



THE STUDENTS' STRATEGIES IN LEARNING ENGLISH VOCABULARY

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ABSTRACT

The objective of this research is to analyze students' learning strategies used in improving their English vocabulary. This research methodology involves interviews as well as focus group discussions to obtain data. The research found that students employ five strategies of improving their English vocabulary: (1) Social strategies, (2) Memory strategies, (3) Cognitive strategies, (4) Metacognitive strategies, and (5) Pomodoro technique. Moreover, students employ Metacognitive strategies the most, then follow Cognitive strategies, Social strategies, Memory strategies, and Pomodoro technique as strategies, which is employed the least in learning English vocabulary.

Keywords: English vocabulary, learning strategies

Introduction

In the process of learning English, vocabulary is important. The more vocabulary students know, the easier it is for students to understand the lesson that is explained. Woodeson et al. (2023) say vocabulary is a crucial component in understanding a foreign language, and is extremely significant. Communication is difficult without a varied vocabulary. A strong vocabulary is important as well learning to read, talk, write, and listen.

Learning English requires a strong vocabulary, but some students do not focus on increasing their understanding of vocabulary and adding a lot of their vocabulary in English. Since they don't have as much vocabulary, this makes students less engaged in the learning process, including speaking classes. They focus on expanding their vocabularies and have learning strategies to expand their vocabularies.

Learning strategies that students employ to acquire vocabulary are definitely for each student. They have their way of studying it. Considering learning strategies that students are using, they can learn more about vocabulary because they know the way to learn vocabulary effectively. The success students in the subject they are studying

will primarily depend on the strategies they choose to use (Tawali & Suhaili, 2023). But, some strategies can be effective for some students, but ineffective for others, and therefore students need to know about learning strategies.

Students can identify learning strategies that work for them in their vocabulary by studying more about them. According to Tawali and Suhaili (2023), these will make learning easier, faster, more enjoyable, independent, efficient, and more situation-appropriate. In addition, Fuadi et al. (2023) stated studying and learning strategies have a significant impact on vocabulary improvement. Students who have a strategy and an effective strategy of studying find it easier to expand their vocabulary.

Vocabulary, according to Al-Khresheh and Al-Ruwaili (2020), is the collection of terms that a person is familiar with in a certain language. It is a significant and beneficial form of communication that helps with understanding development and develops with age. Furthermore, Bai (2018) explains vocabulary is one of the three main components of language learning. It is the fundamental prerequisite of linguistic communication to be able to construct phrases and communicate ideas and meanings; hence, lots of constant vocabulary is vital. As previously mentioned, vocabulary is a crucial component of language development. The fundamental component that has to be comprehended is vocabulary, which is utilized to organize words into sentences and express concepts in communication.

As stated by Baizidi and Saadat (n.d.), vocabulary is key to language and is extremely important to students of languages. Since words are used to identify things, activities, and concepts without excluding anyone who is unable to convey the intended meaning, they form the basis of a language. In addition, mastering vocabulary is crucial for language use; and the more vocabulary the students possess, the more effective the student is in conveying ideas or concepts (Patahuddin et al. 2017).

According to Hiebert and Kamil (2005) word description can be either oral or written. The collection of words that we are familiar with when we read or speak aloud is known as our oral vocabulary. Words that have a known meaning when we write or read aloud make up print vocabulary. They also discuss the two types of vocabulary that are known to exist: receptive vocabulary and productive vocabulary. Productive vocabulary is the collection of words that a person may utilize when writing or speaking, is known as their productive vocabulary. These are familiar, well known and often used terms. Whereas, receptive vocabulary is the collection of words that a person can give meaning to when reading or hearing is known as receptive or

recognition vocabulary. These are terms that are frequently used less frequently and are not as familiar to learners.

In order to acquire, comprehend and communicate in language, vocabulary is needed. Vocabulary is one of the most important of the three elements that must be mastered (Bai, 2018). As previously explained, vocabulary is an important basis that is needed and must be studied because it is used to compose phrases and communicate ideas and meanings. According to Besthia (2018), vocabulary knowledge is commonly acknowledged as a crucial tool for second language learners since a lack of vocabulary in a second language impacts efficient communication. Moreover, as stated by Ahmadi et al. (2012), a greater comprehension of the vocabulary meaning will result in greater comprehension of the overall meaning of the text.

Alqahtani (2015) asserts that as the definitions of new terms are regularly emphasized, both in publications and in the classroom, vocabulary acquisition is a crucial component of learning a foreign language. Additionally, it is crucial for teaching language and crucial to a language student. Furthermore, foreign language acquisition is intimately tied to vocabulary development. During the foreign language process, students need to understand most of the vocabulary and contextual meanings used in the work (Min & Tsu, 2010, in Ahmadi et al. 2012).

Effective learning can be achieved through the use of learning strategies. Students employ learning strategies to comprehend the teaching in their own unique ways. According to Goundar (2015), language learning strategies are methods learners use to improve their education. Furthermore, according to Tawali and Suhaili (2023), the development of communication competence depends on active, self-directed engagement, which are crucial in language learning. Increased proficiency and self-confidence are the results of appropriate language learning strategies.

In learning vocabulary, learning strategies must be understood by students. When learning a language, learners use vocabulary learning tools to pick up new words. Kafipour et al. (2011) explain learning vocabulary is a subset of learning language, which is a subset of strategies for learning in general. Strategies for learning vocabulary refer to any procedures or tools that can be used to learn new words fast, effortlessly, and independently. Using vocabulary acquisition tools, students can acquire the definitions of words in foreign languages, memorize the words, and use the foreign language words in context (Schmitt in Nugroho, 2017).

When learning a language and vocabulary learning can't be separated in learning a language. Vocabulary is a fundamental component of learning English, as is well organized. Students will find it easier to acquire vocabulary size if they use the right learning strategies. Fuadi et al. (2023) stated studying and learning strategies have a significant impact on vocabulary improvement. Students who have a strategy and an effective strategy of studying become easier to expand their vocabulary.

A study by Sari (2021) found that for the learning process to be effective, vocabulary learning strategies must be used. The employment of a vocabulary mastering strategy improves vocabulary mastery and improves students' achievement. Patahuddin et al. (2017) say learners can acquire and learn new words independently using learning strategies on their own time.

Some strategies used in learning vocabulary are presented here. Schmitt (1997) created a number of improving vocabulary strategies. although Norbert Schmitt' learning strategies include a number of definitions, there are five sub-categories of vocabulary learning strategies, which are as follows:

- 1) Determination strategies

They are personal strategies. Schmitt (1997) asserts that when learners learn a new word without depending on someone else's experience, they employ determination strategies.

- 2) Social strategies

They are students who pick up new vocabulary through interaction with each other. Social strategies improve communication and increase empathy, two things that are necessary for achieving communicative competence.

- 3) Memory strategies

Through the use of these strategies, students connect the acquisition of new words to mental processing by new words to prior or existing information using pictures of groupings to connect the term to previously learned content is one memory strategy.

- 4) Cognitive strategies

They are strategies that are more mechanical in nature and do not require students to use their minds. Schmitt (1997) claims that while cognitive strategies in his taxonomy are quite similar to memory strategies, they emphasize mechanical language study strategies and repetition over manipulative mental thinking.

- 5) Metacognitive strategies

These are strategies related to the procedures used in progress evaluation, decision-making, and monitoring. Students employ metacognitive strategies to manage and assess their learning by taking a broad view of the process.

Research Methodology

Research Design

This research was conducted using qualitative methods. As stated by Shahzad (2023:42), the method is a kind of survey research in which data is obtained by asking people questions and is mostly used to assess people's ideas and beliefs about a certain subject. He also stated the qualitative method is a humanistic method that deals with human life and its difficulties, and the goal of researchers is to explore different issues in society. Furthermore, qualitative research deals with feelings, ideas, or experiences, and the goal of the qualitative method is to get a thorough understanding of social phenomena in their natural setting.

Subject and Setting

The subject of this research is eleven-grade students (XII MIA1) of SMA Negeri 5 Barru. To choose the subject, this research will use simple random sampling. According to Hanlon & Larget in Ikhsan (2018) simple random sampling is sampling that is chosen so that any potential sample of the same size has an equal probability of being chosen. Ten learners are the focus of this research. The learners consist of four male and six female students.

Research Instruments

In essence, research instruments are pieces of equipment that are used to gather data. An interview is an instrument used in this study to gather data. Semi-structured interviews are used for these students, which aim to get detailed information for research purposes. The researcher will conduct interviews with selected subjects by asking questions consisting of 4 questions and having focus group discussions. Each answer will be recorded so that it does not appear manipulated, and its authenticity is guaranteed.

Technique of Data Collection

An interview is a conversation conducted with questions and answers to obtain information. Woods (2011) stated the interview process is a purposeful conversation. Semi-structured in-depth interviews were employed in this study. This in-depth interview's questions are designed or modified to focus on research questions and accomplish research goals

Focus group discussions are commonly utilized as a qualitative method to grasp social concerns thoroughly. Instead of using a sample that is statistically typical of the general population, this approach attempts to gather data from a deliberately chosen group of people (O. Nyumba et al., 2018).

Technique of Data Analysis

The following are the steps of qualitative analysis, according to Miles and Huberman (1994):

1) Data Reduction

The process of choosing, concentrating, streamlining, abstracting, and altering the information found in transcription or written field notes is known as data reduction. This process assists researchers in removing unneeded components and organizing data, resulting in conclusions that can be reached and validated.

2) Data Display

The goal of data display is to condense structured information into a concise, instantly accessible format that the analyst can comprehend what is happening and either reach well-founded conclusions or go to the next stage of research that display recommends.

3) Data Conclusion

At this point, the researcher assesses the collected data from the interviews presented in the data presentation to form conclusions according to the finding of research.

Results and Discussion

Results

1. Learning Strategies Used by Students in Improving English Vocabulary

a. Social strategies

Extract 1

"Saya suka bersosialisasi dan berinteraksi langsung dengan teman-teman saya atau dengan guru" (I like socializing and interacting with my friends or my teachers). (ASA)

b. Memory strategies

Extract 2

"Saya suka ketika sudah belajar dan terdapat kata yang baru saya tahu ditesnya dengan menggunakan games karena seru" (I enjoy learning and testing words that I just know using games because they are fun). (SNA)

c. Cognitive strategies

Extract 3

"Saya kadan-kadang menghafa, namun tidak sering, setengah-tengah" (I sometimes memorize, but very often, halfway). (SNA)

d. Metacognitive strategies

Extract 4

"Saya sering menonton film dan video YouTube dengan subtitle bahasa Inggris, belajar dari membaca blog, membaca buku pelajaran bahasa INggris yang digunakan saat belajar" (I of ten watch films and YouTube videos with English subtitle, learn from reading blogs, and read English textbooks that are used when learning English). (MRS)

e. Pomodoro technique

Extract 5

"Saya biasanya belajar pakai 25 menit belajar, istirahat 5 menit baru lanjut lagi belajar, supaya ada waktu belajarku biar sebentar dalam satu hari", (I usually study for 25 minutes, rest 5 minutes, so I have time to study for a while in a day). (FA)

2. The Strategies Used Most Often and Least Often by Students

a. The Strategies Used Most Often by Students

The learning strategies that students use most often in learning vocabulary in English are metacognitive strategies.

Extract 6

“Saya biasanya menggunakan sosial media, menonton film atau drama dengan subtitle bahasa Inggris, membaca buku”, (I use social media, watch films or dramas with English subtitles, and read books) (NAAH)

b. The Strategies Used Least Often by Students

Students infrequently use cognitive strategies, as several interviewed students claim they are less effective in improving their vocabulary in English. It is shown by the data that follows:

Extract 7

“Kalau yang kurang efektif itu seperti yang menghafal kata langsung dari kamus”, (Directly memorizing from a dictionary is less effective).(MRS)

The strategies that students least use are social strategies and memory strategies. From these findings, only one student used social strategies as strategies he used. It is shown by the data that follows:

Extract 8

“Saya suka bersosialisasi dan berinteraksi langsung dengan teman-teman saya atau dengan guru” (I like socializing and interacting with my friends or my teachers). (ASA)

Likewise, only one student mentioned using memory strategies to improve vocabulary in English. It is shown by the data that follows:

Extract 9

“Saya suka ketika sudah belajar dan terdapat kata yang baru saya tahu tesnya dengan menggunakan games karena seru” (I enjoy learning and testing words that I just know using games because they are fun). (SNA)

The least strategy that students use is the Pomodoro technique. This strategy uses only one student based on these findings. The Pomodoro technique is a time management strategy that students use to study more efficiently and effectively. It is shown by the data that follows:

Extract 10

“Saya biasanya belajar pakai 25 menit belajar, istirahat 5 menit baru lanjut lagi belajar, supaya ada waktu belajarku biar sebentar dalam satu hari”, (I usually study for 25 minutes, rest for 5 minutes, so I have time to study for a while in a day). (FA)

Discussion

1. Learning Strategies Used by Students in Improving English Vocabulary

According to the result findings above, students used five different strategies, namely social strategies, cognitive strategies, memory strategies, metacognitive strategies, and the Pomodoro technique. The taxonomy of vocabulary learning strategies put forth by different scholars demonstrates the wide range of distinct vocabulary strategies (Gu, 2003, in Asgari and Mustapha, 2011). Using suitable learning strategies for students can help them learn English vocabulary. Language learning strategies, according to Goundar (2015) are the methods that students use to improve their individual learning.

Previous studies have described strategies for learning vocabulary. But there are various kinds of strategies that have been mentioned before, which will be discussed below.

1) Social strategies

Students use social strategies to improve their English vocabulary by interacting with others. Schmitt (1997) asserts that social strategies are how students pick out new vocabulary through interaction with others. Social strategies are used in learning by interacting with people around them when meeting new vocabulary, students can discuss it with their peers or ask the teacher for clarification, which can be more effective for remembering the words' meaning.

2) Memory strategies

Schmitt (1997) defines memory strategies as the process by which students associate new words with prior or current knowledge in order to connect the acquisition of new words mentally. Students that use memory strategies to improve new vocabulary and connect them using pictures or grouping. In these strategies, students make connections or make illustrations for the new vocabulary they have just learned in order to help them remember it, such as using pictures to convey it, which they usually do by playing games, which proves to be effective in improving their English vocabulary.

3) Cognitive strategies

Cognitive strategies are strategies that focus on repeating a word and writing (Schmitt, 1997). Among the many strategies that exist in cognitive strategies, students use repeating words repeatedly to improve their English vocabulary. They repeat these vocabulary words over and over again to enhance their vocabulary. Repeating

words is an effective strategy for memorizing new vocabulary because it is effective in improving students' English vocabulary.

4) Metacognitive strategies

Metacognitive strategies are generally broad strategies, associated with more efficient learning (Schmitt, 1997). In these strategies, students use many sources from social media such as TikTok and Instagram in short videos, watching YouTube videos, and watching films or dramas with English subtitles, reading blogs, and reading textbooks.

5) The Pomodoro technique

The Pomodoro technique is a strategy related to time management that involves how effectively students can manage their study time. As explained in the findings, students study for 25 minutes and then take a 5-minute break. They use English vocabulary in a short time effectively for use in learning.

Based on the theory, Schmitt (1997) divides learning strategies into five categories: determination, social, memory, cognitive, and metacognitive. Based on this results, the strategies for learning English vocabulary include social strategies, memory strategies, cognitive strategies, metacognitive strategies, and the Pomodoro technique.

From the previous explanation, it can be obtained that students' strategies for improving English vocabulary are social strategies, memory strategies, cognitive strategies, metacognitive strategies, and the Pomodoro technique. These strategies help students remember English vocabulary more easily while studying.

2. The Strategies Used Most Often and Least Often by Students

a The Strategies Used Most Often by Students

The results findings show that students most often used metacognitive. Schmitt (1997) asserts metacognitive strategies are strategies pertaining to the procedures involved in tracking, deciding, and assessing one's own development. Metacognitive strategies are used by students to manage and evaluate the way they learn by looking at the learning process as a whole. Therefore, these strategies are often comprehensive and associated with more effective learning.

In metacognitive strategies, students prefer using social media for learning by watching short videos about English vocabulary, watching films and dramas with English subtitles, watching YouTube videos, reading blogs, and reading textbooks. According to Wahyuni and Ratmanida (2020), stated in their research findings,

metacognitive strategies are the most often used by students to improve their English vocabulary. In addition, Fuadi et al. (2023) found that students learn English vocabulary by watching films and YouTube, and also reading books to improve their English vocabulary.

b. The Strategies Used Least Often by Students

Based on the findings above, strategies used least often are cognitive strategies, social strategies, memory strategies, and the Pomodoro technique.

Students are using cognitive strategies less used when learning vocabulary in English. According to some students, this strategy is less effective in improving their English vocabulary, so they rarely use it to learn English vocabulary. On the contrary, Fuadi et al. (2023) discovered cognitive strategies are the strategies used most often by the majority of first-grade and second grade students in learning English vocabulary.

According to Schmitt in Asgari and Mustapha (2011), social strategies are how students pick up new vocabulary through interaction with others. Students used the least social strategies because only one student uses this strategy in learning English vocabulary, which involves interacting with other people. The use of social strategies based on the previous research is also a strategy students rarely use when learning English vocabulary, as seen in Sihotang et al. (2017) found that students mostly use the determination strategy, whereas metacognitive, cognitive, memory (discovery), and social (consolidation) strategies were the least used.

Memory strategies also become the least strategies by students: only one student uses this strategy in learning English vocabulary. Students rarely mention or use strategy to improve their English vocabulary. Meanwhile, in previous studies, according to Al-Khresheh and Al-Ruwali (2020) students most often used memory strategies when acquiring vocabulary in English.

The last, the Pomodoro technique is a strategy that students rarely use, and only one student mentioned this strategy. This strategy used in learning English vocabulary is managing study time well so that it is effective in improving English vocabulary.

It is shown from the previous description that students used five different strategies when learning vocabulary in English. Furthermore, the most often used strategies are metacognitive strategies and social strategies, memory strategies, cognitive strategies, and the Pomodoro technique, least strategies by students. Fuadi et al. (2023) stated studying and learning strategies have a significant impact on

vocabulary improvement. The purpose of using learning strategies that students really do is to improve their English vocabulary in English, which helps with learning.

Conclusion

Drawing from the research findings and discussion presented in the chapter before it, the researcher draws several conclusions about students' strategies in learning English vocabulary.

Students employ five strategies when studying English vocabulary in order to improve their vocabulary. These include social strategies, memory strategies, cognitive strategies, metacognitive strategies, and Pomodoro technique. Social strategies for improving English vocabulary involve learning from interactions with others, such as asking friends or teachers. Memory strategies include students learning new vocabulary by connecting them using interesting pictures or groupings, such as through games. Cognitive strategies involve repeating words to remember new English vocabulary. Metacognitive strategies involve improving English vocabulary through short videos on social media, watching films, dramas, and YouTube videos with English subtitles, reading blogs, and textbooks. The last strategy, Pomodoro technique, is a strategy where students manage their study time effectively to improve their English vocabulary.

In improving English vocabulary, students have most often and least often strategies. Students commonly use metacognitive strategies most. These include short videos on social media, watching films and dramas with English subtitles, reading blogs, and studying textbooks. On the other hand, social strategies, memory strategies, cognitive strategies, and Pomodoro techniques are least used strategies by students.

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