

## THE USE OF VOCABULARY LEARNING STRATEGY BY UNDERGRADUATE STUDENTS

**Arpinda Syifa'a Awalin**  
UIN Sayyid Ali Rahmatullah

[arfindasyifa@gmail.com](mailto:arfindasyifa@gmail.com)

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### ABSTRACT

This research investigates the vocabulary learning strategies used by undergraduate students with high proficiency in vocabulary. The data was gained from questionnaires. In addition, the result showed that undergraduate students with high proficiency in the vocabulary used different vocabulary learning strategies based on their interests, according to three kinds of vocabulary learning strategies (i.e., discovery, social, and consolidate strategy). Using these strategies, language learners can quickly learn or memorize the vocabulary. Based on the study, it can be concluded that students with high proficiency in vocabulary use monolingual and bilingual dictionaries to help them learn vocabulary. The monolingual and bilingual dictionary represents the discovery strategy. For social strategy, they ask English teachers and communicate with a native speaker to help them learn vocabulary quickly. For the last strategy consolidation, they take notes, make word lists, and use English media.

**Keywords:** Undergraduate Students, Vocabulary Learning Strategy

### INTRODUCTION

Language learners should master vocabulary. Fan (2020) Language as a tool to help the users in engaging relationships with each other. In addition, language, especially English as International Language, should be mastered by the people who want to be accepted in the international world. It is also used in multilingual contexts for communication among non-native speakers (NNS) than among its native speaker (Vodopija-Krstanović & Marinac, 2019). That is why people should learn about the English component to support them in speaking or using English in daily activities. Since English is used in most majors in the world, such as politics, economics, and education, in learning English, the language learners should pay

attention to fundamental English components such as vocabulary, grammar, and pronunciation to achieve a higher level of English.

Based on the previous paragraph, language learners should be mastered vocabulary. Fan (2020) states that vocabulary teaching has not yet been established in the field, and most language teachers are unaware of the importance of vocabulary in establishing tremendous communication benefits. It is suitable if vocabulary is one of the most crucial components of studying vocabulary because it may enhance four English skills. Aside from that, vocabulary can help us communicate and learn.

The most commonly held opinion in foreign language teaching is that foreign language learners are more successful than others. One explanation is that successful learners are more creative in engaging the function of language acquisition in exciting ways, such as by experimenting with more effective tactics (Anderson, 2005). Successful foreign learners often understand how to acquire the basics and meanings of many foreign words, memorize and retain them, and utilize them in suitable contexts and situations. According to Ahmed (1989), practical ESL students can employ many of the learning methods regularly, whereas less successful learners use fewer strategies and use them seldom.

Furthermore, we understand that vocabulary plays a massive part in language acquisition. Typically, ESL students employ an approach to motivate them to acquire vocabulary. The vocabulary learning approach refers to a strategy that is commonly used to acquire vocabulary. Foreign language learners select or employ this method based on habit. In that situation, students will discover a proper technique to assist them in acquiring language. Catalan (2003) argued that information about the step (processes of the strategy) utilized in order to acquire vocabulary as well as the function by students is knowledge about the vocabulary learning strategy (VLS). There are four functions: finding out the meaning of new words, memorizing them in long-term memory, remembering them, and using them.

Based on the pre-observation, the researcher found that not all the undergraduate students memorized and recognized vocabulary during speaking class. Since the learners are not English majors, the researcher wants to investigate the students gaining vocabulary through vocabulary learning strategy. Concerning the problem above, the current study will investigate the vocabulary learning strategy used by undergraduate students. This study will give advantages for the reader who wants to train their vocabulary ability by using one of these strategies. Since there are many kinds of VLS that might be, they can use, using one of the strategies can help them memorize or understand new vocabulary faster.

## LITERATURE REVIEW

There is one thing that can help someone communicates with other people. It is vocabulary, often known as words that people should employ in order to communicate appropriately. There are two kinds of words or vocabulary: vocabulary in speaking (expressive vocabulary) and vocabulary in listening (receptive vocabulary). According to Moats (2005), vocabulary is the number of words with meanings that let individuals declare, infer, and grasp what people assume and opinions. Furthermore, Burns (1972) in Sihotang & Afriazi (2017) defines vocabulary as the collection of words employed by a person or class.

Aside from speech, one element that might help us communicate successfully is body language. Vocabulary is sometimes the "basic" or "essential" aspect of learning English. According to Zimmerman, as described in Coady and Huckin (1998), vocabulary is the foundation of language and plays a critical role in conventional language learning.

In addition, vocabulary classifies into several types. The vocabulary of Hammer (1991) is split into two groups. The first of those is the one the pupils have been taught, and it is predicted that they will be able to utilize it. Meanwhile, the second relates to terms pupils will recognize when encountering them but will most likely be unable to pronounce. It is referred to as direct and indirect vocabulary.

Several experts categorize vocabulary into two types: productive and receptive vocabulary, also known as recognition vocabulary, is a set of words that individuals use to generate meanings when hearing and reading. Those words are unknown to the kids, and they rarely use them. Meanwhile, productive vocabulary is described as a collection of words that individuals may employ when speaking and writing. Those are terms that are well-known and often used.

In helping the ESL students to memorize the vocabulary, vocabulary learning strategies take part in this case. In terms of vocabulary acquisition methods, Catalan (2003) suggested a definition for vocabulary learning strategy (VLS) as knowledge of the steps (processes of the strategy) utilized to acquire vocabulary as well as the role performed by students. According to the preceding statements, a vocabulary learning strategy is any combination of approaches, including actions or mental processes that learners use to enhance their English vocabulary acquisition and increase their vocabulary size. Meanwhile, Nie (2017), a vocabulary acquisition technique must meet four characteristics. Before determining a particular strategy, associating various options indicates some strategies to be picked. Second, the requirement for a complicated process implies that some processes must be taught. Third, comprehension is required, as does practice. Fourth, discover the value of language study and application. Schmitt (1997) develops a comprehensive inventory of vocabulary learning strategies. He divides the strategy into two groups: *discovery strategy* and *consolidation strategy*. Discover strategy consists of

determination and social strategy, while consolidation strategies involve social, cognitive, metacognitive, and memory strategies.

To make it clear, Schmitt's taxonomy classifies vocabulary learning strategies. There are two main strategies; discover strategy and consolidation strategy, and each strategy is divided into sub-strategy. For discovery, the strategy consists of determination and social strategies. Meanwhile, the Consolidation strategy consists of social, memory, cognitive, and metacognitive strategies.

The first type is the discovery strategy, used to infer the meaning of the unknown words. It is also classified into two strategies; (1) Discovery-determination is a strategy that the learner uses to determine its meaning by guessing from their structural knowledge of the language, guessing from L1 cognate, guessing from the content, using reference material (e.g., dictionary), (2) Discovery-social is a strategy used by the learner to determine new words by asking some for help (e.g., asking the teacher for an L1 translation, asking a classmate for meaning and discovering meaning through a group work activity)

The second type is consolidation strategy, according to Schmitt (1997), which is a strategy used to combine the new words. There are four types of this strategy; (1) Consolidation-social is an approach for determining new words by including cooperative group learning in which learners study and practice the new meaning of new words in a group setting (e.g., practice and study new words in a group and interact with native speakers), (2), Consolidation-memory consists of previous study helping relate new words to presented knowledge system (e.g., imaging word form, and connecting words to a personal experience), (3) Consolidation-cognitive, this strategy has a similar definition with consolidation-memory strategy but is not focused on manipulating rational processing. They included repetition and the use of mechanical means. (e.g., taking notes, flash notes, and words list), and (4) Consolidation-metacognitive is a strategy used by students to control and evaluate their learning by having a summary of the learning process in general (e.g., test oneself with word tests, and use of target language media.)

## **RESEARCH METHOD**

This study's design is descriptive and qualitative. Descriptive research entails documenting and evaluating the nature and occurrence as they exist at the time of the investigation. Furthermore, they suggested that descriptive research studies be conducted to gather information about the existing phenomenon of "the usage of vocabulary acquisition approach by junior high school." Then, it may be reduced to a study that depicts a natural phenomenon. The researcher saw and described the event on this occasion. A descriptive qualitative study is a research that relies on the gathering of qualitative data as well as non-numerical data such as words and pictures. It entails gathering information through descriptive qualitative

research while observing, perceiving, and comprehending what occurred in the classroom.

For gaining the data, the researcher chooses the undergraduate students who do not belong to English Major of one of University in Tulungagung. The subject of this study is 12 students who have high proficiency in vocabulary. Thus, the researcher wants to know what strategies students with high proficiency in vocabulary use. The researcher chose purposeful sampling to pick the subject of the study. These samples are obtained through the use of a test and the questioning of an English teacher. The researcher picked this method to differentiate and identify pupils with large and limited vocabulary by utilizing a test adapted by Paul Nation. While speaking with the English teacher, the researcher sought to validate the kids with huge classes.

The researcher used a questionnaire and a test to collect data. A questionnaire was utilized to learn about the students' vocabulary acquisition strategies, and a test was used to define the subject. The vocabulary exam kicked off the data collection process. In order to decide the topics, first ascertain the students' scores following the completion of the exam and the researcher's knowledge of the subjects. She began distributing questionnaires to the pupils.

## **FINDING**

The first result highlighted the vocabulary learning approach employed by undergraduate students who have a high level of vocabulary competence. The strategies were classified into three types: determination strategies, social strategies, and consolidation strategies. They employ these strategies to encourage them inappropriately learn vocabulary.

The table below shows undergraduate students with high proficiency in vocabulary strategies. The table is divided into two columns; the first is the main strategy and the second is chosen strategies. They use main strategies: discovery, social, and consolidation. In addition, each strategy has a different chosen strategy that the student chose. As shown in Table 1, bilingual and monolingual dictionaries are the strategies students choose to help them learn vocabulary. In this case, using bilingual and monolingual dictionaries represent the discovery strategy. A bilingual dictionary is a specialized dictionary used to translate words or phrases from one language to another.

In contrast, a monolingual dictionary provides a translation or explanation using another language you are familiar with, usually your native language. The following strategy is social strategy. Students' chosen strategies to help them learn vocabulary are asking English teachers to translate the new words' meanings and communicating with native speakers. The last main strategy is the consolidation strategy. Junior high students with large vocabulary sizes take notes in class to help

them learn vocabulary. Besides taking notes, they also use word lists and English media to help them learn vocabulary. Meanwhile, taking notes in class, using word lists, and using English media represent consolidation strategy.

Thus, undergraduate students with high proficiency in vocabulary use and learning strategies to help them learn vocabulary. They use all main strategies, discovery, social, and consolidation. Nevertheless, each of them has a different chosen strategy that students use. The first strategy is the discovery strategy. They use bilingual and monolingual dictionaries to help them in learning vocabulary. Second, social strategy is represented by asking English-teacher to translate the new words' meaning and communicating with native speakers to help them in their learning strategy. The last strategy is the consolidation strategy. It is represented by taking notes in class, using word lists, and using English media.

**Table 1.** Vocabulary strategy Used by Students who have large Vocabulary Size.

Main Strategy	Chosen Strategy
Discover Strategy	Use Bilingual Dictionary
	Use monolingual dictionary
Social Strategy	Ask English-teacher to translate the meaning
	Communicate with a native speaker
Consolidation Strategy	Take notes in class
	Word Lists
	Using English Media

The current study discovered a vocabulary learning approach adopted by undergraduate students. Furthermore, María & Catalán (2003) argued that information about the step (processes of the strategy) utilized in order to acquire vocabulary as well as the function by students is knowledge about the vocabulary learning strategy (VLS). Meanwhile, Schmitt (1997) develops a comprehensive inventory of vocabulary learning strategies. He divides the strategy into two groups: *discovery strategy* and *consolidation strategy*. Discover strategy consists of determination and social strategy, while consolidation strategies involve social, cognitive, metacognitive, and memory strategies. In this case, vocabulary learning strategy is the process of learning vocabulary quickly. By using some aspects of both strategies, students use these strategies to help them in learning vocabulary. Thus, this part will be elaborated on what aspects of vocabulary learning are used by junior high school students with large and small vocabulary sizes and why they use these aspects to help them learn vocabulary.

## **DISCUSSION**

According to the result, the vocabulary learning strategy can be used by undergraduate students with high proficiency in vocabulary. Each aspect represents vocabulary learning strategy; discovery strategy, social strategy, and consolidation strategy (Schmitt, 2008). For instance, the students can use the aspects they use to help them learn vocabulary and improve their ability in vocabulary (Gu & Johnson, 1996) since vocabulary learning strategy benefits everyone curious about the particular terms. Meanwhile, students with high proficiency in vocabulary use specific strategies to help them learn vocabulary; bilingual dictionaries and monolingual dictionaries in learning vocabulary. These aspects represent the discovery strategy. For the next aspect of social strategy, they ask English teachers. They communicate with native speakers to help them learn vocabulary, and the last strategy is consolidation, represented by taking notes, making word lists, and using English media. The students use those consolidation aspects.

Meanwhile, it is different from the strategy used by students with high proficiency in vocabulary. According to Schmitt (1997), these characteristics are already contained in a thorough inventory of vocabulary acquisition strategies, which he has already split into two groups. It demonstrates that ESL students with varying degrees of learning experience and skill must have some information about language learning, which influences their approach to language learning as well as their expectations about learning tactics and the outcomes of their efforts (Gu & Johnson, 1996)

## **CONCLUSION**

The vocabulary learning strategy employed by undergraduate students in this study might help students acquire vocabulary more quickly. Students previously picked each technique with a high level of vocabulary competency, which assists learners in acquiring vocabulary. There are three basic strategies (discovery strategy, social strategy, and consolidation strategy), each with various components.

The students with high proficiency in vocabulary apply monolingual and bilingual dictionaries to help them learn vocabulary. The monolingual and bilingual dictionary represents the discovery strategy. For social strategy, they ask English teachers and communicate with a native speaker to help them learn vocabulary quickly. For the last strategy consolidation, they take notes, make word lists and use English media. All of the aspects already have been divided into the main vocabulary that students use to help them learn. Junior high school students use seven aspects of vocabulary strategy with an extensive vocabulary.

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