

## **A Comparative Study on English Vocabulary Learning Strategies between Public and Private Colleges of Balochistan:**

By

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### **Abstract:**

*English enjoys the prestige of being the official language of Pakistan. Pakistanis, belonging to multilingual Pakistani society, learn English as a foreign language. Learning a language as a foreign language comes with several obstacles and challenges; out of which vocabulary building in long term memory is regarded as a significant issue. This study aims to conduct a comparative study on different vocabulary learning strategies between the students of public and private colleges of Balochistan. The study administered adapted questionnaire to 240 students who belonged to public and private colleges. SPSS was used to analyse the collected data through descriptive analysis. The findings of the study revealed that the students who belonged to private colleges were more active in learning and retaining new words of English as compared to those of public colleges. On one side, the findings revealed a comparison of vocabulary learning strategies among students of public and private colleges; on the other side, the findings exposed the huge difference between education standards of both sectors. The results signify that enhancement of education standard and introduction of updated vocabulary learning strategies of English language have a direct nexus with students' retention of new words.*

**Keywords:** Vocabulary Learning Strategies, Public, Private, College, Quetta, Balochistan etc.

### **Introduction:**

English, as the universal language, assumes an undeniably significant role in everyday life, with the expanding communication of economy and culture between countries, the significance of English is perceived more throughout the world. Therefore, English is taught almost in every part of the world in order to make the easiest way of communication between people.

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Vocabulary is the rudimentary element essential for understanding a language. Therefore, obtaining wide vocabulary is perhaps the biggest difficulties in learning a second language. At the point when human beings become familiar with a language, they have to master four abilities that are listening, reading speaking and writing. In the meantime, vocabulary knowledge is fundamental to them, since lack of vocabulary knowledge influences all the four language learning abilities. Therefore, one can't comprehend a sentence without realizing what the majority of the words mean, the coherence of single word interface with the other word in order to make a proper sentence.

Similarly, American Heritage Dictionary characterizes vocabulary as "the summation of words utilized by, understood by, or at the charge of a specific individual or group". More than a century back, vocabulary tests became popular in schools. Vocabulary size was observed to be a dependable indicator of mental age, and vocabulary improvement was viewed as "one of the best single measures of knowledge" (Langer, 1967, p. 157).

Moreover, Vocabulary has been perceived as crucial to language use in which deficient vocabulary knowledge of the students lead troubles in second language learning. People would not object to the statement that rich vocabulary will keep students' position advanced in the classroom. They will better understand what is in their textbook and what is teacher teaching them, their learning capacity will be highly proficient. Of course, people with similar vocabulary sizes may differ in their understanding and knowledge, but the size of a person's vocabulary is still often found to be a good predictor of general competence (Duncan et al., 2007; Kaplan & Saccuzzo, 2013).

Vocabulary learning strategies (VLS) Ellis (1985) characterizes vocabulary learning strategies as how the learners accumulate new words second language learning 12 rules and how they accumulate existing ones. Rubin (1987: 20) categorized the vocabulary learning strategies (VLC) in to three main categories based on the knowledge about language learning strategies which are learning strategies, social strategies and communicating strategies. Learning strategies can directly contribute to learning language where as social strategies and communicating strategies can only contribute indirectly for language learning strategies.

As it is a comparative study between public and private colleges of Quetta, so the researcher adapted a questionnaire which contained 28 items in it having useful strategies which the students use for vocabulary learning strategies (VLC).

### **Importance of the Study:**

“Vocabulary is an essential building block of language and as such it makes sense to be able to measure learners’ knowledge of it” (Schmitt, Schmitt & Clapham, 2001, p.55).

Therefore, for acquiring a second language or foreign language effectively, it is the word bank that helps and looks after all the four skills for learning a language. Thus, the significance of vocabulary acquiring is having a great consideration in research and second language teaching method.

Numerous students, mastering the meaning of a word intends to master the definition of the word in dictionaries. Schmitt (2000: 23) says that word meaning comprises of the connection of the word and its referent, and the latter means the person, thing, action and situation. The meaning of a word in dictionaries is one of the essential importance components. However, a word has different meanings in different contexts. The words people use in their daily life popularly mean the denotation of a word meaning from the main meaning in various contexts. It is the connection between the substance, sender, and receiver, circumstance and reason (Carthy 1990: 61). For example, the basic meaning of the word PET in the dictionaries is “a domesticated animal kept for companionship or amusement”. However, when in casual circumstance it is used to address the individual, you like or love.

As English is one of the dominant languages worldwide and is known as lingua franca, it has great importance in the field of education in our country Pakistan as well. After the national language Urdu, English is considered as the official language of Pakistan. English is viewed as the basic part for learning since all the medium of guidance depends on English language. Similarly, Quetta being the capital city of Balochistan is obviously superior to the other urban communities of the region is a whole in education, especially in the field of learning English. Therefore, to meet the challenges of the world and to compete at international level English language is very essential to be learned in this present era. To obtain the main purpose, numerous public and private organizations have been built up and endeavored to accomplish this objective of learning English. Thus, for learning English, the vocabulary building is significant. As vocabulary building is the initial step for learning any foreign or second language. In this manner both the sectors public and private are utilizing various strategies for vocabulary building.

Also, this study will recommend the most ideal, preferable and suitable strategies for the students of Quetta which will help the teachers to encourage their students for gaining awareness of various subcategories of vocabulary learning strategies, in order to upgrade their vocabulary learning successfully. This study will help future researcher as well. This study is a comparative

study between public and private sectors of Quetta. Thus, it will be helpful for the learners in understanding the flaws of the public institutes, As compared to public institutes, private institutes are far better because private institutes run on the basis of profit, which is incentive to the management for more efficient usage of the resources in order to generate maximum utility. Despite knowing the fact that private institutes will charge a huge amount of fees, mostly people choose it in search of quality education. But this is not in the excess of the majority of the people, just because of lack of oversight, shortage of funds and corruption the higher authorities appoint their favorites and their quality education begin to collapse. The institutes need to ensure proper check and balance measures on the managements so that appointment of highly qualified and transparent people is assured, and to make sure the growth of the institutes and flourishing both the sectors so that learners from both public and private institutes can compete at higher level. This study will not only be sufficient for the private sector but it will be helpful for the public institutes, as public institutes are less considered by the learners because they lack quality education.

**Research Objectives:**

The research objectives of the present studies are as follows:

To explore difference in the vocabulary learning strategies employed by the students of public and private colleges of Quetta

To explore useful vocabulary learning strategies employed by the students of public and private colleges of Quetta

**Method:**

The present study adopted quantitative research design. The researcher used Statistical Package for Social Sciences (SPSS) version 24 for Windows as a statistical tool for the current study. The aim behind adopting quantitative research design for this study was collection of factual and exact information through data collection and data analysis. The results obtained from quantitative analysis of questionnaires (data collection instrument) were used to address the research objectives of the present study.

**Instrument:**

**Participants:**

Total participants of the present study were 300 college students. Out of which 150 students belonged to public colleges of Quetta and 150 belonged to private colleges of Quetta. All the participants of the study were female college students belonging to both public and private colleges of Quetta. Cluster random sampling method was used for the selection of participants of the present study. Cluster random sampling, according to Johnson and Christensen (2008), is “a form of sampling in which clusters (a collective type of unit that includes multiple elements, such as schools, churches, classrooms, universities,

households, and city blocks) rather than single unit elements (such as individual students, teachers, counsellors, administrators, and parents) are randomly selected” (p. 235). The researcher randomly selected students from colleges of both sectors as the participants of this study.

**Procedure of Data Collection:**

Data for the present study were collected by the researcher herself. She went to colleges to collect data. Prior to data collection, written permission of the heads from concerned colleges was taken. The researcher distributed questionnaires to the students inside the classrooms. Questionnaire items were read out aloud by the researcher to make every statement clear to the students. The researcher remained present in the classrooms while the students were filling in their responses. The objective behind remaining present in the classrooms was to answer any confusion that arose in the mind of any of the participants. Students were assured of their anonymity and no personal information was asked in the questionnaires. They were asked to participate voluntarily. The researcher completed the process of data collection from 300 participants in a time span of two weeks.

**Findings of the Study:**

SPSS was used to perform descriptive analysis on the collected data in order to answer both research objectives of the present study. In the following paragraphs, results of cognitive and meta cognitive learning strategies from all four categories, which are cognitive, learning strategies, metacognitive learning strategies, communicative learning strategies and social learning strategies are discussed

**Discussion:**

To explore difference in vocabulary learning strategies the researcher examined two main colleges of Quetta, one from private sector and the other from public sector. There was a huge gap between the students of both the colleges the students from private college were much more competent than those of the public college.

According to the findings of the data the students from public college they rarely use English dictionary for knowing the meaning of a word and prefer using a bilingual dictionary which helps them knowing the meaning of the word from English to Urdu as the students from the public colleges are used to get things translated for them in order to understand it well. The students from public college do not contemplate on knowing the pronunciation of the word because they mostly carry a hand dictionary with them and that doesn't help the students in getting the proper pronunciation, because they find it difficult to decode the phonetic signs given in the hand dictionary in order to pronounce the word. The researcher also observed that the students from the public college only go for the meaning of that specific word they do not go before

knowing the synonym and antonym of the words and most of the students from public college don't bother about knowing the usage of the particular word in a sentence what they aim to know is only the meaning of the word. Living in this modern era of technology, most of the college students own personal android phones. If they do not own their personal phones, they can use their parent's phones for using an electronic dictionary, which is far better and easy for getting the meanings and pronunciations. Just by clicking at the audio sign students can easily learn the pronunciations of the words, whereas, the students from public colleges does not use this facility.

The students of the public college are taught in a very accustomed and limited manner, they are not habitual of getting in to the depth of learning. Students very rarely get to know the meanings of the words through grammatical or collocation pattern. According to the study they even don't go for knowing the meaning through parts of speech very few of the public college students go through the prefix root and suffix for guessing the meaning of the word. The findings of the data collected also showed that the students from public colleges use to ask their teacher for the meanings of the words they find difficult to understand and even they repeat the word loudly to remember it. Sometimes when they feel it difficult, they skip the word. Students from public college use the translation method for learning a new vocabulary, they note down the word and write its meaning In Urdu translation so that they could remember it.

One more thing was observed by the researcher, learning process of the students of public College was very much limited, they only try to learn things which were concerned for their examinations, they do not even try to go beyond that specific boundary, and it showed the limited excess of learning form the students of public college.

As far as the students of private colleges are concerned they are way more active in learning vocabulary , because they have been provided with an atmosphere especially at college level and are emphasised and motivated to speak only in English .thus, the findings of the data collected from the private college students are that the students from private college focus more on using an English to English dictionary for knowing the meaning of the word and they don't go for using a bilingual dictionary .students from private college are eager to know not only the meaning but also they go for the synonym and antonym of the word ,it shows that the students go for deep learning because they are curious to learn more and more words for a single word and also they search for the proper usage of those words in different sentences .this way they build up a good amount of vocabulary which is a very useful strategy for learning vocabulary .it's also observed that the students of private college use

electronic dictionaries which guide them in the easiest way and helps them getting the correct pronunciation of the word .

The students of private college are keen learners who are always in search of new learning methods they use electronic dictionaries for looking at the grammatical and collocating patterns of the word and they learn the meaning of the word by guessing the suffixes and prefixes attached to the words, this strategy of guessing the meaning of the word is also one of the fine and easy strategy used by the students.

The students of private college often discuss the words meaning with their classmate and even ask the meaning from the native speakers they create an image of the word in their mind for remembering it, even they break the word into pieces for getting its accurate meaning .the students from private colleges make use of their knowledge by guessing the meaning from the given topic but they never skip any difficult word they come across .the students from private college note down the meanings only , they do not go for translations as they try to learn alternative words out of the word for enhancing their vocabulary .

This research study showed that the students of private college are way more capable of learning new vocabulary, because they try to upgrade their vocabulary by studying beyond the limits of examination. They try to acquire more and more of vocabulary so, that they could not only be successful in the exams but also be enough qualified for competing at higher levels

After going through the process of data collection the researcher observed, that the useful vocabulary learning strategies employed by the students of public college was writing a word, repeatedly which helped them learning a new vocabulary. The students feel much comfort in this process, they feel hesitation in speaking they are more into writing and then learning and they considered useful for them. students of public college were found to make a mental image of a word for remembering it as the advanced form of dictionaries are in the excess of most of the students no matter which sector they are studying in, these latest technologies have made things easy for the students so that they could learn it rapidly. This process was found useful for both the students of public and private college.

One of the useful strategy used by the students of private college was to make use of that specific vocabulary in their daily conversation, as the students of private college are more confident and they have been provided an atmosphere where they can speak to each other and this process is considered helpful form them for learning .the students of private college prefer reading and reading it loud to themselves and they add it in their daily routine by using the vocabulary .the students of private college also make a mental image of a word for learning it, as they use advanced dictionaries like Mnemonic dictionary which is very helpful it carry stories with the word students search

for and that makes it interesting for the learners to grasp a new word by remembering the story or image given for the word



**Independent Samples Test**

		Levene's Test for Equality of Variances		t-test for Equality of Means		
		F	Sig.	t	df	Sig. (2-tailed)
Cognitive strategies	Equal variances assumed	.087	.768	3.189	298	.002
	Equal variances not assumed			3.188	297.147	.002
Metacognitive strategies	Equal variances assumed	7.006	.009	1.393	298	.165
	Equal variances not assumed			1.398	291.830	.163
Communication strategies	Equal variances assumed	1.020	.313	6.248	298	.000
	Equal variances not assumed			6.255	297.909	.000
Social strategies	Equal variances assumed	.016	.899	3.857	298	.000
	Equal variances not assumed			3.864	297.483	.000

**Conclusions:**

In the course of past two decades, many researchers have brought up the significance of vocabulary learning strategy as key to upgrade for learning foreign or second language (Nemati, 2013; Yang, 2007). According to the findings of the study the questions form cognitive learning strategies and metacognitive learning strategies were mostly used by the students of public and private college students, like use of bilingual dictionary, guessing the meaning of the word, asking meaning from teacher, using parts of speech in guessing the meaning, repeating the word, writing for its meaning using a new word into their daily conversation are mostly practiced vocabulary learning strategies. These findings somehow support the findings by Fan (2003); Gu, (2003); Gu and Johnson, (1996); Nassaji, (2003); Khaldieh, (2000). these findings portray that the vocabulary learning strategies applied by the public and private colleges of Quetta were somehow similar in application but differences were in the mean score where the order of the strategies were different.

**Limitations of this Study:**

Limitations of the study were that the researcher being a female chooses only the female students from both public and private colleges.

**Implications:**

The research can help the students to build their vocabulary learning strategies, the outcomes of the study can be purposely applied to help the students in learning English vocabulary in both the sector public and private. In the case of some weak students the encouragement of the teacher would play a vital role. Teachers can assign them different new tasks in order to plunge them in learning English vocabulary. Furthermore, it is suggested that due to limited sources the researcher choose colleges within the capital of Balochistan, further researchers should concentrate to choose students from all over public and private colleges of Pakistan. In order to generate significant results of vocabulary learning strategies, interviews should be included for data collecting process because a questionnaire may not include all the VIS.

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