come from a rural background and have often done their studies in their native language. They come from rural, urban and suburban schools where they live. They need to develop their language skills and communicative competence which can flourish only if their vocabulary also simultaneously increases. They have to use their second language in their work field. It is, therefore, very important to develop their language skills and their register depending in the subject they specialize. The English professor has the herculean task of helping the students get a keen interest in learning English and develop their vocabulary. So, they have to critically examine their background, level of knowledge of their LSRW skills, what strategy they use and why and show them the way to develop their communication skills and develop an interest in expanding their vocabulary.

Therefore, the decision has been taken to explore the Vocabulary Learning Strategy of the paramedical students of two departments and that this would enable us to throw light on the individual differences in vocabulary learning, and thus find how they can be helped by the teachers and the policy makers and

curriculum constructors to be cautious and conscious of their responsibility in structuring the materials and the activities that will help the learners improve their vocabulary knowledge. Based on the outcome of this research the institution and the department can decide on what apt methodology would best fit the learners to enhance their skill of learning words to make them really efficient and for their future employability and to perform well in their jobs.

9. Research Design

It was decided that the best way to analyse this problem is to use an efficient questionnaire that will help us to understand the situation and assess the students. This will help us to survey the vocabulary learning strategies used commonly by the students and also give us the quantitative empirical evidence we need through this investigation.

10. Research tool

Schmitt's VLSQ (Vocabulary Learning Strategies Questionnaire) that has been adopted by Bennet (2006) has been used which focuses on the various categories in which a student can learn vocabulary and they are determination, social, memory, cognitive and meta-cognitive. Twenty-one items have been chosen to study the problem through conduction of survey.

11. Participants

The population was the 2nd semester paramedical students of a medical college, Chennai, Tamil Nadu. A total of 57 students of which 48 were female and 9 were male who were chosen using random sampling method. The selected sample was from rural and urban areas of Chennai.

12. Statistics Used

The collected data were analysed using mean, standard deviation, Pearson Chi square.

13. Data Analysis

The data analysis gives us clearly the percentage of students regarding the variables of gender, school education background and their residential background to reveal how they are important in determining the strategies chosen by them and the effort they have taken to increase their vocabulary and also the strategies they have used to learn and improve their vocabulary.

14. Results

The results of the questionnaire are undoubtedly clear that the paramedical students need to learn and adopt specific strategies to develop their vocabulary and language skills. The following figures give us a detailed study of the variables used and the results in percentage. Most of the students have studied in urban and suburban schools which teach using the second language, English, as the medium of instruction.

14.1. Variables

Figure No.1: Percentage of students who studied in Tamil and English Medium Schools

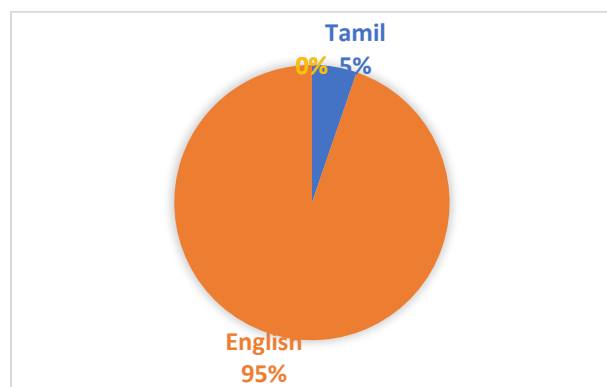


Figure No.2: Percentage of male and female students

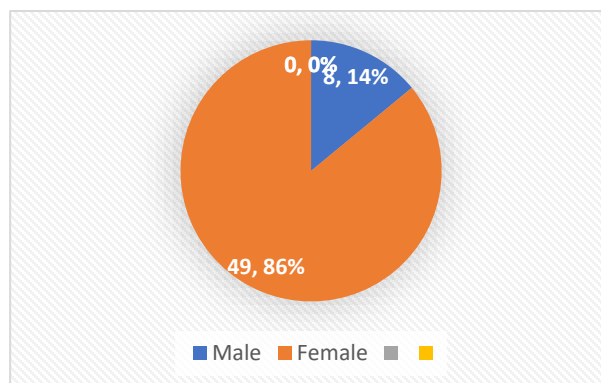
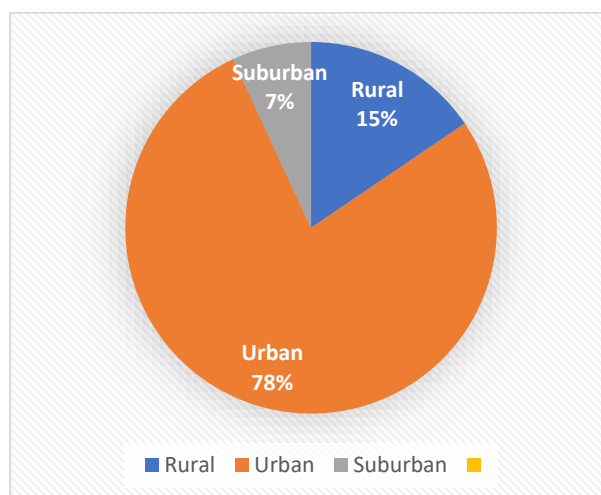
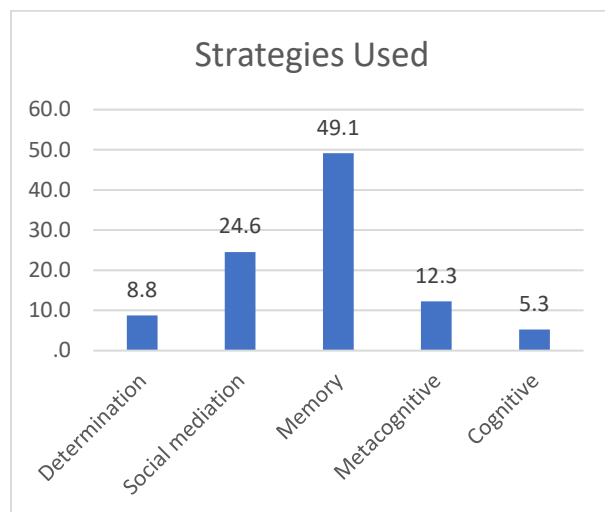


Figure No.3: Percentage of Residential Areas and Schools from which the students come from.

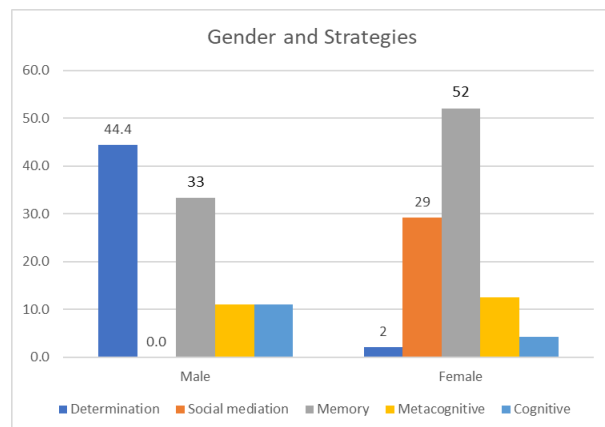


14.2. Factors

The main five learning strategies namely, determination, social, memory, cognitive and metacognitive strategies have been assessed based on the variables given above. The bar graph given below vividly reveals that the students have not been taught any specific vocabulary learning strategy and have used certain aspects randomly. The main strategy that is emphasized in schools is rote memory and the questionnaire shows that they are still using that as a chief strategy.

Figure No.4: Overall Percentage of Usage of the Vocabulary Learning Strategies**Table No. 1: Percentage of students using the different factors to learn their vocabulary**

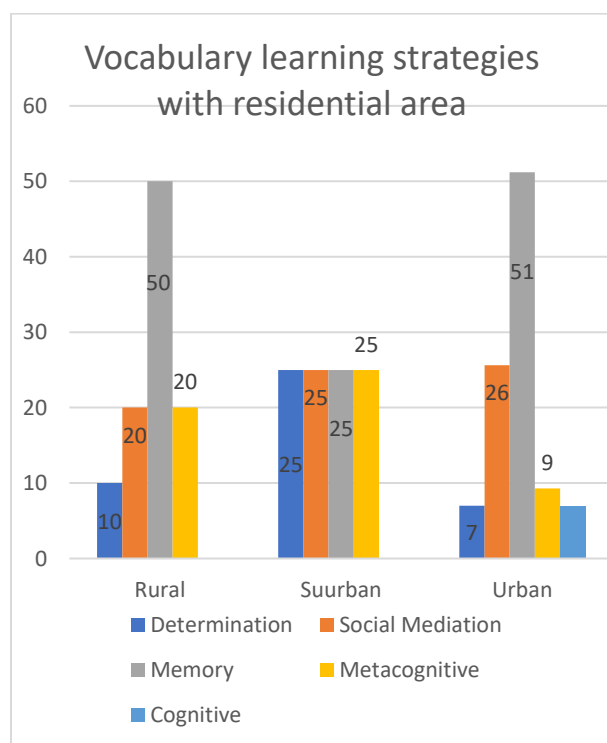
			Vocabulary Learning Strategies					Total
			Determination	Social mediation	Memory	Metacognitive	Cognitive	
Gender	Female	Count	1	14	25	6	2	48
		%	2.1%	29.2%	52.1%	12.5%	4.2%	100.0%
	Male	Count	4	0	3	1	1	9
		%	44.4%	.0%	33.3%	11.1%	11.1%	100.0%
	Total	Count	5	14	28	7	3	57
		%	8.8%	24.6%	49.1%	12.3%	5.3%	100.0%

Figure No.5: Gender-wise Percentage of Usage of Learning Strategies

With regard to gender and the strategies the Pearson chi square value is 19.378, df=4, p-value =0.001<0.01 which is highly significant, which shows that male are comfortable using determination strategy (44.4%) to enhance their vocabulary, whereas female are comfortable using memory strategy (52.1%).

Table No.3: Percentage of Usage of Learning Strategies based on the Residential Area of the students

			Vocabulary Learning Strategies					Total
			Determination	Social mediation	Memory	Metacognitive	Cognitive	
Residential Area	Rural	Count	1	2	5	2	0	10
		%	10.0%	20.0%	50.0%	20.0%	.0%	100.0%
	Suburban	Count	1	1	1	1	0	4
		%	25.0%	25.0%	25.0%	25.0%	.0%	100.0%
	Urban	Count	3	11	22	4	3	43
		%	60.0%	78.6%	78.6%	57.1%	100.0%	75.4%
Total		Count	5	14	28	7	3	57
		%	8.8%	24.6%	49.1%	12.3%	5.3%	100.0%

Figure No.6: Bar Graph of Overall Percentage of Usage of Learning Strategies Based on Residential Areas

In connection to the residential area and the influence of it in learners' vocabulary learning strategy, the Pearson chi square test shows that there is no significance between the locality of the respondents with the type of VLS. The Pearson chi square value =4.291, df=8, p-value=0.830>0.05 level of significance which

reveals that irrespective of the locality of the respondents the types of VLS is distributed.

15. Conclusion

The paramedical graduate students have problems with vocabulary learning, as they have been taught only one strategy i.e., rote memory. They have used a few other strategies randomly and they do not know about metacognitive and cognitive learning strategies, as they have been taught what to learn and not how to learn and what to think and not how to think. The demographic variables play a significant role in learning vocabulary, as the students come from rural, suburban and urban areas and schools where they have not been taught communication skills or the important learning strategies, even though most of them come from English medium schools. The most popular strategy used by the students is memory, though the male students 44% have used determination strategy. This is evidentially shown in the choice of their college that is located in the city circle which would favour them in improving their language skill as obtaining their higher education. This is also reflected in the fact that they have chosen a graduate course in a college situated in the city

and they want to improve their language skills and obtain good higher education.

It is, therefore, imperative that the paramedical graduate students need to learn and know about cognitive and metacognitive vocabulary learning strategies to improve their second language skills. Cognitive and metacognitive strategies help the students, to think and comprehend what they need to focus on their language skills besides learning their core subjects. Vocabulary learning strategies will help them not only to learn English to survive in their jobs and go forward in their future, but also help them to learn the vocabulary of their core subjects also.

16. Recommendations

Learners can be taught how to improve their own vocabulary, when the professor teaches them the appropriate learning strategy. A systematic approach by the professors will help the learners/graduates to be learn the strategies and become more organized and independent. Cognitive and metacognitive strategies can produce dramatic impacts on the success of the students. It is also very effective in improving oral communication skills. The direct training method advocated by O'Malley and Chamot has better results. They had worked in 1994 on a project called Cognitive Academic Language Learning Approach (CALLA) that has provided a useful framework for direct language learning strategies instruction. The sequence of instruction in CALLA approach has a five-phase recursive cycle for introducing, teaching, practicing, evaluating, and applying learning strategies. (Chamot & O'Malley, 1994; Chamot Barnhardt, El Dinary, & Robbins, 1999). The syllabus has to be specific and contain task-based activities that involve storing in memory, attention, and problem solving, so that the students can garner

new vocabulary, new information and also improve their reading and comprehension skills. The students can also learn to synthesize texts and help make inferences and opinions about what they have learnt. Model and practice, word learning and applied grammar are also practical metacognitive learning strategies. The goal is to make the students skilful thinkers.

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