



VOCABULARY LEARNING STRATEGIES: PERSPECTIVES OF ARABIC LANGUAGE LEARNERS

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Abstract

Ongoing discussions about enhancing students' vocabulary mastery in learning foreign languages have spurred an urgent need for practicing vocabulary learning strategies (VLS) in learning new vocabulary. VLS are widely used as an effective learning tool, offering various advantages in vocabulary mastery. However, the empirical evidence supporting its implementation in the context of learning Arabic as a foreign language (AFL) remains limited. Therefore, this study aims to investigate the level of VLS implementation among Arabic foreign language learners. To gather quantitative data, survey research is employed using a VLS questionnaire developed by Gu (2018) with a 5-point Likert scale. This questionnaire was administered to diploma students majoring in Islamic Studies at Universiti Islam Antarabangsa Tuanku Syed Sirajuddin (UniSIRAJ), Malaysia. The data collected from 144 respondents were analyzed using SPSS. The results of the study indicate that the level of using VLS among the respondents is high, showing that they are active-users of VLS, whereas note-taking strategy is the most preferred, while inferencing strategy is the least used. Pedagogical implications of this study are that the implementation of VLS in the AFL context should be improved to enhance students' Arabic vocabulary mastery.

Keywords: vocabulary learning strategies, Arabic language, foreign language learning, vocabulary mastery, university level

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INTRODUCTION

Mastery of vocabulary is considered one of the most crucial elements in language learning due to its strong influence on successful language performance. As a person's vocabulary mastery increases, he is expected to become more proficient in language skills. Therefore, vocabulary mastery could be enhanced by learning and acquiring vocabulary as much as possible. However, to be able to memorize and apply new vocabulary is very challenging (Ghalebi et al., 2020), especially in learning a second and foreign language.

In recent times, the level of Arabic vocabulary mastery among university students in Malaysia is at a worrying stage (Zulkepli et al., 2023). Previous research has extensively highlighted the inability of university students to acquire a desired amount of vocabulary especially in the context of learning Arabic as a foreign language (AFL) (Abdullah & Bakar, 2022; Maaruf & Samah, 2020; Pisal et al., 2024; Razak et al. 2020; Samah et al., 2023; Zaini et al., 2021). Due to their limited vocabulary, they are unable to communicate in Arabic and use it daily in class (Samah et al., 2020). As the number of unfamiliar vocabularies increases by exposure, it becomes more difficult for them to understand Arabic texts (Samah et al., 2023) and lessen their abilities to write in Arabic (Maskor, 2020). As a result, Arabic language is perceived as less desirable and overly complicated due to students' difficulties in mastering its basic concepts (Negoro et al., 2022; Retnawati et al., 2020).

In Malaysian educational environment, most AFL learners still completely depend on their teachers' guidance in explaining unknown vocabulary (Azrin & Baharudin, 2020). Meanwhile, the instruction hours in Arabic class are limited which is impossible for the teachers to teach and explain every word in class (Sahid et al., 2020). Therefore, the students would need to memorize the Arabic vocabulary by themselves outside class (Aluwi & Ghani, 2023). However, relying on vocabulary memorization alone does not help students to acquire and retain the vocabulary effectively if they are not exposed to appropriate use of learning strategies. Thus, vocabulary learning strategies (VLS) become one of the solutions as it is one of the main factors in improving students' efficiency in learning vocabulary (Gu & Johnson, 1996; Nation, 2001; Sahid et al., 2020; Schmitt, 1997). The number of studies investigating the realm of AFL that employ vocabulary learning strategies (VLS) for non-native speakers in Malaysia remains limited. The limited research on VLS in Malaysia, compared to similar studies on other foreign languages, underscores the necessity of the present study.

Since the learning of vocabulary is commonly associated with VLS, this study seeks to examine the level of VLS usage within the AFL context, as aligned with Sustainable Development Goal number 4 (SDG 4) which aims for quality education. To achieve this, three objectives are established: (i) to determine the VLS that is most preferred among students; (ii) to determine the VLS that is less preferred among students; and (iii) to determine the level of VLS implementation among students, with the hope to have positive impacts towards pedagogy that will improve students' abilities to acquire new vocabulary and provide a way to increase students' vocabulary knowledge in Arabic language.

LITERATURE REVIEW

This section discusses the existing literature in the role of vocabulary mastery in AFL context and vocabulary learning strategies (VLS) implementation among UniSIRAJ diploma students majoring in Islamic studies. It starts by defining VLS and their classification, followed by the implementation of VLS in mastering AFL.

VOCABULARY MASTERY

Vocabulary mastery is very important in teaching and learning any language since it is a fundamental pillar of every language (Pa, 2006). Language cannot exist without vocabulary, as it plays a crucial role in expressing an individual's needs and desires across various fields, particularly in language teaching and learning. Maskor and Baharudin (2020) defined vocabulary as a collection of words that form sentences and, over time, contribute to the development of a language. Acquiring vocabulary enables an individual to understand its meaning, pronounce it accurately, and use it appropriately in various contexts. Conversely, without understanding the meanings of vocabulary, one cannot comprehend the language (Tu'aimah, 1989). Thus, mastering vocabulary is a fundamental step toward achieving greater language proficiency.

A learner's language skills are closely related to the vocabulary size that he acquires through vocabulary learning (Hasnurol et al., 2021; Ngalawi & Zainal, 2020). Nation (2001) emphasized that the size of the learner's vocabulary is an indicator that distinguishes a person's language, in which the lack of acquired vocabulary will cause difficulties to express ideas and understand language structures. As the person's vocabulary size increase, his level of language mastery would be improved.

In learning Arabic as a foreign language, the basic principle is the ability to understand Arabic vocabulary (Nisa et al., 2020). By mastering Arabic vocabulary, students are able to understand, write and speak Arabic well (Jasni et al., 2020). Additionally, learning a second and foreign language is related to a cognitive procedure that links with the broader language study and output strategies (Schmitt, 1997). In this case, the learner should be exposed to the appropriate ways and strategies of learning, acquiring and retaining the new vocabulary especially in the AFL setting.

VOCABULARY LEARNING STRATEGIES (VLS)

Numerous researchers have highlighted challenges associated with vocabulary learning strategies (VLS), such as their definition and classification, the factors influencing VLS preferences, and their implementation in foreign language contexts, especially in Arabic.

Originally, VLS are a part of language learning strategies (LLS) (Nation, 2001; 2022). Existing literature (Cohen, 2014; O'malley et al., 1990; Oxford, 1990; Oxford et al., 2018; Wenden & Rubin, 1987) defined LLS as the steps employed by learners consciously in managing the language information received, to facilitate the process of language acquisition. According to Schmitt (1997), VLS are the intersection between two aspects of study that consists of vocabulary and learning strategies which then lead to the emergence of VLS in the field of a second and foreign language acquisition.

Noting that VLS highlight the learner's active role in the vocabulary learning, Catalan (2003) defined VLS as having the knowledge about the mechanisms, processes, strategies, steps, or actions taken by students to find out the meaning of unknown words, to retain them in long-term memory, to recall them at will, and to use them in oral or written mode. This definition is supported by Kousalová (2023) which highlighted the focus of VLS toward the techniques learners employ to discover the meaning of a new word. On the other hand, VLS relate to the learner's ability to use these strategies to acquire new words and phrases and manage their learning effectively (Ellis, 1994). Thus, VLS are regarded as a tool that facilitates vocabulary learning and vocabulary development among language learners (Norastinia et al., 2015), as well as help them understand vocabulary items (Cameron, 2001). Despite some differences among VLS definitions, the common ground is that VLS are useful aids for learners to make their vocabulary learning more effective.

Various researchers have emphasized the importance of VLS implementation in learning vocabulary due to several reasons. Vocabulary knowledge is one of the main aspects of language learning that can be learnt independently (Sahid et al., 2020). As expected, learners of a second and foreign language should acquire sufficient vocabulary to be able to utilize the language effectively and successfully (Oxford, 2016). Consistent with this insight, VLS encourage learners to take control of their own learning and become autonomous by using different strategies to acquire vocabulary independently (Nation, 2022). Additionally, VLS relate to the lack of learners' dependency on their teachers as it enables learners to improve vocabulary outside the class (Webb & Nation, 2017). As a result, VLS promote the shift from teacher-centered to student-centered learning in which the learners make the appropriate choice regarding what to learn and how to learn and understand a new word.

On the other hand, the choice, use and effectiveness of VLS depend on the context of the learners and several variables including proficiency level, task, text, language modality, background knowledge, learning context, target language, and learner characteristics (Nation, 2013; Schmitt, 1997). Logojan's (2021) study found that

the learners' language proficiency and maturity play an important role in VLS implementation. Generally, shallower strategies are used by younger learners or beginners, and deeper strategies are used by more cognitively matured learners or with higher levels of proficiency (Cohen & Aphek, 1981; Schmitt, 1997). These factors contribute to different choice of VLS among language learners, therefore influence their effectiveness in learning vocabulary.

TAXONOMY OF VOCABULARY LEARNING STRATEGIES

Numerous scholars have attempted to develop different VLS taxonomies. Schmitt (1997) established a VLS taxonomy extended from Oxford's LLS classification (1990) where VLS are categorized into two groups: (i) discovery strategies for uncovering the meanings of new words; and (ii) consolidation strategies which relate to establishing the meanings of words. These two groups are then divided into five subgroups: determination strategies, social strategies, memory strategies, cognitive strategies, and meta-cognitive strategies. This comprehensive taxonomy is considered as a primary theoretical framework of VLS and is widely adopted as an instrument in VLS research.

Another VLS taxonomy was introduced by Gu and Johnson (1996) to discover the VLS employed by advanced Chinese learners in the context of learning English as a Foreign Language (EFL). This taxonomy contains eight main strategies: beliefs about vocabulary learning, metacognitive regulation, guessing, dictionary, note-taking, rehearsal, encoding, and activation. Then, Nation's taxonomy (2001) appeared which includes three types of VLS that consist of planning, sources, and process.

In addition to these taxonomies, Al-Shuwairakh (2001) identified two main strategies of VLS taxonomy in the context of learning Arabic vocabulary. This taxonomy includes: (i) discovery strategies, which refer to the non-lexical strategy for discovering the meaning of a word and using the dictionary; and (ii) integration strategies. Discovery strategies consist of taking notes, memorizing, practicing, meta-cognitive strategies, and expanding lexical knowledge.

Recently, Gu (2018) developed an updated and validated VLS taxonomy based on his previous taxonomy (Gu, 2013). Despite several VLS taxonomies that have been established in this field, they have never been properly validated, or the validation information has never been formally published (Gu, 2018). Therefore, by presenting this validated questionnaire, it is the main aspect that distinguishes Gu's taxonomy (2018) from other previous taxonomies. Additionally, this taxonomy was again validated by Chou (2024), hence becoming the reason for selecting this taxonomy as the instrument in this current study.

VLS IN FOREIGN LANGUAGE CONTEXT

Some studies have been conducted to explore the level of VLS usage among foreign language learners at various levels, including primary, secondary and tertiary levels,

then identifying which VLS are most frequently and least applied by learners. Studies conducted by Noor et al. (2016) and Azrin and Baharudin (2020) found that AFL students at primary and secondary school apply VLS at a medium level as they are more dependent on teachers and friends in learning Arabic language vocabulary, thus reducing their ability to learn vocabulary independently. These results are expected because learners in the school stage rely more on the help of others in the process of learning Arabic vocabulary. On the other hand, prior research (Akahsah et al., 2024; Kousalová, 2023) emphasize the positive impact of peers on the learning process as it promotes learners' active engagement in collaborative learning by relying on their classmates for assistance when needed.

Based on a study conducted by Ismail et al. (2016), AFL academically smart secondary school students utilize VLS at a low degree even though they employ various types of strategies in VLS. Compared to pre-university students, Baharuddin and Ismail (2015) and Kamaruddin and Baharudin (2017) asserted that the students have been using VLS moderately in learning Arabic vocabulary. Similar findings are also discovered by Logojan (2021), indicating a medium usage of VLS among secondary school English learners. This result is due to the lack of training and awareness on the use of VLS as the instructional hours for English are limited, in addition to the culture of learning in the context of the institution or the country (Logojan, 2021).

In terms of VLS implementation at the university level, Arabic language major students show a more positive attitude towards VLS compared to students of non-Arabic major (Shahid et al., 2020). Therefore, it is believed that the learners' background on the foreign language is an influential factor of VLS implementation in learning vocabulary. Pisal et al. (2024) reported that the level of VLS usage among university AFL learners is at a moderate level, hence suggesting that learners should be exposed earlier to various effective uses of VLS to learn more vocabulary. Previous studies conducted by Alhashemi and Mahmoud (2012) and Mustapha and Omar (2014) showed that AFL university students utilize various types of VLS in estimating new word meanings. This finding is aligned with the study of Brosh (2019) and Kousalová (2023) that highlighted the effectiveness of employing various strategies to achieve successful learning outcomes.

According to Anthonysamy et al. (2021), to perform well at the tertiary level, students believe that they need to apply learning strategies which help them to reflect on their learning and find ways to improve their learning performance. In line with that, third- and fourth-year students are expected to utilize more strategies than students at the beginner levels (Chamot & Kupper, 1989). To conclude, AFL learners at tertiary level are expected to apply VLS better than learners at primary and secondary levels. This is because language mastery develops alongside the learners' age and experience (Negoro et al., 2022). This finding is supported by Jaikrishnan and Ismail (2021) which found a difference in the level of VLS usage between experienced and less experienced language learners. Therefore, Malaysian AFL university students learners are considered to have more experienced and matured in learning

Arabic as they are consistently taught and exposed formally to the Arabic language from primary up to secondary levels.

Upon the above comparison, the mixed findings from the earlier research proved that learners differ in their level and use of strategies; therefore, they have different understandings and actions when learning Arabic, both inside and outside the class (Pisal et al., 2024). However, the number of studies on Arabic language acquisition for non-native speakers has so far been relatively low compared to equivalent research about other foreign languages (Bakker, 2020). For the current study, it will focus on the Arabic language acquisition in terms of the implementation of VLS among AFL learners at the university level.

METHODOLOGY

This study employed quantitative research to gather data through a questionnaire with numerical items of a 5-point Likert scale. The scale ranges from 1, which denotes strong disagreement, to 5, which denotes strong agreement. The respondents are asked to evaluate how they agree with the statements in the questionnaire. The data collected from the respondents were then analyzed using SPSS.

POPULATION AND SAMPLING

The population of this study are learners of an Arabic language course (subject code DTU 2022), majoring in Islamic studies at Universiti Islam Antarabangsa Tuanku Syed Sirajuddin (UniSIRAJ), Malaysia. DTU 2022 is a compulsory subject for diploma students under the Centre for Languages and General Studies at UniSIRAJ. Given the importance of the Arabic language as an important foreign language in Malaysia, the Arabic language subject has been included in the curriculum in many Malaysian universities both public and private universities, in which the students need to pass this subject before graduation (Abdullahi et al., 2018). Diploma students are selected to observe the continuity of Arabic language learning from the school level to the university level, particularly in terms of the skills involved in using VLS to acquire Arabic vocabulary.

As recommended by Krejcie and Morgan (1970), an appropriate sample size is 144 respondents from the total population of 220 students taking the course. The sample was chosen using a convenient sampling technique and the questionnaire was distributed physically in class. Ebert et al. (2018) noted that distributing physical questionnaires will lead to a high response rate from the respondents.

SURVEY INSTRUMENT

The instrument utilized in this study is adapted from a VLS questionnaire developed by Gu (2018). This questionnaire is chosen based on its established validity and reliability of the items conducted by Gu (2018) and Chou (2024). Therefore, using the

validated questionnaire can save time and resources and allows for comparison with data derived from other studies (Aithal & Aithal, 2020). The questionnaire employed in this research contained 32 items divided into seven categories of VLS: metacognitive strategies, inferencing, using dictionary, note-taking, rehearsal, encoding, and activation, as presented in Table 1.

Table 1. Constructs and dimensions

Constructs and Dimensions	No. of items
Metacognitive strategies	
Selective attention	2
Self-initiation	3
Inferencing	
Guessing strategies	3
Using dictionary	
Dictionary strategies	4
Taking notes	
Choosing which word to put into notebook	3
Deciding what information goes into notes	2
Rehearsal	
Use of word lists	2
Oral repetition	2
Visual repetition	2
Encoding	
Visual encoding	2
Auditory encoding	1
Use of word-structure	1
Contextual encoding	2
Activation	
Activation	3
Total items	32

The Cronbach's Alpha coefficient value is 0.876 for all items, which indicates a high level of reliability (Hair et al., 2019). The questionnaire was translated into Malay language using a back translation technique (Brislin, 1970). Then, the mean score interpretation by Oxford (1990) was employed to determine the degree of the respondents' implementation towards VLS whether it is high, moderate, or low, as shown in Table 2.

Table 2. Oxford's mean score interpretation

Level	Min score
High	3.5 – 5.0
Moderate	2.5 – 3.4
Low	1.0 – 2.4

RESULT AND DISCUSSION

This section consists of descriptive analysis using SPSS to analyze the respondents' backgrounds and to answer the objectives of this study.

DESCRIPTIVE ANALYSIS

- i) **Gender:** The respondents' gender is tabulated in Table 3.

Table 3. Respondents' gender

Gender	Frequency	Percentage (%)
Male	64	44
Female	80	56
Total	144	100

- ii) **Period of learning the Arabic language:** The period of learning Arabic language among the respondents is presented in Table 4.

Table 4. Respondents' period of learning Arabic language

Years	Frequency	Percentage (%)
< 2 years	0	0
3-5 years	85	59
6-9 years	26	18
> 10 years	33	23
Total	144	100

Based on the descriptive analysis in Table 3, most of the respondents are female. This is consistent with the situation in most higher education institutions in Malaysia as the number of females registered in these institutions is more than males (Kementerian Pengajian Tinggi, 2022). In addition, as presented in Table 4, most of them have experience learning the Arabic language at least for three to five years at primary level, indicating that most of the students have learnt the Arabic language formally based on the Arabic curriculum provided by the Malaysian Ministry of Education through the j-QAF program, which was implemented starting 2005 (KPM, 2010). Abdullah and Bakar's (2022) research indicate that three to five years is the minimum period that students need to develop vocabulary.

ANALYSIS OF THE IMPLEMENTATION OF VLS

Table 5 below shows the mean and standard deviation figures, indicating the level of VLS used among respondents arranged in descending order.

Table 5. Level of VLS used among respondents

No	Components	Mean	Standard deviation	Degree of use
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1	Note-taking	3.94	0.66	High
2	Metacognitive strategy	3.92	0.56	High
3	Using dictionary	3.72	0.64	High
4	Encoding	3.70	0.68	High
5	Rehearsal	3.61	0.68	High
6	Activation	3.54	0.77	High
7	Inferencing	3.50	0.55	High
	Overall VLS use	3.72	0.51	High

Table 5 presents a statistical overview of various vocabulary learning strategies (VLS) employed by respondents. The table suggests that they utilize a diverse range of VLS to learn vocabulary. Notably, note-taking and metacognitive strategies appear to be the most preferred strategies with the highest mean score of 3.94 and 3.92 respectively, while inferencing is the least frequently used strategy with its mean score of 3.50, indicating learners may not often deduce word meanings from context. This suggests that individual learners may have preferences for certain strategies over others, and that some learners may be more consistent in their use of VLS than others.

The following section provides a discussion of the results to highlight the objectives of the study.

1. TO DETERMINE THE MOST PREFERRED VLS AMONG STUDENTS:

The result indicates that note-taking is the most preferred VLS with the highest mean of 3.94, showing that the learners write down useful notes in their notebooks whenever they find new words. Based on cultural and educational practices in Malaysia, Malaysian students are typically influenced by traditional teaching methods and teacher-led instruction, where note-taking is a commonly-practiced habit. Since most of the respondents of this study begin learning Arabic in primary school, they find note-taking is familiar and beneficial even though they are currently at the university level. Similarly, Akahsah et al. (2024) research points out that students frequently apply strategies that they have been using since their secondary level.

The result of this study aligns with Logojan's (2021) and Pisal's (2022) findings which discover that note-taking strategies is one of the preferred strategies by foreign language learners. By taking notes in class, they are able to organize information about new words, making it is easier to review in the near future or prepare for a quiz or an exam (Logojan, 2021). In AFL setting, students prefer note-taking to record Arabic vocabularies, phrases, and their meanings, so it will be much easier to retain and review new vocabulary. In line with that, educators should assist students on efficient note-taking techniques, such as creating Arabic word banks, using visual aids, or organizing notes by thematic categories, thereby improving their students' vocabulary retention.

On the other hand, this current finding contradicts with previous studies by Rahmani (2023) which found that note-taking strategies are less preferable by Afghan

EFL undergraduate learners because they do not make notes for commonly used words, useful expression or phrase, and words related to their personal interest. Given that the time for language teaching and learning is very limited in the Afghan setting, therefore, the learners might not make notes for the newly learned words (Rahmani, 2023).

2. TO DETERMINE THE LESS PREFERRED VLS AMONG STUDENTS:

Based on Table 5, it shows that inferencing or guessing strategies obtained the lowest mean score of 3.50. Even though the usage level of inferencing strategies is still high, the result indicates that it is the least practiced by the learners. Alhashemi and Mahmoud (2012) and Logojan (2021) also emphasized that inferencing strategies are less used among the students. This result might be related to the difficulty that learners might face in inferencing meaning from the context.

In contrast, this result differs from previous studies (Al-Shuwairakh, 2001; Kousalová, 2023; Rahmani, 2023) which discovered that inferencing strategies are more commonly employed by learners to comprehend new words. Al-Shuwairakh (2001) pointed out that this result is influenced by the language environment as his research was conducted among Arabic native speakers in an Arabic language environment. Compared to the current research, it is conducted among UniSIRAJ learners who are non-Arabic speakers living in non-native environments, thus leading to very low usage of the inferencing strategy. AFL learners in Malaysia have limited opportunities to be immersed in natural Arabic environments, such as interacting with native speakers or experiencing authentic texts, which makes inferencing strategies less needed.

On the other hand, this finding is unaligned with the study of Yaacob et al. (2019) which agreed that inferencing strategies are more commonly used by learners as they are able to guess from pictures, illustrations and diagrams that come with the text as well as make use of the morphology and grammatical structure of words to infer the meaning of the word. The reason for this may be due to some factors such as the learners' ability to understand other words in the context and their grammatical knowledge, which makes them able to guess the meaning better. However, the grammatical and lexical knowledge required for effective inferencing might not be fully developed among AFL learners in Malaysia, particularly those at beginner or intermediate levels. This aligns with the lower preference towards inferencing strategies among respondents in this study.

3. TO DETERMINE THE LEVEL OF VLS IMPLEMENTATION AMONG STUDENTS:

The results concluded that respondents employ a high level of VLS. However, this matter contradicts some previous studies such as Azreen and Baharudin (2020), Ismail et al. (2016), Kamaruddin and Baharudin (2017), Noor et al. (2016), and Pisal et al. (2024) which indicated a moderate and low degree in employing VLS among AFL students. This high usage of VLS among the respondents is related to the experience of learning Arabic language. The result shows that they learn Arabic as a foreign

language for at least three to five years prior, as noted from Table 4. Therefore, it is an important factor enabling them to make decisions regarding the appropriate VLS to be employed in learning Arabic vocabulary. This result is coherent with Baharudin (2014) and Jaikrishnan and Ismail (2021) that the level of VLS implementation is affected by the duration of learning the Arabic language, as students who study the Arabic language for a long period tend to use more strategies than students who learn Arabic within a short period. Therefore, experience in learning Arabic language has a strong influence on VLS application among students.

On the other hand, Arabic language learners in UniSIRAJ can be classified as good language learners according to Rubin's classification (1975), as they can use certain types of learning strategies to become successful learners. Another study of Oxford et al. (1993) and Chamot et al. (1996) has confirmed that good language learners use more and better language learning strategies than those who are weak learners. Furthermore, Griffiths (2018) has listed the characteristics of good language learners as being motivated, independent, goal-oriented, and having positive beliefs about what they are trying to learn. Therefore, it can be said that the use of learning strategies by good language learners will help them gain control over the skills required during the learning process. It can be concluded that learners of the Arabic language in UniSIRAJ are characterized by good language learners as they use a variety of VLS to learn Arabic words.

Schmitt (1997) concluded that the high use of VLS is a result of learners' awareness of the importance of vocabulary, they realize that learning vocabulary is important, so they use more strategies to learn vocabulary compared to other linguistic aspects. In addition, Dickinson (1994) emphasized awareness differentiates between good learners and vice versa. In the context of the current respondents who are AFL learners, they are aware of the need to learn a lot of Arabic vocabulary, hence, the degree of their use in VLS is high.

Aside from students' awareness, motivation is another factor that causes the high use of VLS among Arabic language learners. This finding aligns with Oxford (1989) and Dornyei and Ushioda (2021) that confirmed the language learners with high motivation will use more strategies than students with low motivation. This is because high motivation urges them to make certain choices, engage in work, and continue working (Dornyei & Ushioda, 2021). Based on the current study, motivation is assumed to be one of the factors that prompt the Arabic language learners in UniSIRAJ to better employ vocabulary learning strategies.

RESEARCH IMPLICATIONS

The findings of this study hold significance for both theoretical and practical aspects. Theoretically, the results of this study could provide useful insights concerning the benefit of VLS in learning Arabic vocabulary, especially for university students, and thus improving their performance in learning and acquiring vocabulary. Moreover, the study's outcomes provide practical implications especially for teachers as well as

curriculum designers and material developers in integrating varied VLS into Arabic language subjects or courses in all levels. Language learners are expected to be trained to implement VLS from the beginning of learning a foreign language to ensure they can better grasp the language they are learning.

Considering the need for further investigation, this study recommends conducting more research on VLS in learning Arabic vocabulary, particularly its correlation with other variables such as gender, cultural background, educational background, language proficiency, learning styles and motivation. Further exploration should also be done on VLS usage in other tertiary institutions in Malaysia in AFL context. Additionally, it is worth noting that the absence of qualitative approach in data collection represents a limitation in this study. Therefore, it is suggested that future research should use other data collection methods such as interviews, diary or journal writing and classroom observations to enhance the richness of the data and obtain a more comprehensive picture of students' actual practices in VLS.

CONCLUSION

The outcomes of this study reveal the high usage of VLS among Arabic language learners in UniSIRAJ. Earlier research indicates that the aspects of awareness and motivation might influence the higher implementation of VLS in learning Arabic vocabulary. The most preferred VLS in this study is note-taking while inferencing strategy is considered as the least practiced among the selected population. In conclusion, learners not only need to know about these VLS, but they are required to have skills in utilizing them.

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ETHICS STATEMENT: This study was conducted in accordance with ethical principles and academic integrity. All procedures were carried out responsibly, with informed consent obtained from participants and strict confidentiality maintained.

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