

A STUDY ON LANGUAGE LEARNING STRATEGIES USED BY ENGLISH STUDY PROGRAM STUDENTS OF FKIP UNRI TO ENHANCE THEIR VOCABULARY DEVELOPMENT

Trisna Angguni¹, Mahdum², Erni³

¹Universitas Riau,

²Universitas Riau,

³Universitas Riau,

¹ trisna.angguni5230@student.unri.ac.id,

² mahdum.adanan@lecturer.unri.ac.id,

³ erni@lecturer.unri.ac.id,

ABSTRACT

This study aims to examine the vocabulary learning strategies used by students of the 2023 cohort of the English Study Program at the University of Riau. The research was conducted in response to students' recurring difficulties in remembering, understanding, and applying new vocabulary in language learning, which highlights the importance of identifying the strategies they employ. The population consisted of 113 students, of whom 36 participated in a try-out to ensure the reliability and validity of the 28-item Likert-scale questionnaire adapted from Schmitt's (1997) taxonomy of vocabulary learning strategies. The main sample comprised 77 students selected through simple random sampling. This study employed a quantitative descriptive research design, and descriptive statistical analysis was used to determine the frequency of strategy use across five categories: determination, social, memory, cognitive, and metacognitive strategies. The findings indicate varying levels of strategy use, with Memory Strategies emerging as the most frequently applied (mean = 2.96), particularly through verbal repetition and associating new vocabulary with personal experiences. Social Strategies were also widely used (mean = 2.90), demonstrating students' reliance on peers and instructors when encountering unfamiliar words. Determination Strategies (mean = 2.87) and Metacognitive Strategies (mean = 2.78) were used moderately, while Cognitive Strategies were the least employed (mean = 2.71). Overall, the results show that students predominantly rely on memory-based and socially oriented strategies, underscoring the significance of personal association, collaborative learning, and strategic awareness in supporting effective vocabulary acquisition.

Keyword : language learning strategies, EFL students, vocabulary development

A. Introduction

One of the most important things that students in higher education institutions' English language

programs need to master is vocabulary. In foreign language learning and education, vocabulary is crucial because it enables pupils to

express themselves clearly (Le & Trinh, 2024). By determining the vocabulary acquisition strategies that students employ, teachers can better adapt their lessons to promote vocabulary growth. The inability of many children to acquire new vocabulary, however, might impede their learning and make it difficult to apply in everyday situations. Because of limited retention and ineffective learning habits, it is important to investigate students' learning strategies.

Several students from students of the 2023 English language program were interviewed, and it was discovered that while they use a variety of strategies to acquire vocabulary, not all of them work. Many students still rely on traditional methods, such as memorizing vocabulary without understanding the context of its use. On the other hand, many students also utilize technology-based resources (listening to podcasts on YouTube, watching English films, using online learning applications), contextual learning, and creating vocabulary lists.

However, not all students engage with or utilize these resources in the same way. It appears that

students who lack word-learning strategies or sufficient vocabulary in the language they are learning continue to struggle with their language learning. This can be quite frustrating and frequently results in a cycle of failure (Altalhab, 2023).

This research aims to fill that gap by identifying the actual vocabulary learning strategies used by English Study Program students of the 2023, providing context-specific insights that can support both learners and educators in enhancing vocabulary development.

B. Methodology

In this research, researchers used quantitative techniques with a descriptive approach. This is based on the needs and objectives of this research. The population of this research was all English Study Program Students of the 2023 namely classes A, B, and C, totaling 113 students.

The sampling technique used in this study is random sampling. This technique was chosen because it provides equal opportunities for elements in the population to be selected, thus reducing bias and ensuring that the samples taken are

more representative and objective. Therefore, the researcher selected samples from the total population of 113 students from the 2023, 77 students were chosen as the main sample, while 36 students were assigned for the try-out to test the validity and reliability of the questionnaire. In this study, researcher collected data by creating a questionnaire containing of 28 items categorized into 5 strategies namely Determination, Social, Memory, Cognitive, Metacognitive. Then the questionnaire is distributed online via gform and students are asked to rate the frequency of use of vocabulary learning strategies on a Likert point scale (1 = never, 2 = seldom, 3 = often, and 4 = always) for 1 hour.

The instrument used in this research was a questionnaire. The questionnaire was compiled based on five categories of vocabulary learning strategies developed by Schmitt (1997), namely determination, social, memory, cognitive, and metacognitive strategies. A questionnaire is data collection technique in which respondents are asked to answer a series of question or statement Sugiyono (2017).

The data analysis technique used in this study was descriptive statistical analysis. After collecting the questionnaire responses, the data will be input into Microsoft Excel. The analysis involved calculating the mean, frequency, and standard deviation for each item to observe the general tendency, the distribution of responses, and the variation among respondents. The results were then presented through tables and graphs to facilitate clear and comprehensive understanding.

Table1 Interpretation of Mean Scores Based on Likert Scales

Mean Score Range	Interpretation
3.26 – 4.00	Always
2.51 – 3.25	Often
1.76 – 2.50	Seldom
1.00 – 1.75	Never

C. Findings And Discussions

This section provides a detailed analysis of the learning strategies employed by English Study Program students, including determination, social, memory, cognitive, and metacognitive strategies. Each strategy is examined to assess how frequently students use these methods to improve their vocabulary acquisition. The overall results of learning strategies for vocabulary

mastery are presented in this table. This table provides an overview of the overall results of the various learning strategies used by students to improve their vocabulary. The summary of these findings is shown in Table 2.

Table 2 The Overall Result of Learning Strategies

Table 2 presents the overall results of learning strategies used by

No	Learning Strategies	Mean	Interpretation
1	Determination Strategies	2,87	Often
2	Social Strategies	2,90	Often
3	Memory Strategies	2,96	Often
4	Cognitive Strategies	2,71	Often
5	Metacognitive Strategies	2,78	Often

students to enhance their vocabulary mastery. Memory Strategies were the most frequently used, with a mean score of 2.96, indicating that students often rely on techniques like repetition and association to retain vocabulary. Social Strategies followed closely with a mean of 2.90, showing that students engage in collaborative methods such as seeking help from peers or teachers. Metacognitive Strategies with a mean score of 2.78 reflect students' frequent use of self-monitoring techniques, while Determination Strategies with a mean

score of 2.87 highlight the common use of independent methods like guessing word meanings from context. Cognitive Strategies had the lowest mean score of 2.71, suggesting that these strategies, such as repetition and word lists, are used less frequently. Overall, students predominantly rely on Memory and Social strategies for vocabulary development.

The findings of the present study reveal several insights into the strategies employed by students to enhance their vocabulary development. These results are compared with those of similar studies to determine common trends and notable differences.

In this study, determination strategies emerged as a frequently used method, with students relying on techniques such as analyzing word parts and using dictionaries to understand new vocabulary. The findings align with previous studies, such as Sihotang et al. (2017), who found that determination strategies were the most commonly used by students in their vocabulary learning.

D. Conclusion

Based on the data analysis, the findings indicate that students

primarily rely on memory and social strategies. Memory strategies, such as linking new words to personal experiences, using verbal repetition, and connecting words with synonyms or antonyms, are the most frequently employed by students. Similarly, social strategies, including seeking help from peers and teachers as well as interacting with native speakers, are also commonly used, reflecting the importance of collaboration and exposure to diverse linguistic contexts. Although these findings are consistent with previous studies, some contextual differences are evident, particularly in how students prioritize certain strategies. Metacognitive and determination strategies, although used less frequently, still play an important role in the vocabulary learning process. Overall, the results highlight the importance of using a combination of strategies, especially memory and social strategies, in promoting vocabulary development.

REFERENCES

- Altalhab, S. (2023). Vocabulary Learning Strategies Used by Saudi University Students in Pair Work. *International Journal of Education and Literacy Studies*, 11(1), 44–49.
- <https://doi.org/10.7575/aiac.ijels.v.11n.1p.44>
- Le, H. S., & Trinh, M. L. (2024). An Investigation of Vocabulary Learning Strategies of ESP Students. *International Journal of TESOL & Education*, 4(1), 1–17.
- Schmitt, N. (1997). Vocabulary learning strategies. In N. Schmitt & M. McCarthy (Eds.), *Vocabulary: Description, acquisition and pedagogy* (pp. 199–227). Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.
- Sugiyono. (2017). *Metode Penelitian Kuantitatif, Kualitatif, dan R&D*. Bandung: CV. Alfabeta.
- Sihotang, R., Afriazi, R., & . I. (2017). Vocabulary Learning Strategies Applied By the Students of English Education Study Program of Bengkulu University. *Journal of English Education and Teaching*, 1(1), 86–95.