A SURVEY OF ENGLISH STUDENTS VOCABULARY LEARNING STRATEGIES (VLS)

Iwan Kurniawan[1*], Nunun Indrasari, Satria Adi Pradana

Raden Intan State Islamic University
[1*]iwankurniawan@radenintan.ac.id

Abstract. *The objectives of this research are to know the kinds of vocabulary learning strategies, the most and the least vocabulary learning strategies, and strategy use based on gender differences. The methodology employed was survey with a research instrument questionnaire and interview. Results show Vocabulary Learning Strategies are Metacognitive, cognitive, memorization/repetition, and activation. Respondents tended to apply activation strategy as the highest, and it is indicated with a mean score (3.12). On the other side, the least utilized strategy was the memories/repetition strategy, and it is shown with the lowest mean score (1.87). Female students had a tendency to apply activation strategy, and it is indicated with the highest mean score (3.04) and least used memories/repetition strategies, and it is shown by mean score (1.84). In addition, the highest strategy employed by male students was also an activation strategy with mean score (3.0), and the lowest strategy was memories/repetition with the lowest score (1.51).*

Keywords: *gender differences; survey; vocabulary learning strategies*

A. BACKGROUND

Vocabulary has a central position in language learning. Liang (2010:152) states that word or vocabulary is believed as the basis in language learning and will influence someone`s language proficiency. A large number of vocabularies will strengthen a learner's language skills. Besides, according to Saengpakdeejit (20014:1101), vocabulary is extremely crucial because it will form larger units such as phrases, clauses, sentences, and paragraphs. These units later will deliver meanings to be understood by the listeners or readers.

Some quotations that reflect the importance of vocabulary are:" without grammar, a little can be conveyed, without vocabulary, nothing can be conveyed." No matter how well the students learn the grammar, no matter how successfully the sound of L2 mastered, without words to express meanings, communication in L2 cannot happen in a good way. " without vocabulary,

skills of language learning including, speaking, listening, reading and writing cannot be successfully achieved. So we cannot deny that vocabulary learning plays a very important role in L2 communication, and an extensive vocabulary will improve students` proficiency.

Even though vocabulary is very crucial, its teaching had been neglected for a long time. In some countries such as Iran, China, English Language teaching was emphasized on language skills, not vocabulary. As a result, many students have poor word lists, leading to a deficiency of language proficiency (Hamzah at.al, 2009).

The years of 80s were viewed as the resurrection of vocabulary teaching and research because it starts to attract priority in language programs. One reason why it happens because communicative language teaching has dominated language teaching around the globe.   This method focuses a lot on communication competencies that need more words in written and oral activities. In Thailand, generally, students have a problem in using English passively and actively due to lack of vocabulary and this problem less occur for anybody who has attended an international program. In Indonesia, some researches were done to know the students` vocabulary size. Nurweni and Read (1999) found that an average of 1,200 words possessed by new Indonesia students in Lampung University and Kurniawan (2016) investigated Raden Intan Islamic State University English department and concluded that the majority had only 1400 words. These numbers are not enough to communicate generally in English. The ideal number is around 2000 words.

To solve this barrier, some efforts can be done, and one of them is the implementation of the Vocabulary Learning Strategy (VLS).VLS can contribute many benefits. For instance, to handle many difficult words, to ease and to increase vocabulary, to form language learners to be self-sufficient in enlarging and meeting their own vocabulary size, etc. (Alharthi, 2014). Also, Tacak (2008) even suggests VLS should be combined in teaching vocabulary and push the students to implement certain VLSs.

Furthermore, VLS not only lures many experts to apply it in teaching but also motivates them to carry out some researches. The researches were implemented to know types of VLS employed by language learners or the effectiveness of VLS toward students` vocabulary extension. Some former studies regarding Vocabulary Language Learning Strategies have been done. In Malaysia, Noor and Amir (2009) surveyed 35 master students at University

Kebangsaan Malaysia (UKM). By distributing the questionnaire made by Gu and Johnson (1996). They could show that memorization, dictionary strategies, and Linguistics clues as to the most general strategies, whereas note-taking was the least strategies applied. Catalan (2003) in Martinnen (2008:40) carried out a study on gender differences in types of VLS and notice that female students tend to use more varied strategies than males. Female students like more on the social system for communication, whereas male students focus on translation strategy.

The facts above have triggered the researcher to conduct almost the same research but with different respondents and location. The research will be done at Raden Intan state Islamic university or UIN Lampung. There are several reasons why the researcher chooses this university. First, general researches about vocabulary learning strategies were done at Public universities, and this time researcher is interested in exploring Islamic university students` preference in vocabulary learning strategy. Second, this university has an English Education department. By doing this research, the researcher hopes the result of this study can be inputs for English lecturers in teaching vocabulary by matching the lesson with strategies preferred by students so that the lecturers can build the students vocabularies.

Research Questions

1) What are vocabularies Learning strategies employed by English Department students of Raden Intan State Islamic university batch 2018?
2) What are the most frequent and the least vocabularies learning strategies employed by English Department students of Raden Intan State Islamic university batch 2018?
3) What are the most and the least strategies used by English Department students of Raden Intan State Islamic university batch 2018 based on gender differences?

Significance of Research

1. Theoretically

This investigation result hopefully will enrich more on previous theories about the vocabulary learning strategy varieties (VLS) and theories about the gender differences in vocabulary learning strategies.

2. Practically

For Lecturers

This research finding hopefully can give additional information for UIN Raden Intan English lecturers about their students' vocabulary learning strategies, so lecturers can choose teaching techniques and materials which are suitable for their students' vocabulary learning strategies.

For university

This study result hopefully can give information for university leader about their students' vocabulary learning strategies, so he or she can complete their university with appropriate facilities such as language lab, games, etc.

B. RESEARCH DESIGN

This research will use the survey technique. According to Ary at al. (2010:371-379), survey research is an attempt to ask questions about people's beliefs, opinions, characteristics, and behaviour. Due to this, asks about students` beliefs or opinions about the vocabulary learning strategies that they use. Therefore, this research is appropriate to use the survey technique. There are two kinds of surveys if it is seen from its scope. They are census and sample surveys. Census survey will cover the entire population as the sample of research, whereas a survey that will cover only a portion of the population is called a sample survey. Survey also can be classified into two types if they are viewed from the time of data collection: longitudinal and cross-sectional surveys. Longitudinal gathers information at different points in time to see the changes throughout times. Cross-sectional surveys study the population at a single point of time. Survey does not use complex statistical analysis. Data analysis can be in the forms of frequency and percentage. According to Fraenken and Wallen (1993:346-348) there are four basic ways to collect data in Survey: giving the instrument directly, letter, telephone, and interviewing personally. They also mentioned the ubiquitous instruments in this research are questionnaires and interviews. The former is designed by the researcher and then filled in by the respondent, whereas the latter is designed and asked by the researcher. The respondents later answer the oral questions.

1. Population and Sample.

Population

Population that will be used in this study is from the English Education Department of Raden Intan State Islamic University, which consists of 4 classes and has students` number around 103. The numbers of female students were 84, and female students were 19. The population is from 4th-semester students.

Sample

Because the researcher wants to know the entire vocabulary learning strategies that students employ, so in this investigation, the researcher will take all population as a sample. In other words, the researcher uses the census technique.

2. Research Instrument

The instrument that will be used in this research is the questionnaire proposed by Gu & Johnson in 1996. The questionnaire will consist of 31 statements that are grouped into four categories: Metacognitive Strategies, Cognitive strategies, Memories/repetition strategies, and Activation strategies. The sample will respond a 5-point Likert scale from *Always use it, usually use it, sometimes use it, seldom use it, and never use it.* To ease the process of data analysis, so every statement of 5 point Likert Scale were given scores. Always use it = 4, usually use it = 3, sometimes use it = 2, seldom use it = 1 and never use it = 0. Statements no.1 to 6 will explore metacognitive strategy, statements 7 to 25 will seek information about cognitive strategy, statements 26 to 29 will collect data of memory/repetition strategy. Statements 30 to 31 will ask for information about activation strategy.

3. Validity and Reliability of the Instrument.

 A good instrument will measure what is supposed to measure. This research will measure the vocabulary learning strategies employed by students of Raden Intan State Islamic university. The instrument that will be used is the creation of Gu and Johnson and then adapted by Noor and Amir (2009) at University Kebangsaan Malaysia. This adapted version will then be used by the researcher to collect data, and also it will experience a little adaptation and match with

Indonesian students` condition. Before using it to collect data, the researcher will do a try-out to know its validity and reliability.

To know this instrument's reliability, SPSS version 16.0 windows was employed by Cronbach Alpha's (α). Criteria of Reliability is as follows:

If the score of alpha (α) :

0,8 - 1,0 = Reliability is good

0,6 - 0,799 = Reliability is acceptable

Less than 0,6 = Reliability is not good

Calculation of reliability

Reliability Statistics

Cronbach's Alpha	N of Items
0.745	32

From the reliability test, it was gotten coefisien Cronbach Alpha α = 0, 745.

The conclusion is the reliability of this instrument is very high.

4. Data Analysis

The collected data will be analysed by employing descriptive statistic to know frequency, percentage, and mean (X). The formula to find the mean is as follows:

$$\text{Mean} = \frac{\text{Respondent Respond X score of Likert Scale Statements}}{\text{Number of Respondent}}$$

C. RESEARCH RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

1. Overall Vocabulary Learning Strategies Employed By Students

The data findings show from the four categories of Vocabulary LearningStrategies, students or respondents tended to apply activation strategy, and it is indicated with the highest mean score (3.12). On the other side, the least utilized strategy used was memories/repetition, with the lowest score (1.8). The data are provided in the table below:

Table 1. Vocaulary Learning Strategies of UIN Lampung English Department

	Class A	Class B	Class C	Class D	Mean (X)
Metacognitive	3.05	2.69	2.87	2.87	**2.87**
Cognitive	2.50	2.30	2.10	2.71	**2.40**
Memories/Repetition	1.68	1.91	1.67	2.22	**1.87**
Activation	3.02	3.12	3.04	3.31	**3.12**

2. Vocabulary Learning Strategy Of Female And Male Students

The data findings indicate from the four categories of Vocabulary Learning Strategies, female students tended to apply activation strategy, and it is indicated with the highest mean score (3.04) and less used memories/repetition strategies, and it is shown by mean score (1.84).   On the other side, the highest strategy used by male students was also an activation strategy with a mean score (3.0), and the lowest strategy was memories/repetition with the lowest score (1.51). The data are provided in the table below:

Table 2. Vocabulary learning Strategy of different gender

	Female	Male	Mean (X)
Metacognitive	2.86	2.72	**2.81**
Cognitive	2.39	2.15	**2.27**
Memories/Repetition	1.84	1.51	**1.68**
Activation	3.04	3.0	**3.03**

3. Discussion

The purposes of this study were to know kinds of Vocabulary Learning Strategies which employed by English Education Department students of State Islamic University of Raden Intan Lampung; the highest and the least strategy used by them, and also the differences of Vocabulary Learning strategies use based on gender.

The Findings of the research were presented as follows. Firstly, all types of Vocabulary Learning Strategies which were proposed by Gu and Johnson (1996) were employed by all State Islamic University of Raden Intan English department such as, Meta-cognitive, Cognitive, repetition, and activation. Secondly, the most frequent strategy was activation strategy, and the least frequently strategy was memories/repetition. Finally, there is no difference between gender preferences in using Vocabulary Learning Strategy. Both genders used activation as the highest and memories as the lowest.

Related to vocabulary learning strategies, there are very few studies discussing it and gender preference. Research finding to Chinese high school students done by Na (61; 2016) found that there were differences between female and male-female students which triggered by Chinese cultural background. Females are more cautious to plan study and are more patient in repeat word pronunciations. Therefore, Girl students are more familiar with meta-cognitive and cognitive strategies in learning vocabularies. Some activities are popular among them such as word repetition, word note-taking, and dictionary use. Hence, it was revealed that male students prefer using social strategies more than female ones; they are more flexible to express opinions and are not scared to make a mistake. Na`s findings are not similar with this research finding

where both male and female students prefer adopting activation as the most favourite and memories/repetition as the least used.

An almost identical investigation was also done by Catalan (2003:56). According to her, females used more vocabulary learning strategies than males, and female students prefer social strategies to be competent in communication; meanwhile male students employ more strategies on translation. In addition, Catalan (2003) identified those female students utilized wider formal, rehearsal, and planning strategies. On the other side, male students used more related image vocabulary strategies. Catalan`s findings also differ widely from the finding of this research in which both male and female students would instead employ activation as the most popular and memories/repetition as the least utilized.

In Indonesia, an effort to see the differences between male and female students of the English Education Department of IAIN Surakarta in using Vocabulary learning strategies was done by Susanti (2018) from Muhammadiyah University of Surakarta. The subject of the research was 22 females and 13 males and they were taken from fourth-semester students. She found that there is gender a distinction in using vocabulary learning strategies that male students like more social strategy, and female ones prefer cognitive strategy. This result, however, is the same with Na`s research conclusion, but it is different from this research data finding where male and female students enjoy activation as the most often used and memories/repetition as the least employed.

D. CONCLUSIONS AND SUGGESTIONS

1. Conclusions

Based on the findings and discussions on Vocabulary Learning Strategies (VLS) in the previous chapter, so the researcher can take conclusions as follows:

a) The four vocabulary learning strategies which are proposed by Gu and Johnson are employed by all English department students of Raden Intan State Islamic University. Those Vocabulary Learning Strategies are Metacognitive, cognitive, memorization/repetition, and activation.

b) From the four categories of Vocabulary Learning Strategies, students or respondents tended to apply activation strategy as the highest, and it is indicated with a mean score (3.12). On the other side, the least utilized strategy was the memories/repetition strategy, and it is shown with the lowest mean score (1.87).

c) From the four categories of Vocabulary Learning Strategies, female students had a tendency to apply activation strategy, and it is indicated with the highest mean score (3.04) and least used memories/repetition strategies. It is shown by mean score (1.84). Besides, the highest strategy employed by male students was also activation strategy with mean score (3.0), and the lowest strategy was memories/repetition with the lowest score (1.51).

2. Suggestions

a) For the English Teacher/Lecturer

- They should teach vocabulary intentionally, not accidentally, because vocabulary has significant role in language acquisition development.
- They should have a variety of vocabulary Learning strategies in teaching vocabulary, so students can take advantage of the varied strategy.
- They should take advantage of gender differences in using Vocabulary learning strategies. They should teach female students and male students based on the common strategy used by them.

b) For English Students

- They should intensify vocabulary acquisition because without enough vocabulary they will meet many handicaps and limitations in learning language skills and components.
- They should have many kinds of vocabulary Learning Strategies and take benefit from these different strategies.
- They should learn vocabulary from the result of this research. Female and male students should learn vocabulary through dominant strategies or the most preferred strategies.

c) For The Next Researcher

- The next researchers can explore more variables that are related to Vocabulary Learning strategies such as gifted and non-gifted students, level of educations, etc.

- The next researchers can use different taxonomy other than Gu and Johnson. For example, Schmitt Taxonomy.
- The next researcher can explore other foreign language students to know their Vocabulary Learning Strategies. For example, Arabic students.

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