



Non-EFL Students Vocabulary Learning Strategies

Holifah¹⁾, Kurniasih²⁾

^{1),2)}University of Islam Malang, Malang, Malang, East Java, Indonesia

¹⁾holifahh727@gmail.com, ²⁾kurniasih@unisma.ac.id

ABSTRACT

As development progresses, international competition and cooperation cannot be avoided. This phenomenon will encourage students to participate in it. Therefore, the ability to speak English is an important component to be involved in this phenomenon. Various countries in the world have been competing to apply English to their children from an early age. This study will focus on students' perceptions of vocabulary strategies in learning English. This study involved 32 participants from different universities and data collection was done through a questionnaire. The results showed that the participants liked to use learning strategies, and they agreed that using strategies in learning could improve the quality of vocabulary learning. As well as train their language skills, reasoning abilities, and understanding of the content of word use. Even though they are not consistent with just one strategy, from the data, presented, they almost ever do all the strategies offered.

Keywords: Students Perception, Vocabulary Strategy

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INTRODUCTION

Apart from increasingly advanced developments, international competition is unavoidable. This involves cooperation between countries, and students will participate in building good communication as one of the most important parts of international competition. To achieve the core goal of learning English as an international influence, countries in the world are competing to develop English skills in children from an early age. This study will focus on the use of vocabulary strategies in student learning, in which

vocabulary is the most important unit in a language. In learning English, vocabulary will affect student-learning outcomes (Hwang & Wang, 2016). The students learn vocabulary through simple words by listening to people who are talking around them (Saputra & Hadi, 2019).

In general, the difficulties faced by students in learning vocabulary are very diverse, including difficulties in phonology, how to write and spell, difficulties in using words that have the same meaning, understanding words, or idiomatic expressions. The low ability of

vocabulary can also be influenced by several internal factors such as the lack of student interest in exploring vocabulary, and the use of technology that has not been maximized as a medium for learning vocabulary.

According to Hwang & Wang (2016), one of the important factors that can stimulate the language learning process in students is to provide a learning context that allows them to be fully involved with the learning target. Efforts that can be made as a form of progress in supporting student-learning success are that they must be able to recognize the learning strategies used and maximize their involvement in them effectively. In line with that Khayati & Hadi (2021) explains that vocabulary learning is a key aspect of learning English because vocabulary contains the basic components of English Sentences.

Atay & Ozbulgan (2007) stated that research on the use of vocabulary strategies showed that there were differences between students in using their strategies. Strategy is a dynamic learning pattern so that each student has his strategy and is not the same as other students. Students who use strategies in learning vocabulary will be able to adjust their learning patterns; they will easily learn new words and combine their previous knowledge (Ahmed, 1989; Sanaoui, 1995). The use of strategies will have the opportunity to improve the quality of learning and achieve better targets. Students will freely explore vocabulary both outside and inside the classroom according to their needs.

This study aims to find out students' perceptions about the strategies they use in learning

vocabulary. The strategies offered include four kinds, namely Memory strategy which is a mental process of storing new information in memory and then remembering or retrieving that information if needed. A note-taking strategy related to writing new vocabulary and finding it useful someday (commonly used vocabulary).

This strategy is usually used to make it easier to identify the main idea in a statement, but in vocabulary writing keywords, synonyms, or antonyms of the statements found can do learning the note-taking strategy. Next is the guessing strategy, which is a learning technique that trains logic and develops reasoning. This strategy can be in the form of guessing the meaning of a word in a sentence by analyzing other words before and after it. And the last is the dictionary strategy, which is the focus of students on the dictionary as a review in vocabulary learning. Of the four strategies that have been discussed, the strategy dictionary is the most commonly used.

RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

For the research to be able to cover a wider area we took around 32 students majoring in non-English from eight universities, and one of them was a D3 Student at Jiangsu Agri-Animal Husbandry Vocational College, China. They were from semesters 2, 4, and 6. At the time of the study, these students all had 6 years of experience studying English in high school, before finally taking English as an additional course at the faculty.

The data in this study was conducted by distributing Vocabulary

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Learning Questionnaires (VLQ version 3) in several questions to the respondents, to obtain information about the strategies for using the most used vocabulary by respondents, and the results obtained were then analyzed using data analysis techniques. The distributed questionnaire will include 2 parts. Part 1, Personal data, which asks about demographic information of each respondent, semester, and major / study program they take at the University. Part 2, Vocabulary learning strategies, contains 19 questions representing 4 different strategies: Memory Strategy (6); Note-taking Strategy (4); Guessing Strategy (4); and Strategy Dictionary (5). We instruct respondents to rate each statement according to their truthfulness on a 4-point scale ranging from Strongly Agree (1) to Disagree (4).

FINDING AND DISCUSSION

In this section, the findings and discussion related to the findings will be presented. The findings, which are the result of research questions on 32 students from various majors, regarding students' perceptions of using vocabulary learning strategies in English as a foreign language (EFL) class, have been summarized in the form of percentage tables. The results of 19 questions representing 4 learning strategies will be attached to each table. After the pretest, treatment, and posttest were administered, the data obtained from the tests are analyzed and their results are described below:

No	Question	S	A	N	D	S	D
1.	I make	-	60	35%	-	-	-

	vocabulary lists of new words that I meet.			%		
2.	I write the new words on one side of a card and their explanations on the other side.	25 %	30 %	40%	-	-
3.	I make regular and structured reviews of new words I have memorized.	15 %	50 %	30%	-	-
4.	When I try to remember a word, I repeat its pronunciation in my mind.	30 %	50 %	20%	-	-
5.	I remember a group of new words that share a similar part in spelling.	-	50 %	40%	10 %	-
6.	I remember together words that sound similar.	-	50 %	40%	-	-

Table 1.1 presents a summary of the percentage results of the questionnaire related to memory strategies. Of the 6 questions, there are results, namely; Strong Agree = 11.6%, Agree = 48.3%, the numbers shown are quite high, meaning that some respondents agree to note down the new vocabulary and provide definitions on the other side.

They feel this strategy is effective to make it easier for them to improve the

amount of vocabulary they have. Although others chose neutral and disagree from the 6 questions with a quite significant percentage (Neutral = 34.1%, Disagree = 10%, Strong disagree = 0%). They agree that to remember the word they have learned they repeat its pronunciation in memory.

Question	S	A	N	D	SD
I make a note of the meaning of a new word when I think the word I'm looking up is commonly used.	20%	45%	35%	-	-
I put synonyms or antonyms together in my notebook.	10%	30%	40%	20%	-
I make a note when I see a useful expression or phrase.	35%	35%	25%	-	-
I note down examples showing the usages of the word I look up.	-	45%	50%	-	-

Table 1.2 presents 4 questions that represent note-taking strategies in vocabulary learning, and finds the results; Strong agree = 10.8%, Agree = 38.7%. Some respondents strongly agree (20%) or agree (45%) to take notes on new commonly used vocabulary and their meanings, and strongly agree (35%) or agree (35%) to record useful new phrases or expressions.

The positive number given by the respondent is quite high even though it is

slightly different from the negative number (Neutral = 37.5%, Disagree = 5%, 0%). These results indicate that note-taking strategies are widely used by respondents to help them understand the statements they encounter.

Question	S	A	N	D	SD
I look for other words or expressions in the passage that support my guess about the meaning of a new word.	10%	50%	30%	10%	-
I look for any definitions or paraphrases in the passage that support my guess about the meaning of a word.	-	25%	55%	15%	-
I analyze the word structure (prefix, root, and suffix) when guessing the meaning of a word.	-	25%	65%	10%	-
I check my guessed meaning against the immediate context to see if it fits in.	-	45%	50%	-	-

Table 1.3 presents 4 research questions that represent guessing strategies and the percentage of results from respondents. The students agreed (50%) to look for other words to support

their guess regarding the meaning of the new vocabulary because they believed this strategy would have a good effect on their reasoning abilities.

While some other respondents chose neutral (65%) when they found new vocabulary and then analyzed its word structure (root, prefix, and suffix, because maybe they needed to think harder. The comparison between strongly agree or agree (SA = 10%, Ag = 36.2%) and Neutral or disagree (Neu = 50%, Dis = 8.7%, SD = 0%) is quite significant. These results indicate that the guessing strategy in the category of word structure analysis is quite weighty for the respondents.

Question	S	A	N	D	SD
I pay attention to the examples of use when I look up a word in a dictionary.	25%	35%	35%	-	-
I consult a dictionary to find out about the subtle differences in the meaning of English words.	10%	50%	35%	-	-
I make a note when I want to help myself distinguish between the meanings of two or more words.	10%	50%	40%	-	-
When	10%	60%	30%	-	-

looking up a word in the dictionary, I read sample sentences illustrating various meanings of the word.

When I get interested in another new word in the definitions of the word I look up, I look up this word as well.	35%	50%	15%	-	-
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Table 1.4 has presented 5 research questions related to the strategy dictionary along with the percentage results from respondents. We can see that the students strongly agree (SA = 18%, Ag = 49%) when they find a new word, sentence, or phrase that is interesting and generally useful, they will look up its meaning in the dictionary. In addition, the students also strongly agreed to understand the illustrated examples of the words they were looking for in the dictionary.

The comparison between strongly agree or agree (67%) and neutral (31%) is very high. While the percentage of Disagree and Strongly Disagree scores is 0%, this shows that most of the respondents have or often use dictionary strategies to help develop their vocabulary learning.

The data in the table above shows that students gave various responses regarding the use of vocabulary learning strategies in English courses. Most of the

participants in this study gave a positive score (strongly agree or agree) on each strategy. The percentage for the category of strongly disagree is 0% in each table. This means that students have used all the strategies offered. They agree that the use of learning strategies can make it easier for them to increase vocabulary.

New lexical acquisition in the second language/L2 in students can be influenced by the use of learning strategies, which will make it easier for students to reach the target vocabulary that has been determined and consolidate vocabulary after it is found (Cohen, 1996; Bangsa, 2001; Schmitt, 1997).

Of the several questions that were shared regarding the Memory strategy, Note-taking strategy, Guessing strategy, and Dictionary strategy, most respondents agreed to use the dictionary strategy as a reference in learning vocabulary. Although not all consider that the vocabulary strategy is efficient enough in learning vocabulary, this strategy is the simplest technique and allows everyone to use it.

This is in line with the research of Prichard, 2008 that educators sometimes claim that students do not use dictionaries efficiently, but many middle and high school students use dictionaries selectively, so those who are considered less efficient are those who use dictionaries excessively.

While for the Memory strategy, most of the participants used to make a list of the new vocabulary they encountered, and the others focused on pronouncing the vocabulary so that they could easily remember it. They also agreed that by remembering the

pronunciation of a word it would be easier to remember the word.

Regarding note-taking and guessing strategies, they focus more on analysis (paraphrasing and word structure) and logical reasoning, so those who use these 2 strategies in vocabulary development will practice their thinking skills in guessing and searching for keywords. This is in line with the opinion of Eslami, 2013 that students who use contextual cues a lot to guess words, for example, the relationship between new words and others in a sentence, then the relationship of new words with conjunctions will make it easier for them to understand more about foreign vocabulary and ideas.

CONCLUSION

The findings of the study showed that the participants showed good responses to the use of vocabulary learning strategies. Students participate well in research on perceptions of the use of vocabulary learning strategies as a facility to support success in language learning. The need to use learning strategies is to encourage yourself not only to rely on limited classroom learning but more than that, to create an effective and fun learning atmosphere outside of class hours.

In addition, students assume that by using learning strategies the learning patterns will be more varied because they can regulate the pattern and time. They also assume that the learning strategies they use are quite able to help meet learning needs. The benefit of using a learning strategy is to follow the percentage table. Participants can find out the use of a word that has the same

meaning by looking at examples of statements in the dictionary. They can distinguish 2 words that look the same with the correct pronunciation.

In addition, they can also develop reasoning by guessing the meaning of the word they just encountered by looking for another word (before or after) to support their guess. And they can also find out the meaning of a statement by searching for keywords from the statement.

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