

INVESTIGATING ENGLISH STUDENTS' VOCABULARY LEARNING STRATEGIES AT RADEN INTAN STATE ISLAMIC UNIVERSITY

Iwan Kurniawan, Melinda Roza, Juhana

Universitas Terbuka

Iwankurniawan@radenintan.ac.id

Abstract. *The purpose of this study was to determine the types of Vocabulary Learning Strategies (VLS), the most and least frequently used VLSs by female and male students, and the types of VLSs chosen to address vocabulary learning problems. This study employed a survey technique. The population for this study was drawn from Lampung State Islamic University's English Education Department, which consisted of three classes and had a total enrollment of approximately 75 students. Female students totaled 64, while male students totaled 11. The sample consisted of fourth-semester students. The instrument used in this study was a questionnaire that Gu and Johnson proposed in 1996. Interviews were also used as a tool. All English department students at Lampung State Islamic University used one of four vocabulary learning strategies. Among the four categories of Vocabulary Learning Strategies, students in the three classes favoured metacognitive strategies the most, as indicated by the mean score (2.90). On the other hand, the least frequently used strategy was memory/repetition, as indicated by the lowest mean score (2.22). Female students tended to use metacognitive strategies, as indicated by their highest mean score (2.87), while male students tended to use memories/repetition strategies, as indicated by their average score (2.2). Additionally, the most frequently used strategy by male students was metacognitive strategy with a mean score of (2.93), while the least frequently used strategy was activation with a mean score of (2.93). (2.31). To overcome the problem of vocabulary acquisition, the students used the strategies of consulting a dictionary first, followed by learning grammar and asking other people second. The final strategies used were word practise and internet surfing.*

Keywords: *investigating, strategy, vocabulary*

A. BACKGROUND

Vocabulary can be said as the most important part in language learning. Thonbury (2002:3) mentions that if a learner uses much his time studying English grammar, his or her English is not going to improve very much but if they learn vocabulary their English will be much better. The next evidence shows how important vocabulary is by having limited vocabulary a person in the tourism area can sell a product or service only by saying *buy me...buy me... or massage cheap...massage... cheap*. These examples inform us even with very limited words; a communication can take place and it cannot be done by Grammar. In short, vocabulary is the heart of language. A person cannot do communication activities perfectly without the vocabulary presence.

Other experts also support the importance of vocabulary. They describe that word plays a key role in the expertise of language, and learners who do not have an adequate vocabulary will not be able to use the language appropriately (Richard & Renandya, 2002; Saengpakdeejit, 2014; Afzal, 2019). In many linguistic theories, vocabulary is also positioned in a crucial place. It is considered as the core of language and more important than other components of language or even the most important (Lewis, 1993:89).

The next important reason to start learning language from vocabulary, based on theory and research, to use English normally someone has to have at least 2000 the most frequent English words. This number is the most often used words by English native speakers in daily life. It will promote students ability to understand 9 from 10 words in text and push them speak and write adequately. These 2000 words are called high-frequency words. Famous scholars such as Varela (2013), Nation (2000), and Senturk (2016) agree that high frequency words play very basic role because they cover most written and oral words in text and language uses.

Cahyono and widianti (2008:4-5) mention that teaching vocabulary is to make the students understand the unfamiliar words, add vocabulary size, and enable the students to use the words well for communication purpose. It is believed that the vocabulary mastery will affect greatly on language proficiency receptively and productively. For example, vocabulary size will influence reading comprehension.

The teaching of vocabulary will be very influenced by fashionable language teaching method in certain time. In the era of Grammar Translation Method and reading method, vocabulary was considered far less important. Similarly, the same view occurred in Audio Lingual Method. This method focused very much on Phonology and grammar through habit formation and neglected vocabulary. Even, researches of vocabulary were so little done.

Decade of 80 was viewed as the rise of vocabulary teaching and research because it has been given a priority in textbooks and language programs. There were reasons of this resurrection. First, the communicative language teaching (CLT) takes over the role of dominating method and it emphasizes on communication ability which demands many vocabularies both in written and oral forms. Based on theory and research, to communicate appropriately someone should at least has 2000 words or it is called high frequency words. Second, there is a development of language data analysis equipment. For example, computer which can calculates how often certain words will appear on certain context. Third, there is awareness of how important the vocabulary is. It occurs not only globally but also in Indonesia. Many Indonesian writers consider vocabulary as important as grammar and recommend having a good position in our curriculum.

Some studies related to vocabulary have been done. Two research done in Indonesia by Nurweni and Read (1999) mentioned average 1,200 words had by first year Indonesia students in Lampung University and Alwasilah (2007:82) stated Satya Wacana University new students only accompanied by 1000 words. These numbers are not enough to communicate normally in English. In Saudi Arabia, Afzal (2019;87-92) conducted a study and found that students face some difficulties in learning vocabulary to know the meaning of new words, pronounce the vocabulary, and use the words correctly memorize them, etc. To overcome this problem, some actions can be taken and one of them is the use of Vocabulary Learning Strategy (VLS). According to Alharthi (2014) VLS can supply many benefits such as to tackle a large number of unknown words, to ease and enhance vocabulary retention, to shape learners to be independent learners in expanding and meeting their own vocabulary, etc. Tacak (2008; 76) even proposes that VLS should

be integrated in teaching vocabulary and encourage to the students to try the use of some VLSs. By implementing certain VLS, the students are expected to be independent learners to raise their vocabularies. Later, he mentions some strategies that a teacher can instruct to students, such as: Writing vocabularies on card together with meanings, Grouping the words systematically. For example, based on topic, function, etc, pronouncing words loudly, Recording words and listening to them, Writing words together with their pictures, Describing words with their situations, Connecting words with their places, and introducing keywords methods, Associating words with other. For example, antonyms and synonyms, Introducing words` parts. For example, suffixes.

VLS attracts many experts to implement it in teaching and inspires them to do some research. According to Amirian and Heshmatifar (2013; 636) since decade of 1970s, VLs has lured attentions of researchers to do in language leanings and the researches were done to know kinds of VLS employed by students, the effect of VLS toward students` vocabulary development, the differences between good and weak students in using VLS, Is there VLS differences based on students gender (Amirian & Heshmatifar, 2013; Catalan, 2003; Celik & Toptas, 2010; Na, 2016). From those studies, later the investigators have classified Vocabulary learning Strategies into several taxonomies or classifications such as Gu and Johnson Taxonomy, Schmitt Taxonomy, and Nation Taxonomy. Using the availability of these taxonomies, some additional studies were also done in Malaysia, Iran, Turkey, China, Finland, etc. They were done to know these local countries students` VLS.

In Malaysia, Noor and Amir (2009) did a study toward 35 post graduate students at University Kebangsaan Malaysia (UKM). By using the questionnaire proposed by Gu and Johnson in 1996. They could reveal that memorization, dictionary strategies, and linguistic clues are the most often used strategies whereas note taking was the least employed strategy.

Marttinen (2008:91) conducted a study on upper secondary school students in Finland and found that the students at least used one VLS and the most common three VLSs are written repetition in reading, written repetition in writing, and translation. This study also show that female students use memory strategy more often and male employed metacognitive strategy more frequent.

In Spain, Catalan (2003; 54) explored 581 students` VLS and found female students employed more formal rule, input elicitation, rehearsal, and planning strategies. In contrast, male students preferred image vocabulary learning strategies. Regarding, the number of strategies usage, female students took more strategies than male students.

The facts outlined above prompted the researcher to conduct a nearly identical study but with a different sample size and location. This will be done because research on VLS is still uncommon in Indonesia, particularly efforts to examine VLS by gender. Lampung State Islamic University or UIN Lampung will conduct the research. Numerous factors contribute to the researcher's selection of this university. To begin, while most research on vocabulary learning strategies has been conducted at public universities, the researcher is interested in the preference of Islamic university students for vocabulary learning strategies. Second, this university has a department of English Education. By conducting this research, the researcher hopes to provide inputs for English lecturers on how to teach vocabulary by matching the lesson to the strategies preferred by students, so that the lectures can help students build their vocabularies.

1. Research Questions

- a. What are vocabularies Learning strategies employed by English Department students of Lampung State Islamic University?
- b. What are the most and the least strategies used by English Department students of Lampung State Islamic University based on gender differences?
- c. What are the Vocabulary Learning Strategies used by the students to overcome Vocabulary learning problems?

2. Significance of Research

a. Theoretically

Hopefully, this research will enrich more on existing theories about the vocabulary learning strategy varieties and theories about the gender differences in vocabulary learning strategies.

b. Practically

For Lecturers

Hopefully, this research finding will inform lecturers about their students' vocabulary learning strategies, enabling lecturers to select teaching techniques and materials that are appropriate for their students' vocabulary learning strategies.

For university

Hopefully, this research finding will provide university administrators with information about their students' vocabulary learning strategies, enabling them to provide appropriate equipment, such as a language lab and games, at their institution.

B. VOCABULARY LEARNING STRATEGIES (VLS)

It is believed that vocabulary learning strategy is one part of language learning strategy. Based on observation, language learning strategy will push bigger the sense of self-direction in a learner. A self-directed learner will be responsible, confident, and proficient in learning. Research has indicated that learners really have language learning strategies (LLS) including vocabulary learning strategies (VLS). Therefore, students are really suggested to be taught the LLS and VLS.

Oxford (1992) in Yunhao (2011:7) defines VLS as certain actions, behaviours, steps, or techniques, facilitating the internalization, storage, retrieval, or use of the new language learners to develop their L2 skills. These strategies are tools for self directed involvement for developing communicative ability. Another definition was also given Cameron (2001:92) in Yunhao (2011) who states that VLSs are action that students take to help

themselves to comprehend and keep in mind vocabulary. From the two definitions, we can conclude that vocabulary learning strategy is actions or techniques that someone uses to understand, to remember, and to use the vocabulary for developing their language skills.

There are some researches about vocabulary learning strategies that have been done by scholars in some countries. The research findings have been used to form some taxonomy of vocabulary learning strategies. At least, there are some experts in these fields such as Gu & Johnson, Schmitt, and Nation (Nosidlak, 2013; Asgari, 2010).

1. Gu and Johnson Taxonomy

Gu and Johnson(1996) conducted a research toward 850 sophomore English students in Beijing Normal University to know their vocabulary learning strategies. They concluded that there are four kinds of vocabulary learning strategies like metacognitive, cognitive, memory and activation. Metacognitive has lower level strategies of selective awareness and self-initiation. An EFL learner who uses selective awareness knows to select the important words to learn, and the learner who implements self-initiation will use various ways to clarify the word meaning. Cognitive strategy contains guessing strategy, use of dictionary, and note taking. Learner will use their background knowledge and linguistics to guess the meaning of unfamiliar words. Memory strategy covers strategy of practice such as word list & repetition and encoding like association, imagery, visual, auditory, semantic, word structure, and contextual encoding. Activation strategy is a strategy used by a learner to implement a new word in different situation. For instance, a learner uses a new word to make a sentence. Gu and Johnson VLS can be put in a table as follows:

Table.1

Gu and Johnson Taxonomy

GU AND JOHNSON TAXONOMY OF VLS			
METACOGNITIVE	COGNITIVE	MEMORY	ACTIVATION
1.Selective awareness	1. Guessing strategies	1. Practising	1. Using new words in some context.
2. Self-initiation	2. Using Dictionary	2. Encoding	
	3. Note Taking		

2. Schmitt Taxonomy

Schmitt Taxonomy (1997) in Riankamol (2008) created VLS that was based on Oxford taxonomy of learning strategy with some revisions. Schmitt divided his taxonomy become two groups: discovery and consolidation strategy. Discovery strategy consists of determination and social strategy whereas consolidation contains social, memory, cognitive and metacognitive strategies. He uses social strategy in two divisions because it can be implemented for both purposes.

Discovery strategies are implemented to seek the vocabulary meaning for the first time and consolidate ones to combine meaning when learners meet them again. According to Schmitt, determination is an effort taken by a learner to know a new word meaning without help of the other and he or she will guess the meaning from contexts. Social strategy is asking someone help to know the meaning of unfamiliar word. After knowing a new word, next a learner needs some kinds of strategies to practice and keep the new word meaning in mind. A learner then should use many strategies such as social, memory, cognitive and metacognitive to fix the vocabulary knowledge. In social strategy, learners can deepen and use the new words meaning in a group. Memory strategies or known as mnemonic is an action by relating a former knowledge with new found words. This can be done by using words` affixes and roots. Cognitive strategies in Schmitt`s taxonomy are the same with memory strategy, but they do not manipulate mental process and use

repetition and mechanical equipments in learning vocabulary. The example of this strategy such as word list, flashcard, taking notes, textbooks, etc. Language learners use metacognitive strategies to evaluate and control their learning activities. The instances of these strategies are watching English films, communicating with native speakers, reading English books. The learners also know when to study effectively and use the time efficiently.

3. Nation Taxonomy

Nation's taxonomy of vocabulary learning strategy consists of planning, source, and processes categories. The first category of planning is about an action to determine where, how, and how often to focus on certain vocabulary. The category will cover activities such as choosing a word, choosing a word knowledge aspect, and choosing strategy including repetition. The second category is word resources. It will include the sources which can derive from the word itself, from the context, from dictionaries, glossaries, and connections with other languages. Process is the last category of vocabulary learning strategies which includes some word knowledge activities like noticing, retrieving, and generating strategies. The strategies of noticing may be in writing the words in notebook, word list, word card, and practicing them visually and orally. Retrieving is an activity to recall the words that were met before. Generating strategies cover activities such as word analysis, semantics mapping, creating context, collocation, etc.

C. RESEARCH DESIGN

This study employed a survey technique. Ary et al. (2010:371-379) state that survey research aims to elicit information about people's beliefs, opinions, characteristics, and behaviour. As a result, we inquired about students' beliefs or opinions regarding the vocabulary learning strategies they employ. As a result, the survey technique was extremely appropriate for this research. Surveys are classified into two types based on their scope. There are two types of surveys: censuses and sample surveys. A census survey will sample the entire population, whereas a sample survey will sample a subset of the population. Additionally, surveys can be divided into two types based on the time period of data collection: longitudinal and cross-sectional surveys. Longitudinal data is

gathered at various points in time to examine changes over time. Cross-sectional surveys examine the population at a discrete time point. The survey makes no use of sophisticated statistical analysis. Frequency and percentage analysis are two types of data analysis. According 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 very common instruments in this research are questionnaire and interview. The former was designed by the researcher and then filled in by the respondent, whereas the latter was designed and asked by the researcher. The respondents later answered the oral questions.

1. Population and Sample.

Population that was used in this study was from English Education Department of Lampung State Islamic University which consisted of 4 classes and has students` number around 75. The numbers of female students were 64 and male students were 11. The population was from 4th semester students. Because the researcher wanted to know entire vocabulary learning strategies that students employed, so in this investigation the researcher took all population as sample. In other words, researcher used census technique.

2. Research Instrument

The instrument was questionnaire proposed by Gu & Johnson in 1996. The questionnaire consisted of 31 statements that were grouped into 4 categories: Metacognitive Strategies, Cognitive strategies, Memories/repetition strategies, and Activation strategies. The sample responded 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 explored metacognitive strategy, statements 7 to 25 will seek information about cognitive strategy, statements 26 to 29 collected data of memory/repetition strategy, and statements 30 to 31 asked about activation strategy. Another instrument used was an interview that asked to

8 students that consisted 4 women and 4 men to know students` vocabulary learning strategies used to overcome vocabulary learning problems.

3. Validity and Reliability of Instrument.

A good instrument will measure what is supposed to measure. This research had tried to measure the vocabulary learning strategies employed by students of Lampung State Islamic University. The instrument that used was the creation of Gu and Johnson and then adapted by Noor and Amir (2009) at university Kebangsaan Malaysia. This adapted version then was used by researcher to collect data and also it had experienced a little adaptation as well to match with Indonesian students` condition. Before using it to collect data, researcher had done try-out to know its validity and reliability.

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:

$$M = \frac{RR \times S}{N}$$

M = Mean

RR= Respondent Respon

S = Score of Likert Scale Statement

N = Number of Respondent

D. RESEARCH RESULT AND DISCUSSION***1. Overall Vocabulary Learning Strategies Employed By Students***

The data findings show from the four categories of Vocabulary Learning Strategies, students or respondents liked to apply metacognitive strategy and it was indicated with the highest mean score (2.90). On the other hand, the least utilized strategy used was memories/repetition with the lowest score (2.2). The data are provided in the table below:

Table.1**Vocabulary Learning Strategies of UIN Lampung English Department**

	Class B	Class C	Class D	Mean (X)
Metacognitive	3.06	2.72	2.82	2.90
Cognitive	2.80	2.40	2.11	2.44
Memories/Repetition	2.49	2.45	1.71	2.22
Activation	3.08	2.16	2.36	2.53

2. Vocabulary Learning Strategy of Female and Male Students

The data findings indicate that female students tended to use activation strategies, as indicated by the highest mean score (3.04), while male students tended to use memories/repetition strategies, as indicated by the lowest mean score (3.04). (1.84). On the other hand, the most frequently used strategy by male students was also activation, with a mean score of 3.0, and the least frequently used strategy was memories/repetition, with a mean score of 0. (1.51). The data are provided in the table below:

Table. 2

Vocabulary learning Strategy of different gender

	Female	Male	Mean (X)
Metacognitive	2.87	2,93	2.90
Cognitive	2.41	2,50	2.50
Memories/Repetition	2.2	2.40	2.30
Activation	2.6	2.31	2.50

3. Result of Interview

As mentioned before that another instrument used was interview. It was done to answer the last research question about what strategies that used by students when they met problems in learning vocabulary. It was done to eight English department students consisting four males and four females.

To overcome vocabulary learning problem, the students use strategies of consulting dictionary as the highest, and it is followed by learning grammar and asking other people in the second place. The last strategies used are practicing the word and google surfing.

4. Discussion

The purpose of this study was to ascertain the types of Vocabulary Learning Strategies used by English Education Department students at Raden Intan State Islamic University; the most and least effective Vocabulary Learning strategies based on gender differences; and the strategies used by students to overcome vocabulary learning difficulties.

The following are the research findings. To begin, all of the Vocabulary Learning Strategies proposed by Gu and Johnson (1996) were used by the English departments at the State Islamic University of Raden Intan, including metacognitive, cognitive, repetition, and activation. Second, there is no difference in gender preferences when it

comes to the use of Vocabulary Learning Strategies. Both sexes scored metacognitive strategies highest and memories lowest for female learners, but activation strategies highest for male learners. To overcome the problem of vocabulary acquisition, the students used the strategies of consulting a dictionary first, followed by learning grammar and asking other people second. The final strategies used were word practise and internet surfing.

There are very few studies on vocabulary learning strategies and gender preference. According to the findings of a study conducted on Chinese high school students by Na (61; 2016), there were differences between female and male female students that were triggered by their Chinese cultural background. Females are more circumspect when it comes to study planning and are more patient when it comes to repeating word pronunciations. As a result, female students are more familiar with metacognitive and cognitive strategies for vocabulary acquisition. Several activities, such as word repetition, word note-taking, and dictionary use, are popular among them. As a result, it was discovered that male students prefer to use social strategies over female students; they are more adaptable in expressing their opinions and are not afraid to make errors. Na's findings are consistent with this research, which indicates that both male and female students prefer metacognitive strategies over memories/repetition.

Catalan authorities conducted a nearly identical investigation (2003:56). Females used more vocabulary learning strategies than males, and female students prefer social strategies to communicate effectively, whereas male students rely more on translation strategies. Furthermore, Catalan (2003) discovered that female students used a broader range of formal, rehearsal, and planning strategies. Male students, on the other hand, used more image-related vocabulary strategies. Catalan's findings were almost identical to this one, in which both male and female students preferred to use metacognitive strategies.

Susanti (2018) of Muhammadiyah University of Surakarta conducted an investigation into the differences in vocabulary learning strategies used by male and female students of the English Education Department of IAIN Surakarta in Indonesia. The research sample consisted of 22 females and 13 males from fourth semester students. She discovered that

there is a gender difference in how students approach vocabulary learning strategies, with male students preferring social strategies and female students preferring cognitive strategies. This result, however, is consistent with Na's research conclusion but differs from the data findings in this research, which indicate that male and female students prefer metacognitive skills as the most frequently used and memories/repetition as the least frequently used.

E. CONCLUSIONS AND SUGGESTIONS

1. Conclusions

Based on the findings and discussions on Vocabulary Learning Strategies (VLS) above, so researcher can conclude as follows:

- 1) There are four Vocabulary Learning strategies which were employed by all English department students of Lampung State Islamic University. Those Vocabulary Learning Strategies are Metacognitive, cognitive, memorization/repetition, and activation.

From the four categories of Vocabulary Learning Strategies, students of the three classes preferred to implement metacognitive strategy as the highest and it is indicated with mean score (2.90). On the other hand, the least utilized strategy was memories/repetition strategy and it is shown with the lowest mean score (2.22).

- 2) From Vocabulary Learning Strategies, female students tended to apply metacognitive strategy and it is indicated with the highest mean score (2.87) and lowest used memories/repetition strategies and it was indicated by average score (2.2). In addition, the highest strategy used by male students was also metacognitive strategy with mean score (2.93) and the lowest strategy was activation with the lowest score (2.31).

- 3) To overcome vocabulary learning problem, the students use strategies of consulting dictionary as the highest, and it is followed by learning grammar and asking other people in the second place. The last strategies used are practicing the word and google surfing.

2. Suggestions

For the English Teacher/Lecturer

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

For English Students

- They should intensify vocabulary acquisition because they will meet many handicaps and limitations in learning language skills and components without enough vocabulary.
- 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 the dominant strategies or the most preferred strategies.

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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