

# ENGLISH VOCABULARY LEARNING STRATEGIES USED BY JUNIOR HIGH SCHOOL STUDENTS

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**Abstract:** This research was conducted to determine the vocabulary learning strategies used by junior high school students at MTs Almaarif 01 Singosari. Data on students' use of vocabulary learning strategies was obtained from a questionnaire created by Yeh & Wang (2004) which was adopted from the taxonomy of vocabulary learning strategies developed by (Schmitt, 1997). This research procedure includes several steps; taking scores from English teachers, distributed questionnaires, and analyzed data using Microsoft Excel. The results showed that in the determination strategy, female students are superior to male students in using Vocabulary Learning Strategies and determination strategies including strategies that are effectively used in learning English vocabulary in class. Metacognitive strategies require a higher level of awareness and self-reflection, which may be more challenging for some learners to develop and apply them effectively. In addition, metacognitive strategies may be less familiar to students and teachers, and therefore may not be emphasized or taught as often as other strategies.

**Key Words:** Vocabulary, learning strategies

## INTRODUCTION

When learning a language, students must first build their vocabulary. It is the element of language development that is most important. Without a strong vocabulary, it can be difficult for us to communicate vocally and in writing. Brown (1995), vocabulary serves as the foundation for language development, which is essential for communication. This means that acquiring vocabulary comes first when learning English. The ability to apply structural functions for efficient communication depends on vocabulary, hence acquiring vocabulary at a young age is more vital than studying grammar, (Nunan, 1991). In other words, while one can communicate a little without grammar, one cannot convey anything without vocabulary. Thornbury (2005) asserts that without vocabulary and very little more, oral communication is impossible.

According to Cameron (2001), learning a second language requires building a useful vocabulary. This means that developing a strong vocabulary involves more than just teaching children the words and having them memorize them; it also involves teaching them how to understand and use the terms in real-world situations. The students should learn a sufficient number of terms and be proficient in their usage. Harmer (2007), educators must make an effort to comprehend how their students think and behave. Macaro (2003), each student learns uniquely and may have their method used for learning vocabulary outside of the teaching space. Therefore, the subject is the responsibility of the teacher to use creative thinking while selecting vocabulary-learning exercises to create a fun environment.

Students must use the right strategies when acquiring vocabulary. According to Oxford (1990), students practice learning strategies to make learning simpler, earlier, extra enjoyable, extra self-directed, extra effective, and extra transferable. According to Schmitt (2000),

vocabulary learning tactics can motivate students and hold their interest while they are learning language in a strategies that motivates progress in vocabulary development. Active learning strategies must be utilized to increase vocabulary since they enable students to understand the meaning of new words, pick up additional terms, and communicate clearly (Cahyono, 2008). Therefore, using effective learning strategies will aid students in expanding their vocabulary, which in turn will impact their language abilities.

Active and passive vocabulary are the two categories into which some experts split vocabulary. The distinction between these lexical categories is made by (Harmer, 1991). Active vocabulary has been taught to students and is expected of them to be able to use it. Passive vocabulary refers to words that students will likely be able to recognize when they hear them but probably won't be able to pronounce. Active vocabulary was defined by Finocchiaro (1973) as arguments that students can understand, pronounce properly, and practice successfully in dialogue and script. A learner who employs passive vocabulary does not really use the word while speaking or writing, even though they can recognize and understand it when reading or hearing to someone else use it. Numerous factors affect how well the teaching and learning process works. One of these elements remains the use of strategy in learning, particularly in the teaching of languages. Finding and using the right method will support students and teachers learn a language additional speedily and effectively. Every student uniquely develops their vocabulary learning strategies. Researchers who have contributed to the creation of VLS classification and taxonomy include Schmitt (1997) and (Oxford, 1990). There are two primary learning strategies, direct and indirect, according to (Oxford, 1990). Direct strategies include memory, cognitive, and compensatory strategies. Indirect strategies include metacognitive, emotional, and social strategies. While Schmitt (1997) followed Oxford's theory on vocabulary learning processes and divides them into five categories: (1) Determination strategies, (2) Social strategies, (3) Memory strategies, (4) Cognitive strategies, and (5) Metacognitive strategies.

Fan (2003) identified some differences for the use of learning language strategies between male and female learners. More research is needed in order to accurately describe the sex differences in vocabulary learning strategies use. According to a study by Fan (2003) male and female students normally use the same strategies. Some studies have shown that female learners often use a wider range of learning language strategies than male learners. Gender differences in Vocabulary Learning Strategies do have various factors in learning, and male research sources explore gender differences in case studies. Female are stated to use more strategies in learning than men Oxford (1989) this happens because female more often use strategies in the form of formal rules, planning strategies and input elicitation strategies, while men only use learning through vocabulary. word picture (Catalan, 2003). According to Oxford (1989) female more often use formal-based learning such as; being careful to revise vocabulary as well as arranging and analyzing words, Even female also excel in conversational input such as; asking for corrections in a study result. To learn English vocabulary, different students employ different strategies. In order to accurately explain gender disparities in the usage of vocabulary learning strategies, study was done.

Over the years, much research has been conducted on English vocabulary learning strategies. Amirian (2013) investigated popular and less popular strategies used by students. in 2013, 74 EFL students had high expectations regarding the vocabulary learning strategies they used. These findings show specifically that context-based guessing and dictionary use are the most common strategies, but asking a teacher or a group of friends for clarification is hardly applicable. This is significantly different from this research because this research focuses on gender differences. learning strategies used by male and female students in the

second grade of junior high school. The purpose of this research is to provide some analysis between English vocabulary learning strategies by male and female students, namely the strategies that students believe are most effective and least effective in helping them learn and improve their vocabulary. This research uses qualitative methodology to determine the level of strategies that are widely used and least used by male and female students at MTs Almaarif 01 Singosari. Therefore, this research was conducted to reveal (1) what vocabulary learning strategies are mostly used by male students, (2) what vocabulary learning strategies are mostly used by female students, (3) what vocabulary learning strategies are used the least by male students, and (4) what vocabulary learning strategies are used the least by female students.

## **METHOD**

The researcher employs a qualitative descriptive approach since it gathers data based on actual circumstances. According to Sugiyono (2013), qualitative analysis is a technique for verifying the accuracy of data by physically seeing the items. Using this method, researchers will identify the strategies used by students in learning vocabulary at MTs Almaarif 01 Singosari. The subjects of this study were second-grade students of junior high school at MTs Almaarif 01 Singosari. the researcher took 43 students consisting of 22 male students and 21 female students who were divided into two classes and had high scores in English subjects.

In order to gather information about the participants' vocabulary learning practices, the researcher used a questionnaire in this study. A questionnaire, according to Sugiyono (2008), is a method of data collection that involves providing answers to statements or inquiries for the respondent. Researchers employed a questionnaire to find out how second-graders at MTs Almaarif 01 Singosari approach acquiring language. Schmitt (1997) taxonomy, which was created by Yeh & Wang (2004) as a vocabulary-learning strategy study instrument, is used in the questionnaire. Damari (2019) then translated it into Indonesian. 50 statements from Yeh & Wang (2004) related to the vocabulary learning approach are included in this study. The questionnaire includes a few questions that are intended to help the respondents understand the vocabulary-learning strategies used by second-graders at MTs Almaarif 01 Singosari.

### **Data Collection**

Researchers used several procedures to gather data for this investigation. The researcher first sought the principal's approval. Second, the researcher got the English teacher's approval. Third, the researcher inquired about the student's interest in participating as respondents. Fourth, the researcher explains why asking students to fill out the questionnaire is important. After forty-three students are asked to fill out the questionnaire. The researcher finished collecting data in two weeks.

### **Data Analysis**

The data analysis step of a data processing operation produces a series of results, which may take the form of a new invention or other forms. After collecting information through a questionnaire, the initial action of the researcher is to assess the information based on the answers to the questions. 5 Likert scales are used in this questionnaire. Using Microsoft Excel for data analysis, the questionnaire responses were categorized. the vocabulary learning strategies used in the questionnaire were included in the questionnaire adapted from other researchers. The data is calculated and entered into the table after being categorized by the researcher. Information reveals which strategies are used dominantly and which are used less. the most common strategies were determined by participants' choices of "always" and "sometimes". In this case, "always" has an advantage over "sometimes". the most frequently used strategy was determined by the percentage of participants who 'always' selected their option. The final strategy that participants use is based on how many "never" options the participants choose.

## FINDING AND DISCUSSIONS

The findings, the researcher describes the results of the data that has been analyzed. There are two data that the researcher took, the first was from a questionnaire and the second was the value of the English subject from the teacher. The researcher took 43 male and female students. then the researcher looked for the average of each strategy used by students. As much as possible, the results of the analysis can be seen in Table 4.1.

| No | Female Students | Mean | Male Students | Mean |
|----|-----------------|------|---------------|------|
| 1. | Determination   | 3.51 | Determination | 3.29 |
| 2. | Social          | 3.24 | Social        | 2.53 |
| 3. | Memory          | 3.30 | Memory        | 2.75 |
| 4. | Cognitive       | 2.85 | Cognitive     | 2.31 |
| 5. | Metacognitive   | 2.50 | Metacognitive | 2.09 |

These calculations show that the determination strategy, with average scores of 3.29 and 3.51 for both male and female students, has the highest average outcome for vocabulary learning strategies. In addition, the difference in the use of the highest vocabulary learning strategy is also found in the determination strategy, with an average score of 3.51 (female students) and 3.29 (male students). This means that female students learn more vocabulary using dictionaries to find meaning than male students. According to these estimates, a metacognitive strategy with an average of (2.09) male and (2.50) female is the vocabulary strategy for learning that is least used by male and female students. In addition, differences in the use of vocabulary learning strategies are also found in metacognitive strategies, with an average score of 2.09 (male students) and 2.50 (female students). This means that male students learn less vocabulary using media or games to find new meanings than female students.

### Discussion

According to all the information gathered from a vocabulary learning strategy questionnaire, the determination strategy is the one most frequently employed by students at MTs Almaarif 01 Singosari, with an average male (3.29) and female (3.51) user. While the least used strategy is the Metacognitive strategy with an average of males (2.09) and females (2.50).

The data in Table 4.1 shows that the determination strategy is the one most frequently used by male and female students, with an average of male (3.29) female (3.51). In determination strategies, it can be seen from the results of the research mentioned that these strategies are the Vocabulary Learning Strategies most frequently used by students of MTs Almaarif 01 Singosari. This happens because students more often use dictionaries to find meanings and analyze types of verbs, nouns, adjectives, and adverbs. In addition, students can analyze types of words such as verbs, nouns, adjectives, and adverbs. The research results of this study are by Schmitt's theory (1997) which states that determination strategies are becoming more widely used because they have several forms of this study that allow students to be actively engaged with the new or common words and take ownership of their learning process. Because when using this strategy, students are more independent in getting the meaning of a word or sentence based on their background knowledge, contextual clues, or reference material. Not only that, determination strategies can empower students in developing their problem-solving skills and become more self-reliant in their vocabulary acquisition. This is what has been stated by Catalan (2003) in his theory that female students have an advantage in producing a language and having verbal fluency. Also, they often use strategies in the form of formal rules and have good planning strategies and input elicitation strategies.

The least used metacognitive strategy can be seen in Table 4.1 which received an average for male students (2.09) for female students (2.50). It means that students rarely learn English using media such as music, newspapers, and radio. This finding is consistent with the theory in an Oxford (1989) that metacognitive strategies require a higher level of awareness and self-reflection, which may be more challenging for some learners to develop and apply effectively. In addition, metacognitive strategies may be less familiar to learners and teachers, and therefore may not be emphasized or taught as often as other strategies. Based on these findings, it can be concluded that no theoretical evidence or previous research is showing that male students practice less metacognitive strategies than female students. Additionally, because learners and teachers may not be as familiar with metacognitive strategies as other tactics, they could not be stressed or taught as frequently. To promote the use of metacognitive strategies in vocabulary learning, it may be beneficial to incorporate metacognitive strategy training in the classroom to guide students to more effective control of their learning and help them transfer those strategies to other learning situations.

This finding shows that the strategy most used by male and female students is the strategy of determination and the least used is the metacognitive strategy where female students have a higher average level than male students. female students study more formally, such as; revise the acquired vocabulary, compose and analyze the words in a sentence. So it can be concluded that in this determination strategy, female students are superior to male students in using the Vocabulary Learning Strategy. In studies on language learning strategies involving gender, efforts have been made to look into the strategies employed by male and female, and "gender differences" findings to date suggest that typically language learning situations used by female more learning strategies than men and use it more often" (Oxford, 1989). Additionally, a study by Fan (2003) found that typical male and female students use the same and more similar strategies rather than different ones. is in line with the previous study by Agung et al., (2022) who concluded that these students with high self-efficacy were discovered as evidenced by their magnitude and strength. Whereas this study concluded that all students used the strength dimension at the proficiency level.

## **CONCLUSIONS AND SUGGESTIONS**

Based on the data discussed in the findings, the researcher would like to explain the conclusions. The data shows that female students have an advantage in using the determination strategy in the Vocabulary Learning Strategy because female students study more formally, such as; revising the acquired vocabulary, compose and analyze the words in a sentence. So it can be concluded that in the determination strategy, female students are superior to male students in using Vocabulary Learning Strategies and determination strategies including strategies that are effectively used in learning English vocabulary in class. Metacognitive strategies require a higher level of awareness and self-reflection, which may be more challenging for some learners to develop and apply them effectively. In addition, metacognitive strategies may be less familiar to students and teachers, and therefore may not be emphasized or taught as often as other strategies.

Following the conclusion of the research, For students, the results of this study show that the student's vocabulary strategy for learning in MTs Almaarif 01 Singosari second grade is in the low category. The discovery that the category average is extremely low serves as proof of this. Students are urged to develop more effective strategies for learning vocabulary. The students' experience with vocabulary learning strategies needs to be increased. Additionally, they need to become more motivated and interested in using the most effective vocabulary learning strategy. For teachers, the situation is believed that this research would inspire them toward consider a more successful vocabulary teaching strategy to advance students' learning abilities. To help students improve their vocabulary learning strategies, the

teacher can employ interesting strategies. In other research, there are still many facets of vocabulary learning strategies that can be examined. Finally, other researchers can look into an alternative aspect of learning processes, and the results of this study may then stand used as preliminary data aimed at additional research.

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