

THE STUDENTS' MEMORY LANGUAGE LEARNING STRATEGY IN MASTERING ENGLISH MATERIALS AT VOCATIONAL SCHOOL LEVEL

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Abstrak : This study aims to investigate students' perceptions of the Memory language learning strategy in mastering various English as a Foreign Language (EFL) language skills in SMK N 7 Semarang. A descriptive qualitative method was used with a questionnaire survey to collect data from 34 students of SMK N 7 Semarang who completed the nine items of the Strategy Inventory for Language Learning (SILL) questionnaire and a Background Characteristics survey. Three simultaneous actions in data analysis, according to Miles & Huberman, (1994): data reduction, data display, conclusions, and drawing/verification. The findings showed from the frequently used memory language strategy was to remember new words or phrases by remembering their location on the page on the board. The conclusions of the study's findings indicate that how English is used in practice affects how well it was learned. On the other hand, the findings showed a connection between using memory strategies and effectively learning English the most popular memory language learning strategy was remembering new words or phrases by remembering their location on the page, on the board.

Kata Kunci : Memory Language Learning Strategy, Vocational School, SILL, EFL



INTRODUCTION

English has become the first foreign language for people across the globe due to its widespread use in business, tourism, and technology. Mayalisa et al., (2023) stated that English is an international language that is extensively used throughout the world, especially in Indonesia, to communicate with people from various nations. Susanto et al., (2020) said that the growing effect of modern technology on globalization in education in terms of teaching and learning activities cannot be denied. Teachers are expected to be more productive in the classroom in the twenty-first century rather simply lecturing in front of students. Teachers should also foster a culture of literacy awareness in the classroom so that students can participate in the global improvement of education, especially in high schools. Learning a foreign language is a challenging task that requires various learning strategies. Learners face obstacles such as limited vocabulary and difficulty comprehending the rules of grammar in the target language, especially for students in vocational high school and English class. Kusumawardhani et al., (2017) stated that teachers should make the teaching and learning activity more engaging for students by giving relevant media that attracts their attention before entering the real grammar taught. Indonesian Vocational Schools are responsible for educating students not only in their native language but also in a foreign language and preparing them for professional life especially in SMK N 7 Semarang as their vision is to be an international school in 2030. Being proficient in English provides individuals with improved access to international research, higher-quality education, and higher-paying employment opportunities. Besides that, by using a block system in scheduling, English lessons get a schedule of four hours of lessons in one meeting twice a week. However, the effectiveness of these strategies varies depending on the learner, context, and the language being learned. Therefore, it is crucial to identify effective language-learning strategies that can enhance learners' language proficiency and meet their learning needs.

Studies on language learning strategies have been explored by Oxford, (1996); Griffiths, (2004); Abassi & Dastjerdi,(2019); Adan & Hashim, (2021); Oxford, (2011) stated that language learning strategies have been defined as certain activities, behaviors, steps, or techniques that make language acquisition more independent and efficient in new learning contexts. Then, language learning strategies as well-considered methods for dealing with particular language acquisition problems in a given situation. On the other hand, language learning strategies as thoughts, behaviors, attitudes, or emotions that correspond to a person's cognitive or learning style. These strategies make it easier to learn and understand new skills and knowledge in a particular language. Besides that, language learning strategies also have been used by students of art school with the result of some positive points in motivating students to learn English. Finally, language learning strategies assist language learners in achieving their cognitive goals, while enhancing their language skills. The primary objective of LLS is to equip learners with skills to become self-sufficient, allowing them to direct and manage their learning independently. Therefore, there are six types of language acquisition approaches namely memory strategies, cognitive strategies, compensatory methods, metacognitive strategies, emotional strategies, and social strategies. Teachers might increase students' enthusiasm to attend class by employing a different method or by incorporating the most recent advancement (Machmut et al., 2023).

Discussion on memory learning strategies have been explained by; Oxford, (1990); Khamkhien, (2012); Schmitt & Schmitt, (2014); Najm (2021); who stated that the human mind is capable of storing up to trillion pieces of knowledge, but only a small portion of this information can be utilized unless learners use memory techniques. The four components of memory language learning strategy are creating mental links, using

imagery and sound, assessing thoroughly, and taking action. Besides that, teachers and learners should pay attention to the choice of learning strategies, especially memory strategies, and these factors can influence language achievement and lead to the improvement of language proficiency. Then, memory language strategies are essential for language acquisition because they involve storage, retrieval, and use of information in long-term memory. The effectiveness of these strategies depends on learners' cognitive abilities, motivation, and metacognitive awareness. Finally, teachers can use memory strategies or mnemonic devices to link new material to what has already been stored in their long-term memory. A memory language learning strategy is employed in a classroom setting to assimilate new knowledge. Memory strategies are considered helpful for learning and memorizing new terms. Students use memory strategies in educational settings to retain or store information. Elaboration, mental imagery, mnemonics, organization, and practice are essential components of long-term memory. Sahalluddin et al., (2023) stated that the effectiveness of learning outcomes will be determined by the selection of an appropriate learning model. Educators frequently strive to select an engaging and new learning model so that the learning environment is more alive. However, students' levels of activity and students' expectations of instructors are not always realized. Sometimes students that are active will always be active and will take every opportunity to be engaged in the learning process, but there are kids or students who are always passive and appear uninterested in following the continuous learning process. As a result, as an educator, teachers must be fair and capable of providing equal opportunities to students so that both have the same right to participate in learning.

Teaching English as a Foreign Language in vocational schools has become increasingly important in the globalized world. English is used and taught in Indonesia as a foreign language. Anita & Susanto, (2017) taught us that teachers play an essential role in the implementation of excellent teaching since the success or failure of the teaching and learning process can be seen from the strategies that the teacher uses by picking the proper teaching-learning techniques. The Indonesian government has long acknowledged that English is one of the most crucial languages for communication on a global scale (Songbatumis, 2017). It is important to teach English in vocational schools in a way that applies to the students' upcoming careers. Yosephine et al., (2018) said that too often, we heard students complain about constantly learning and forgetting new phrases. However, few teachers are aware of this teaching challenge, and many have not considered how to modify their strategies to make teaching more effective. Teaching English in a vocational high school needs specialized subject, technique, and teaching strategy knowledge (Muliyah & Aminatun, 2020). Because of this, there are specific differences between teaching English in vocational high school and senior high schools. When teaching English in vocational high school, it should be emphasized that the students' program study is being used.

To overcome the challenges of learning English as a foreign language, the writer has proposed Memory language learning strategy as an effective technique. Previous research has suggested that Memory language learning strategy can be an effective strategy for improving English language proficiency among English as a Foreign Language (EFL) learners. For example, Fahad Alzaidi & Ibrahim Al-Fallay (2018) found that memory language learning strategy significantly improved EFL learners' vocabulary knowledge and reading comprehension. Nation (2013) also highlighted the effectiveness of MLS in improving vocabulary learning in EFL contexts. Wang & Li (2019) state that "memory strategies are essential for EFL learners to learn and use vocabulary, especially for low-level learners". On the other hand, Dolores & Arellano (2017) discovered that some of the

students didn't truly use these methods, and some of them didn't even realize there were methods for learning languages.

Despite the promising results of previous research, there is still a research gap in the effectiveness of memory learning strategies in EFL contexts. Additionally, there is a lack of research on the effectiveness of memory strategies for specific groups of EFL learners, such as those in vocational school. Therefore, this research aims to investigate students' perceptions of memory learning strategies in improving various language skills among EFL learners and to identify possible emergent memory strategies among vocational students. This research is urgent because it can provide evidence-based recommendations for EFL learners and teachers to improve their language-learning outcomes. By developing more effective memory learning strategies, we can enhance EFL learners' language proficiency and prepare them for a globalized world.

RESEARCH METHOD

This study used a qualitative descriptive method. According to Creswell, (2018), qualitative research is a means of exploring and understanding the meaning of individuals or groups ascribed to a social human problem. Four simultaneous actions make up analysis, according to Miles & Huberman, (1994): data reduction, data display, conclusions, and drawing/verification. The final report's organization was variable. The statement stated that using the technique of qualitative methods allowed the writer to accurately describe the facts. The analysis's conclusions are used to describe the investigation, which was carried out utilizing questionnaire-based observations of the group that was being studied.

A qualitative analysis of the Google form results that were received and then assessed by the percentage results presented from the Google form results was the data analysis method used in this study. The purposeful selection of the research topic took into account the requirements for the necessary data. A total of 34 students were enrolled in the second grade of the vocational high school. To investigate language learning strategies, the memory language learning strategy applied by the students' questionnaire about self-inventory language learning (SILL) proposed by Rebeca Oxford (1990) was employed. The questionnaire results were analyzed and described qualitatively. The instruments of the questionnaire consist of nine Likert-type statements as follows:

1. I think of the relationships between what I already know and the new things I learn in English.
2. I use new English words in a sentence so I can remember them.
3. I connect the sound of a new English and the image of the word to help me remember the word.
4. I remember a new word by creating a mental picture of a situation in which the word might be used.
5. I use rhymes to remember new English words.
6. I use flashcards to remember new English words.
7. I physically act out new English words.
8. I often review the English lessons.
9. I remember new words or phrases by remembering their location on the page, on the board.

RESULT AND DISCUSSION

A. Result

We gave our students a set of questions to answer, along with multiple-choice answers, to achieve our goal. We also gathered background data about each individual,

including name, age, the duration of their English studies, and their motivation. We used the Rebecca Oxford-created Strategy Inventory for Language Learning (SILL), which was published in 1990, to compile data on language learning techniques. These assessments were given via Google Docs, which allowed us to quickly obtain replies from individuals who were separated by distance. There were 34 of 36 students who answered the questionnaire.

1. Background Characteristic

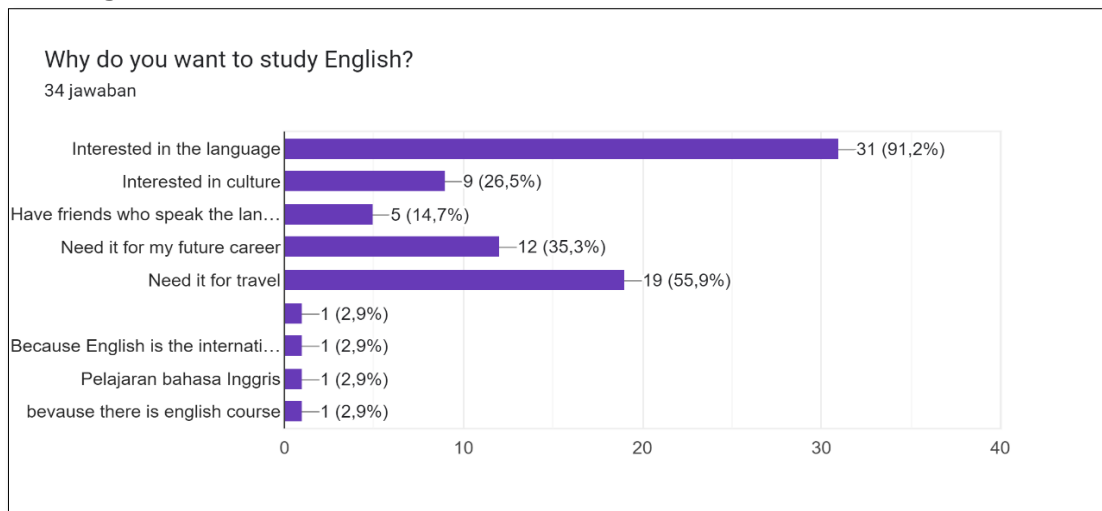


Chart 1. Percentage Of The Reason Why The Students Study English

The participants in this study were students in a vocational school class in Semarang. There were 34 participants who answered the questionnaire, which was divided into 16 males and 18 females. As for their age, all participants were 15 and 16 years old.

Students were asked why they had studied English. Their answers were mostly because they were interested in the language got 91,2 % of the participants. Then, need it for travel 55,9%, need it for their future career 35.3%, interest in culture 26.5%, have friends who speak the language 14.7%, and other reasons such as because English is the international language and because there is an English class.

2. Results Of Data Collection

The following is a thorough review of the SILL questionnaire and the responses from the survey respondents:

a. I think of the relationships between what I already know and the new things I learn in English.

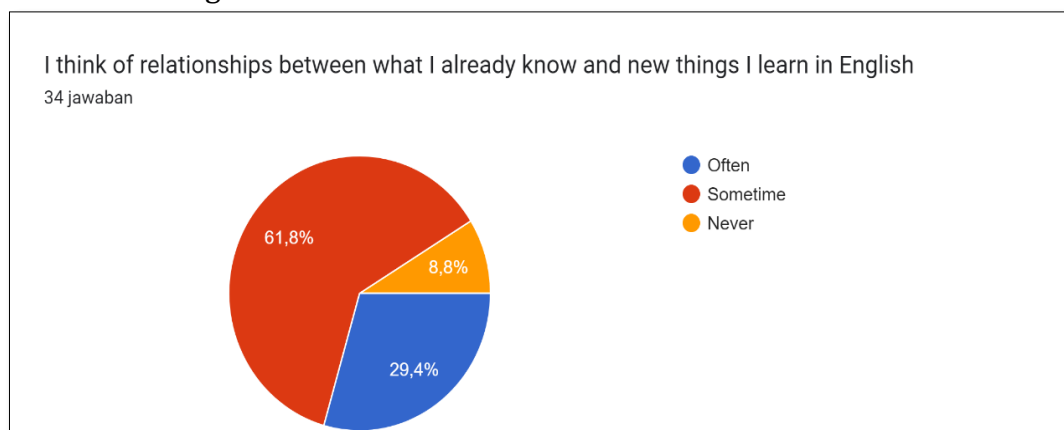


Chart 2. Percentage Of Memory Language Learning Strategy 1

61.8% of the students said that they sometimes consider the connections between what they already know and the new English language skills they are learning, 29.4% often employed this strategy, and only 8.8% never used it.

b. I use new English words in a sentence so I can remember them.

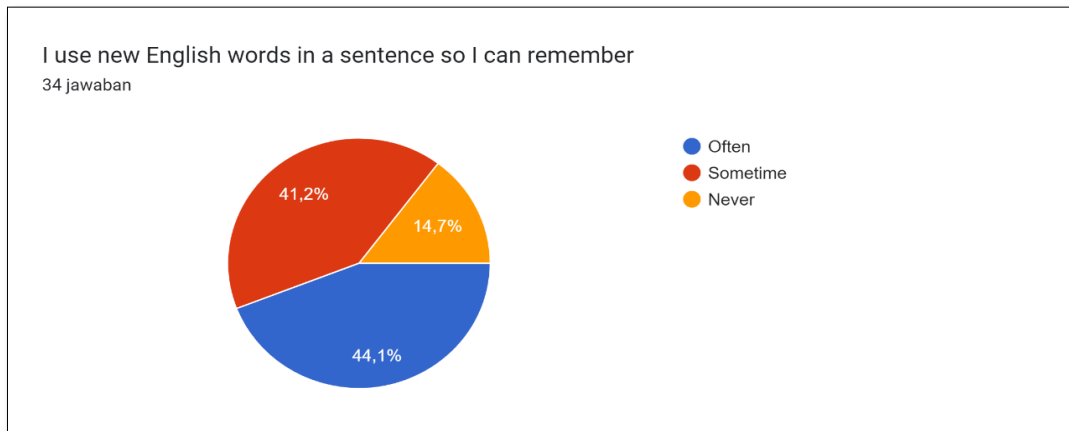


Chart 3. Percentage Of Memory Language Learning Strategy 2

The survey participants believed that this was an effective strategy (41.2% sometimes and 44.1% often). Only 14.7% of people claimed that they never used new English words in sentences to help them remember the language.

c. I connect the sound of a new English and the image of the word to help me remember the word.

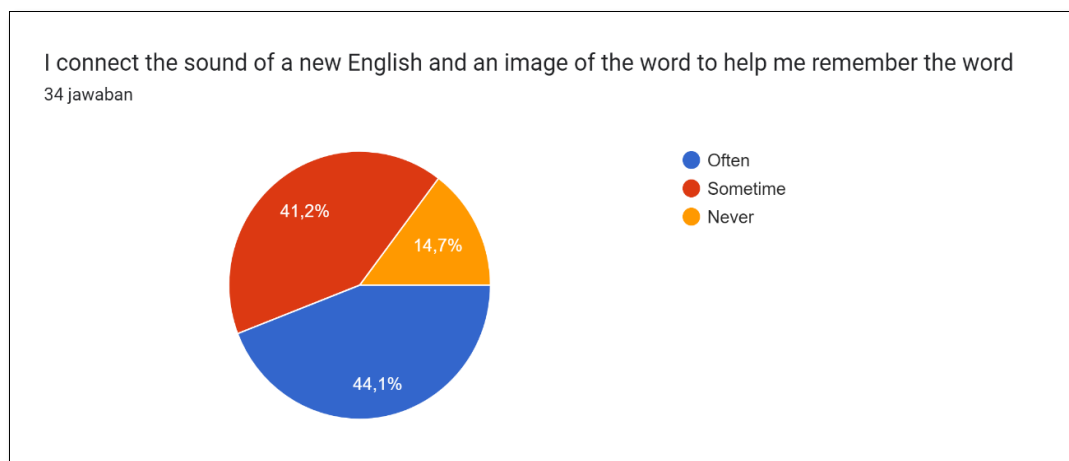


Chart 4. Percentage Of Memory Language Learning Strategy 3

The majority of participants said that they commonly employed this strategy. In fact, the largest proportion (41.2 %) admitted that they sometimes used it, and 44.1% often used this strategy. Only 14.7% said that they had never done so.

d. I remember a new word by creating a mental picture of a situation in which the word might be used.

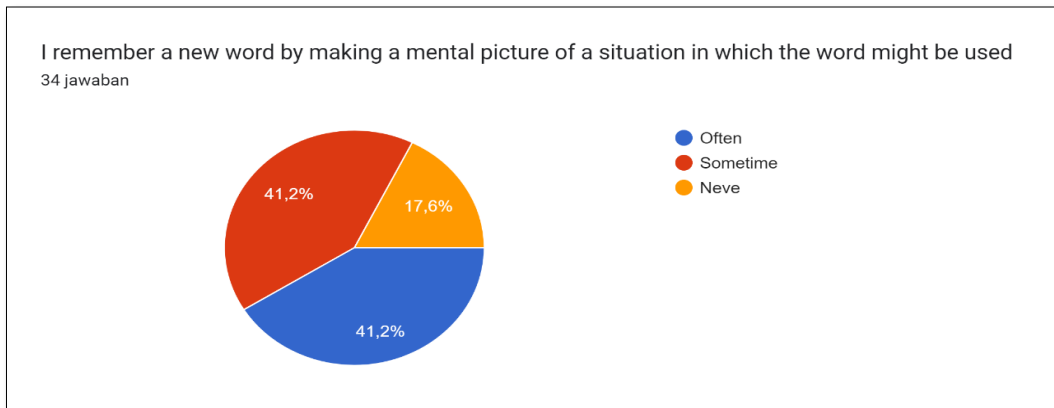


Chart 5. Percentage Of Memory Language Learning Strategy 4

Most of these students sometimes (41.2%) or often (41.2%) rely on visualizing a scenario in which a new English word might be used to help students remember it. Never was the third most popular answer (17.6%).

e. I use rhymes to remember new English words.

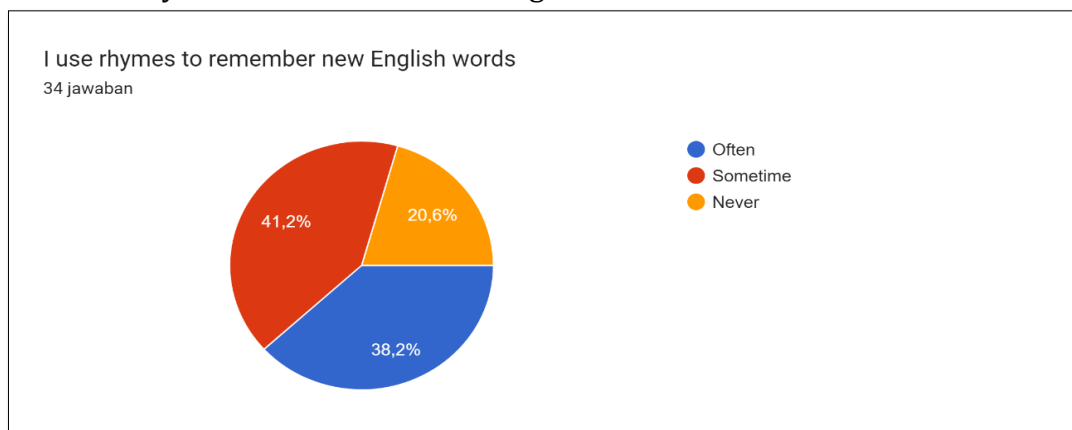


Chart 6. Percentage Of Memory Language Learning Strategy 5

Participants were less interested in using this strategy. While 38.2% often used rhymes to help them remember English words, 41.2% and 20.6% only sometimes and never do so, respectively.

f. I use flashcard to remember new English words.

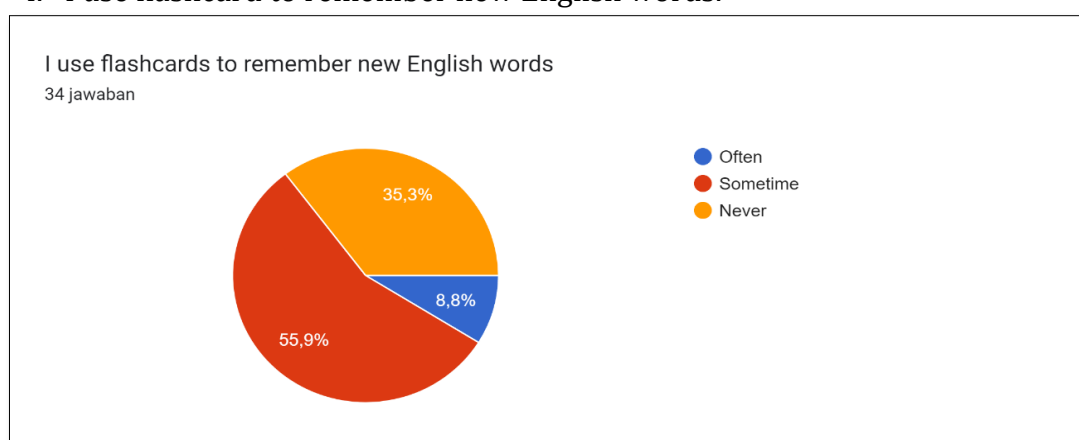


Chart 7. Percentage Of Memory Language Learning Strategy 6

More than 35.3% of the students admitted that they never used flashcards to memorize English words, while 55.9% admitted that they did so sometimes, and only 8.8% answered often.

g. I physically act out new English word.

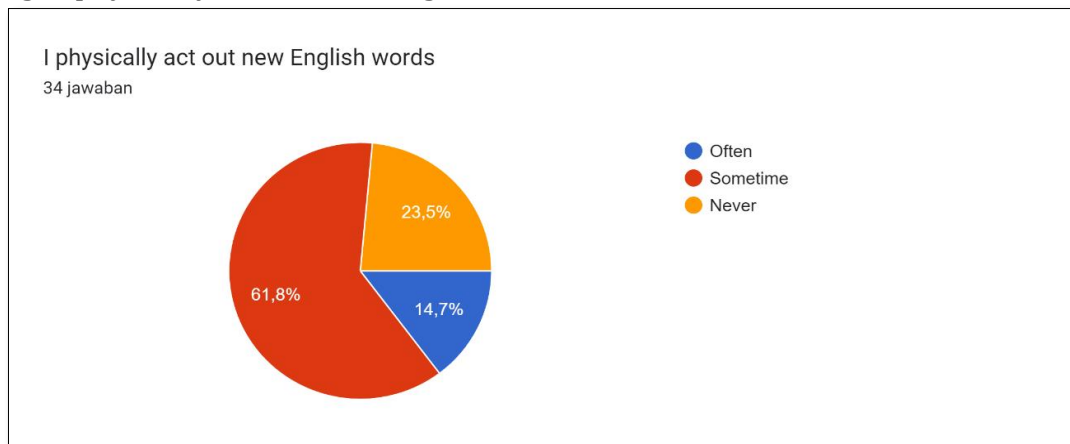


Chart 8. Percentage Of Memory Language Learning Strategy 7

There are 23.5% of students said they never physically acted out new English words, compared to 14.7% of participants who often did so. However, 61.8% claimed to use it sometimes.

h. I often review the English lessons.

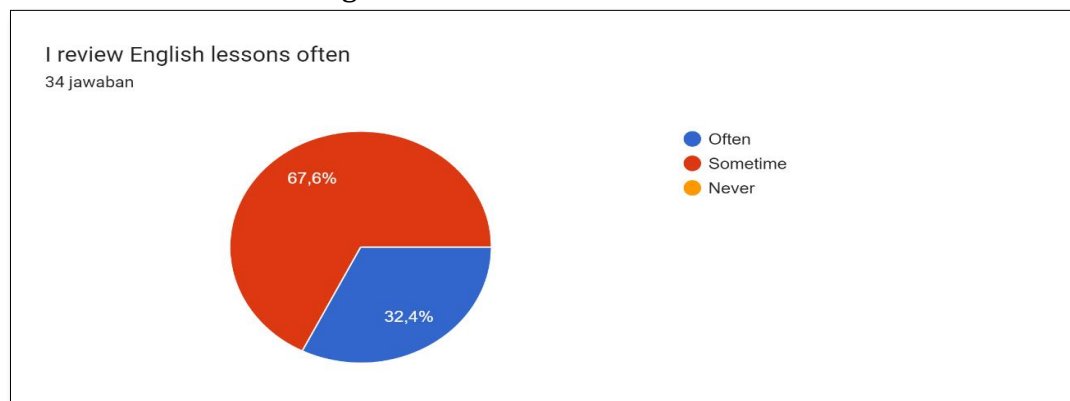


Chart 9. Percentage Of Memory Language Learning Strategy 8

Nearly all the survey participants said they sometimes (67.6%) or often (32.4%) reviewed lessons. None of the participants claimed that they had reviewed their English lessons.

i. I remember new words or phrases by remembering their location on the page, on the board.

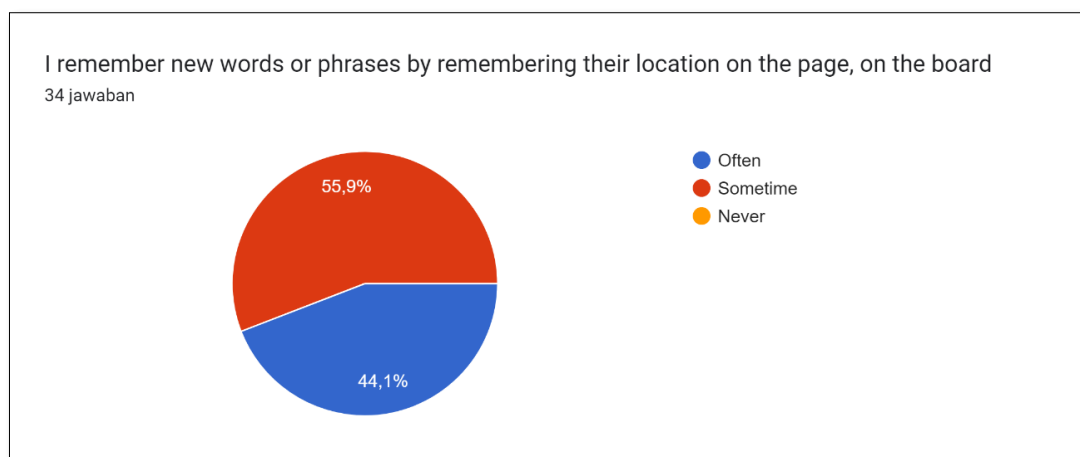


Chart 10. Percentage Of Memory Language Learning Strategy 9

Of the students, 44.1% acknowledged that they often recall new words or phrases by recalling their context by keeping track of where they are on the board's page. In addition, 55.9% of participants claimed that they sometimes used this strategy when learning English.

B. Discussion

Students were asked why they had studied English. Their answers were mostly because they were interested in the language. The reason they chose this answer because English is the most popular international language and nowadays almost everything is in English. Then the next reason they are interested in studying English because they need it for travel, need it for their future career, interest in culture, having friends who speak the language, and other reasons such as because English is the international language and because there is an English class. Almost all of the participants answered that they were interested in the language, and they also chose the second option, which is they needed to travel for their future careers. SMK N 7 Semarang as one of the best vocational schools in Semarang hopes that their students can study abroad to continue their career overseas. So do the students who think the same way. English is one of the most popular international languages. Learning English is important because it will open up knowledge and help students develop the necessary skills for their future careers or if they are going to study or travel abroad. Susanto & Yosephine, (2017) stated that the learning content should highlight the life skills required by students to deal with career and job challenges. Then, in order to make sure that students are excellent at learning both spoken and written communication, additional material, such as providing certain English components to develop their communication skills, is required.

Talking about the discussions of memory learning strategies, there were nine questions that students had to answer. Students who effectively employ the memory language learning strategy of creating mental linkage (question number 1) will see improvements in their second-language proficiency. The use of this strategy was observed in the SILL results, indicating that it was not explicitly addressed in the SILL items. For example, when the teacher taught conditional sentence type 2 about imagery, the students linked it with their imagery story that never happened. For instance, linking information to both students' prior knowledge offers more chances of encountering new information and associating them with already-known materials.

Then, based on question number two, participants' daily use of this learning strategy may be linked to textbook activities. In this case, students used their new vocabulary and grammar skills when speaking and writing. If they were unsure about how to use a word, they asked their friends for advice. If the advice came from someone who knew the language well, they used the word correctly. However, if the advice came from someone who was not a reliable source, they might change or not use the word.

After that, about question number 3. The majority of participants said that they commonly employed this strategy. To help students remember a new word and associate it with something they are already familiar with. This process is known as word association. For example, one student in particular used visualization to connect new words with real-life experiences, while another student associated handwritten words with specific locations in a paper notebook. These strategies helped students better remember and understand the materials they were learning. By associating new words with familiar words that have similar sounds, they are doing just that.

Continue to question number four, six, and nine were about visualization. Not all these visualizations of memory learning strategies were liked by students. It is important to remember that second language exercises that require students to create

graphs, charts, or maps demonstrating the semantic similarity of words or concepts continue to improve their language learning outcomes. Graphic organizers could help them remember new information by connecting it to prior knowledge and showing them how concepts relate to one another and fit into a context. The students in this class liked to make the material into a graph or mental picture to help them remember the whole material. Then, some of the students used the strategy to remember the new words or phrases by remembering their location on the page, on the board. Although they were not remembering all the exact material, they said that they could remember the location of the material in the book. So, it could help them recognize the material easily. On the other hand, using flashcards as a strategy in vocational high school was not effective anymore. English language learners in vocational studies did not often use this strategy, which is one of the least preferred language learning strategies among survey participants. Vocational high school textbooks typically do not include an image glossary or flashcards to encourage the development of visual links, even though they are generally designed to be visually attractive to encourage students to learn.

Then question number 5 was about using rhymes to remember new English words. Students nowadays are enthusiastic music listeners. Students employed this strategy to learn new words from the songs. The brain's ability to recognize audio information and visualize it using patterns is harnessed through rhyme, rhythm, repetition, and melody. Limiting the list of potential choices to those that match the pattern you have established, aid in memory. As second language learners who also enjoyed music, they employed a particular strategy to acquire new vocabulary from songs. This adapted approach may apply to learning new words and structures in any language. However, students reported that they did not frequently use this method in an educational setting. They explained that retaining song lyrics differs from retaining academic materials. However, it only applied to the music and not the content of the class. According to the author, any language might benefit from using this modified version of the strategy to learn words and even grammatical structures.

Besides that, physically acting out new English words is the learning strategy that belongs to the kinesthetic learning style. Magfiroh et al., (2022) said that the role-playing strategy can help students improve their public speaking skills. The role play strategy is a simple and effective method for developing and organizing ideas in public speaking. According to classroom observations, very few students have a kinesthetic learning style, so few take physical action on new English words. While this teaching strategy and others involving drama or physical movement are uncommon in English classrooms, they may be helpful to any student who prefers a kinesthetic style of learning. Suwarti & Susanto, (2009) suggested that speaking English lessons should require more oral practice than written practice. To improve their speaking ability, students should try to communicate in English with their friends more often. And they can use what they have just learned from their teacher's resources.

Finally, question number eight was about reviewing the material. Revision is important since it improves knowledge assimilation, restoration, and recall for language learners. Students like to review their material after class and discuss it with their friends, especially when the exam was the way to come. For this class, language learners will review the 'saved' resources they had previously found interesting and important and liked to preserve for later use, as well as their handwritten notes or on their gadgets.

CONCLUSION AND SUGGESTION

This study was conducted to search for language learning strategies, particularly in the area of memory language learning strategy, based on data presentation and analysis of findings and discussion. The study's findings indicate that how English is used in practice affects how well it is learned. Memory strategies have been shown to help language learners integrate the language and pick up vocabulary, which makes it easier for them to recall it in the later stages of language instruction. The most popular most popular memory language learning strategy is remembering new words or phrases by remembering their location on the page, on the board. on the other hand, to assist English language learners in practicing their language skills in the most effective way possible, it is important to educate students on memory strategies and motivate them to use them. The findings showed a connection between using memory strategies and effectively learning English. In reality, learning seems to be based on the accumulation of knowledge in their mind. Instead, then remembering extensive amounts of information, the focus of learning appears to be on the students themselves through internet searching, exploration, and knowledge sharing with their peers.

Future research in English language teaching (ELT) might investigate English learning practices that are particularly relevant to online or digital platforms in considering the widespread popularity of the Internet among students for communication, socializing, learning, work, and leisure. For example, researching methods for learning new vocabulary, applying memory learning strategies in digital things to master English, and other similar topics may offer insightful information for efficient language acquisition in the digital age.

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