

## English Learning Strategies for Vocabulary Mastery

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### Abstract

This study intends to identify the categories of English vocabulary learning procedures that high school students most frequently employed. The idea of language learning techniques from Rebecca L. Oxford was used to analyze the use of English vocabulary acquisition strategies. Both qualitative and quantitative methods were used in this study. For learners in vocational schools, the qualitative technique is utilized to describe vocabulary acquisition strategies. Data on the prevalence of various English vocabulary acquisition methodologies for high school pupils are presented using the quantitative method. The Class 11 of Hospitality Students academic year 2021 SMK Telenika Palembang served as the study's data sources, and the information was gathered from the answers to questionnaires that the students had completed. The analysis found that pupils frequently use memory to learn English vocabulary. Then, the social technique is the second most often used strategy among pupils. The third technique chosen by students is the cognitive one. The fourth strategy is Compensation, followed by the fifth strategy, Metacognitive. The affective approach is the one students employ most often when acquiring English vocabulary.

*Keywords: English, Strategy, Vocabulary Mastery, Vocabulary Acquisition Strategies.*

### INTRODUCTION

Learning is a process of changing a person's attitude/behavior that is positive for him. Of course, an individual must experience a learning process in his life. Someone can do the learning process without knowing the time and place. It means that an individual can learn anywhere and anytime he wants. However, not all processes of change in an individual can be called learning. Only positive change, which means a change for the better and dynamic behavior of the individual, can be called learning. As mentioned by (Melvina et al., 2020), learning is a process of mental activity carried out by a person to obtain a change in behavior that is positive and persists for a relatively long time through training or experience involving aspects of personality both physically and psychologically; learning produces changes in oneself. Each individual and these changes have a positive value for him.

Language is a fundamental aspect of an individual in life. Learning a language is one of the essential things for an individual. Every individual born to earth must have a language because language is a means of communication between individuals and other

individuals to convey information. As mentioned by (Ang et al., 2017), Humans utilize language as a means of oral and written communication to convey their ideas, aspirations, and emotions. To learn a language, students should consider language skills in many ways. There are four types of language skills: listening, speaking, reading, and writing. Every aspect of language skills is closely related to one another. An individual can acquire a skill with a lot of practice and practice. Practicing language skills also means training thinking skills (Basri, 2020).

The aspects of language skills above also apply to foreign language skills. As in English, there are also 4 aspects of language skills: listening, speaking, reading, and writing. In addition to the four skills mentioned for students learning English, there are also four criteria that must be considered in English language skills: vocabulary mastery, listening skills, grammar skills, and text comprehension abilities (Brown, 2003). The four criteria are vocabulary mastery which is the essential ability to learn foreign languages and English (Purwanto, 2020).

One aspect of English language skills is the skill/ability to master vocabulary. Vocabulary is all the words contained in a language (Gardner, 2013). Based on this theory, It can be stated that vocabulary is a crucial component of linguistic proficiency. Therefore, studying vocabulary is a crucial component of learning English.

English language education In Indonesia is carried out formally in the third development phase, starting from high school to the university level (Ariffin et al., 2021). Currently, the curriculum applied in elementary school to high school education is the 2013 curriculum. In the Regulation of the Minister of Education and Culture of the Republic of Indonesia Number 36 of 2018, English is one of the subjects of group A academic specialization at the high school level. Since high school students are new to learning English, it can be said that high school students are beginners level learners of English.

As beginner-level learners who study English, high school students need knowledge of English vocabulary. Because with good vocabulary knowledge, students will be able to understand the meaning of English. English education in high school is shown so that students can demonstrate mastery of many vocabularies so that if students want to continue their education at a higher level, they will not experience many difficulties. By mastering adequate vocabulary, students are expected to be able to communicate in English according to the characteristics of high school students.

Learning English vocabulary can be influenced by students' learning strategies. Based on observations made by researchers at SMK Telenika Palembang, there are various types of students with different vocabulary mastery. Some students can master English vocabulary in terms of writing and pronunciation. Some students tend to be able to master vocabulary in terms of pronunciation rather than writing. Of course, each student's English vocabulary learning strategies are different. From this phenomenon, researchers researched the analysis of English vocabulary learning strategies for vocational school students.

A person's internal capacity for thought, problem-solving, and decision-making is their strategy (Atmowardoyo et al., 2021). As they learn, students will be required to think critically and analyze, solve, and make judgments. In thinking, one will experience difficulties. So, every individual needs a strategy to get through the difficulties. Learning is experienced and done by every individual from birth to the end of life. Learning is a process of acquiring something that leads to reasonable changes in the individual. Furthermore, (Lee & Heinz, 2016) explains that learning is a process to achieve competency, skill, and attitude. Then each individual's learning ability becomes one of the essential aspects of life and becomes the criteria for distinguishing humans from other creatures.

A *learning strategy* is a habit pattern used in the learning process so that students can develop their abilities deeper. Learners use their habits in the learning process to gain knowledge of what is being studied. As stated by (An et al., 2020), *learning strategies* are defined as various activities used by learners to understand what they are learning. Therefore, learning strategies are essential in the learning process; students need to apply appropriate learning strategies to get good learning outcomes.

According to Oxford (Yulianti, 2018), more depth learning strategies suggest that Language learners use specific techniques to make learning more straightforward, quicker, more pleasant, independent, efficient, and adaptable to different contexts. The viewpoint above leads to the conclusion that a language learning strategy is a unique pattern or habit used by learners to enhance the intake, storage, and use of information to facilitate and hasten language learning. According to Oxford (Salikin et al., 2017), language learning strategies can be classified into 2 primaries, direct and indirect. (Oxford, 2016) explains that the direct strategy involves using the target language or the language being studied, in this case, English, directly to facilitate the learning process. The direct strategy consists of a memory strategy, a cognitive strategy, and a compensation strategy. At the same time, the indirect strategy leads to providing indirect support in language learning, which is done by focusing attention, planning, controlling anxiety, and cooperation. Indirect strategies consist of metacognitive strategy, affective strategy, and social strategy.

The topic of language learning strategies is a topic that is still hotly discussed in the context of foreign language learning. A lot of research on language learning strategies has also been done. (Nguyen & Terry, 2017) studied English language learning techniques used by students. According to the study's findings, students rarely use language learning strategies when studying English as a foreign language, which indicates that they are not very aware of their use. (Salikin et al., 2017) examined children's language learning strategies. The results of his research show that there are 12 characteristics/features in language learning strategies. (An et al., 2020) explains A strategy is a set of learning activities that the teacher chooses and employs

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also been done. (Nguyen & Terry, 2017) studied English language learning techniques used by students. According to the study's findings, students rarely use language learning strategies when studying English as a foreign language, which indicates that they are unaware of their use—of examined children's language learning strategies. The results of his research show that there are 12 characteristics/features in language learning strategies. (An et al., 2020) explains that A strategy is a set of learning activities that the teacher chooses and employs contextually, taking into account the students' characteristics, the classroom setting, the neighborhood, and particular learning objectives. Learning strategies and objectives must be linked to produce the proper learning activity steps. Effective and efficient. The learning strategy comprises approaches and procedures that ensure students accomplish the learning goals—the researcher classifies learning strategies into 4 types: cognitive, meta-cognitive, practical, and social. Cognitive strategies relate to the thinking power of learners in processing teaching and learning materials. The techniques or methods students use to cope with and manage the teaching and learning materials are called meta-cognitive strategies.

Affective strategies relate to the attitudes and feelings of learners in dealing with the learning process of learners. Social strategy relates to learners' collaboration with their peers to achieve learning goals. This grouping seems more straightforward, but its boundaries are more precise. Whereas Oxford has the same basic thoughts as some other researchers, Oxford first divides direct and indirect learning methodologies are divided into two main categories. The three subtypes of the direct strategy are memory, cognition, and compensatory. The three categories of indirect methods are meta-cognitive, practical, and social. There are specific types of activities for each technique. Teachers can select from various learning strategies, including direct expository tactics, deductive-inductive strategies, and comprehensive learning.

Although there have been many studies on language learning strategies, this research is still possible because there are differences from previous research. In (Meksi, 2020), the research examines English learning strategies, and the research subjects are students. The existing problems were answered using a literature approach, and (Agustinasari et al., 2022) analyzed the learning strategies of high school students who passed English and the factors that influenced high school students' graduation in English with a qualitative approach. Meanwhile, this study analyzed English vocabulary learning strategies for vocational school students. Therefore, based on the theory, this study intends to examine the categories of English vocabulary learning procedures that high school students most frequently employed.

## **METHOD**

This study uses mixed, qualitative and quantitative methods with a case study research design—qualitative descriptive method to describe and analyze English vocabulary learning strategies for vocational students. Qualitative methods consist of data collection and analysis activities (Fraenkel et al., 2012). Then the quantitative descriptive method in the form of simple statistical descriptive presents data on the

frequency of the types of language learning strategies used by vocational students (Sugiyono, 2019).

The data sources in this study were students of class 11 of the Hospitality academic year 2021 at SMK Telenika Palembang, totaling 23 students. The researcher chose the data source because eleventh-grader students were students who had studied English starting in tenth grade, so they had more vocabulary mastery. They were considered to have language learning strategies. The result of a questionnaire filled out by Students was given information about the various language learning techniques in the form of statement items taken from the Strategy Inventory for Language Learning (SIL).

The instrument in this research is in the form of a questionnaire. The questionnaire contains six types of language learning strategies according to (Oxford, 2016). Each language learning strategy contains statement items selected *Strategy Inventory for Language Learning* from Oxford. The statement items totaling 30 items were translated into Indonesian so that students could understand the meaning of the statements in the questionnaire. The questionnaire in this study was prepared using a Likert scale and language learning theory (Oxford, 2016) to determine students' tendencies regarding the strategies used. Each strategy has a statement item with a different number of items. The following is a table of questionnaires and details of the questionnaire statement items used as instruments in the study.

**Table 1.** Questionnaire for learning English vocabulary strategies for high school students

Variable	Indicator	Questionare Number	
Language Learning Strategies	Memory Strategy	1,2,3,4,5	
	Cognitif Strategy	6,7,8,9,10	
	Direct Strategy	Compensation Strategy	11,12,13,14,15
		Metacognitif Strategy	15,17,18,19,20
	Indirect Strategy	Affective Strategy	21,22,23,24,25
		Social Strategy	26,27,28,29,30

The distribution of questionnaires served as the study's data collection method for vocational students through the Google Form platform. Research subjects were asked to respond to all the statements. There are 30 statements with five categories of

answers *very rarely* (S), *rarely* (J), *sometimes* (K), *often* (SR), and *always* (SL). The answer category is determined by the size of the student's learning habits or tendencies. The size of study habits used is +20 times a week. *Very rarely* means done only 1-2 times a week. *Rarely* means done more than 2 times, but less than 10 times a week. *Sometimes* that means doing it about 10 times a week. *It often* means being done more than 10 times a week. *It always* means done almost any time of the week. Data analysis techniques were carried out by 1. The results of the questionnaires filled out by students were grouped according to 6 types of learning strategies. 2. Presenting the data from the questionnaire results according to the types of learning strategies 3. Calculating the percentage of each category of answers by dividing the total score for each category of learning habit answers by the total score for each learning strategy and then making it in the form of a percent. The percentage results of each learning strategy are described to show an overview of the frequency of English vocabulary and The learning methods that vocational students employ. By adding the percentages of the tendency category often and always, one may calculate the ratio of the frequency of learning strategies. These findings are used to determine the typical learning techniques pupils employ when acquiring English vocabulary

## RESULT AND DISCUSSION

### Result

A graph of the English vocabulary learning strategies for SMK students is obtained from the questionnaires distributed to students. The following graph describes each strategy for learning English vocabulary for vocational students.

**Table 2.** Percentage of high school students' answers to the English vocabulary learning strategy

No	Kinds of Strategy	Very Rarely	Rarely	Sometimes	Often	Always
1	Memory	5 (5%)	12 (12%)	30 (29.4%)	33 (32.3%)	22 (22%)
2	Cognitif	5 (5%)	10 (10%)	19 (18.6%)	31 (30.4%)	37 (36.3%)
3	Compensation	4 (5%)	13 (15%)	28 (33%)	32 (37.6%)	8 (9%)
4	Metacognitif	1 (1.5%)	11 (16%)	20 (29.4%)	27 (39.7%)	9 (13%)
5	Affective	4 (6%)	8 (11.8%)	9 (13%)	21 (30.9%)	26 (38.2%)
6	Social	2 (2%)	6 (7%)	23 (27%)	34 (40%)	20 (24%)

Table 2 shows an overview of the frequency of Student learning methods for English vocabulary at SMK Telenika. Based on the examination of English vocabulary acquisition

techniques, it is known that students often use Memory strategies with a percentage of 32.3%, Compensation strategies with a percentage of 37.6%, Metacognitive strategies with a percentage of 39.7%, and Social strategies with a percentage of 40%. At the same time, the Affective strategy, with a percentage of 38.2% and Cognitive strategies, with a percentage of 36.3%, are strategies that students constantly use.

**Table 3.** The Ratio of English Vocabulary Learning Strategies

<b>Strategy</b>	<b>Ratio</b>
<b>Memory</b>	69.1%
<b>Cognitif</b>	66.7%
<b>Compensation</b>	63.5%
<b>Metacognitif</b>	53.9%
<b>Affective</b>	52.9%
<b>Social</b>	69.1%

Then the frequencies ratio of English Vocabulary Learning Strategies, By adding the percentages of tendencies, frequently, and always, SMK students' tactics for acquiring the English language. In the table above, it may therefore be described. The findings of the questionnaire analysis are presented in Table 3, which lists the sorts of techniques utilized by SMK pupils in decreasing order of frequency. The analysis findings indicate that students most frequently utilize the Social and Memory technique, which has a percentage of 69.1 percent, to learn English vocabulary. Then, with a ratio of 66.7 percent, the cognitive technique is the second most often used strategy among pupils. With a frequency of 63.5 percent, the third approach students use the most frequently is the compensation strategy. Following that, the Compensation approach comes in at number four, and the metacognitive strategy is the strategy that is rarely used by students in learning English vocabulary, with a percentage of 53.9 %.

## **Discussion**

Learners use memory strategies to remember and retrieve new information. This strategy only uses prior experience knowledge and the learner's memory. Oxford (2016) states that the Memory strategy is done by connecting one concept to another but does not always involve deep understanding. Such as connecting sounds (rhythm), pictures, locations (book pages or blackboards), and motion (physical response). For example, when the learner relates the sound of speech to the things he has ever remembered, the learner uses a memory strategy.

Then, Social strategies are all learner behaviors closely related to cooperation between students and their peers in the learning process. In its application, this strategy is how a learner chooses to interact with his peers or other speakers, such as by forming small/large study groups. In addition, asking other people or people who are more skilled is an example of another application of social strategy.

Many students remember English vocabulary by memorizing vocabulary found in written texts and those heard in spoken texts and by remembering English vocabulary according to sound. According to the analysis results, both strategies are most often used by vocational students in learning English vocabulary. The students used both strategies 69.1%.

Some students rarely remember English vocabulary by imagining pictures and their meanings and physically demonstrating the vocabulary that is read or heard. This case is almost similar to those (Mandasari&Oktaviani, 2018), which shows that the Memory strategy is a strategy that is very rarely used in foreign language learners. Students use the metacognitive technique, which is of the fifth order. All learner behaviors, known as metacognitive strategies, are closely related to the techniques or methods students use to deal with and manage the learning process. A metacognitive strategy is referred to as a method that goes beyond cognitive thinking and enables a student to coordinate their learning. (Suwanarak, 2019).

According to (Lee & Heinz, 2016), the steps in implementing social strategies include asking questions, collaborating with other parties, and empathizing with others. Ask can be manifested in asking questions to ask for clarification or ask for corrections from others. Collaboration with other people can be done with people who are more skilled in English or with friends. Moreover, empathy for others is shown in the learner to recognize and understand British culture.

In this case, SMK students often ask other people if they do not understand English vocabulary they do not know. They ask teachers or friends to help correct mistakes or difficulties experienced and ask for help from those who are more fluent in English. (Laland, 2004) findings also show that 2 out of 4 SMK students who pass the language test use social strategies in their learning process. Contrary to the findings of (Wahjuningsih, 2019), which show that social strategies are very often used, even the percentage reaches a ratio of 69.1%.

The second strategy most often used by students in learning English vocabulary is the Cognitive strategy. Cognitive strategies are all learner behaviors related to knowledge and the use of thinking power in a learning process. In its application, this strategy can be in the form of activities that trigger the emergence of knowledge and the use of students' thinking power. In (Priyastiti, 2021), this strategy can take the form of six kinds of cognitive behavior expected to represent this strategy. These six behaviors are: correcting their mistakes, using gestures, practicing speaking words, writing in notebooks, reading from the blackboard, and looking at teaching media.



The analysis of the questionnaire shows that students often practice speaking and intonation English vocabulary repeatedly, making summaries of the vocabulary learned, and translating English vocabulary to find its meaning. In this case, students use their knowledge and thinking power for the learning process. This result is different from the findings of (Genova, 2019), which shows that students as foreign language learners very rarely use cognitive strategies in the learning process. However, (Resmini, 2019) found that Cognitive strategy is used by all research subjects, namely SMK students who passed the linguistic test.

The third strategy is a compensation strategy that vocational students use. The percentage of results of the questionnaire analysis stated that less than 65% of the students used this strategy. It means that many students do not understand learning strategies and do not have enough awareness to apply these strategies. According to (Galali&Cinkara, 2017), The compensation strategy is used by learners who already have high enough skills. This result is evidenced by the findings of (QOMARIAH, 2018), which show that the Compensation strategy is the most frequently used language learning strategy by outstanding students. Another case (Tanjung, 2018) also showed his finding that compensation strategies were more widely used in students with higher levels of language proficiency. Based on these things, it is very natural that many SMK students do not or rarely use this strategy. Because the Compensation strategy is rarely used by students, it does not mean that students will not develop in learning English vocabulary. As (Pawlak & Oxford, 2018) said that the various strategies used can trigger language learning.

The fourth strategy is Metacognitive; it helps students organize, plan and evaluate learning to set learning goals and evaluate themselves. In this case, some students use metacognitive strategies, and some do not or rarely. This result shows that only some SMK students should think in advance to plan the learning process; during the learning process, they will monitor their understanding and knowledge, thus enabling them to self-evaluate. This result is different from the findings of (Leba et al., 2021), which show that metacognitive strategies are the strategies most often used by foreign learners. Likewise, (Oxford, 2016) emphasizes that Metacognitive type strategies are essential for language learning to be successful.

Last is Affective strategies are all learner behaviors closely related to learners' attitudes and feelings or emotions in dealing with the learning process. Student behavior can be in the form of positive or harmful behavior. This strategy is divided into two, namely positive and negative affective. Positive affective means learner behavior that shows an attitude of accepting and appreciating a learning process. Negative affective means learner behavior that shows an attitude of refusing and not appreciating the learning process.

According to the results of the analysis, the strategy rarely used by vocational students in learning English vocabulary is the affective strategy. In this case, students put forward attitudes and feelings or emotions in learning English vocabulary. It can be

concluded that the students of SMK Telenika Palembang managed to control their attitudes, feelings, and emotions while learning English vocabulary. This result differs from the findings in (Priyastiti, 2021), which showed that students managed to control their emotions and attitudes toward foreign language learning. A similar finding by (Liton, 2015) shows that the Affective strategy is the most often used by students in learning a foreign language, English. According to Oxford (Liton, 2015), Affective strategies refer to emotions, attitudes, motivations, and values; Thus, students may be considered good language learners. In order to students must get a good support system, such as family and friends, to encourage students' emotional atmosphere. In addition, motivation and encouragement from English teachers are also needed so that students' emotions emerge to produce an optimal learning process.

## CONCLUSION

According to the research that has been done, three language learning methodologies are recommended, namely memory, social and cognitive strategies, which are often used and become a priority for most high school students to learn English vocabulary. These studies show that students emphasize feelings, emotions, thinking power, and involvement with others in learning English vocabulary. Meanwhile, memory and metacognitive strategies are learning strategies used by some students, which means that other students rarely use these strategies. Then the compensation strategy is a strategy that high school students rarely use. Therefore, this strategy needs to be maximally improved by high school students, and teachers must be able to trigger the English language learning process for their students to achieve success in the learning process.

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