

**VOCABULARY ACQUISITION STRATEGIES AMONG
EFL STUDENTS AT UIN AR-RANIRY UNIVERSITY**

THESIS

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UNIVERSITAS ISLAM NEGERI AR-RANIRY BANDA ACEH
2025 M / 1446 H**

**VOCABULARY ACQUISITION STRATEGIES AMONG EFL STUDENTS AT UIN
AR-RANIRY UNIVERSITY**

THESIS

Has been Approved and Submitted to the Thesis Munaqasyah Defense
As One of the Requirements to Obtain a Bachelor's Degree
in the Field of Education in English Language Teaching

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THESIS

It has been defended in *Sidang Munaqasyah*
in front of the board of the Examination for the working paper
and has been accepted in partial fulfillment of the requirements
for the Bachelor Degree of Education in English Language Teaching

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adalah benar karya saya, **kecuali** semua kutipan dan referensi yang disebutkan sumbernya. Apabila terdapat kesalahan dan kekeliruan di dalamnya, maka akan sepenuhnya menjadi tanggungjawab saya. Demikianlah surat ini saya buat dengan sesungguhnya.

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g membuat pernyataan



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ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS



Alhamdulillah Rabbil ‘Alamin, I would like to express the deepest praises and thanks to Allah Subhanahu wa ta’ala, the almighty, the most merciful and the most gracious who has given mercies and blessing that the researcher could finish this thesis. Peace and salutations be upon the prophet Muhammad Shalallahu ‘alaihi wasallam, as well as his family and associates, who brought insight into human life.

I would like to express my deepest gratitude to my supervisor, Fithriyah S. Ag., M. Pd., who was willing to spend time, energy, and thoughts so guide me in completing this thesis. Thanks also to my academic advisor Prof. Dr. T. Zulfikar, S. Ag., M. Ed., who taught and guided me during the study. I also express my gratitude to the Head of the English Language Education Department, staffs, and all lectures of the English Language Education Department at UIN Ar-Raniry Banda Aceh.

Furthermore, I would like to express my heartfelt gratitude to my extended family, whose prayers, encouragement, and unwavering support have meant so much throughout this journey. Your kindness and belief in me gave me strength during the most challenging moments. To my dearest father, thank you for your constant prayers, unwavering support, and the values you have instilled in me. Thank you for working so hard to provide for our family and for doing your best to give me everything I need. Even without a mother figure by my side, your love has always filled that space. You never let me feel unloved, even in the hardest moments. Thank you for always believing in me, for standing up for me when others spoke ill of me, and for being the first to step forward when I needed support the most. Your sacrifices and trust have shaped who I am today. I hope one day I can repay even a small part of what you have given me. To my late mother, who left this world when I was still in the third grade, your memory is etched deeply in my heart. Though our time together was brief, your

love has remained a source of strength and inspiration. This thesis is also for you, as a tribute to a love that never fades and a reminder that you continue to live in every step I take. To my younger siblings, thank you for being my quiet source of strength and joy. Though I cannot mention each of you by name, please know that I carry you in my heart. Your presence has made the burdens lighter and the days brighter.

My appreciation and thanks are also addressed to all of my friends, that I cannot mention all one by one, thanks for everything who have accompanied me through the ups and downs while completing my thesis. A special thanks to Maria Ulfa, my dear friend, who has always been there no matter what. Your support and friendship mean the world to me. To all my other friends, though I cannot mention you one by one, please know that every encouraging word and every shared moment has made this journey easier and more meaningful.

Last but not least, I thank the one who has walked this journey with unwavering strength, myself, Arista Widya. Widya, thank you for holding on this far and for always striving to give your best despite the challenges. Keep growing beautifully for yourself, your parents, your brother, and everyone who needs your light.

Finally, I hope that this thesis could give the advantages to reader. I believe that this thesis is far from being perfect. Therefore, I accepts criticism and suggestion of this thesis for better result.

Banda Aceh, August 5th 2025

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ABSTRACT

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UIN Ar-Raniry University
Supervisor : Fithriyah, S. Ag., M. Pd.
Keywords : Vocabulary Acquisition; Vocabulary Learning
Strategies; EFL Students

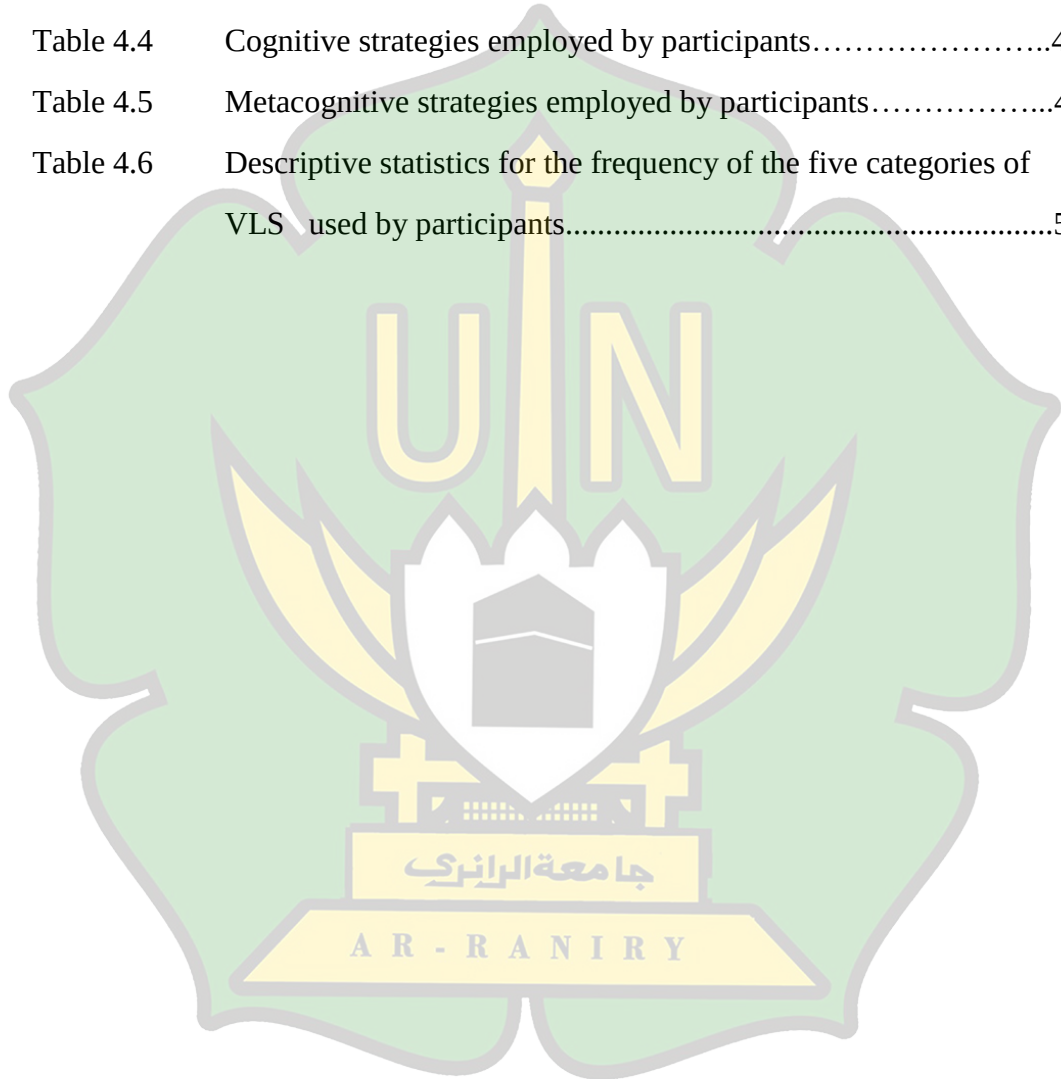
Vocabulary acquisition is essential for EFL students, as limited vocabulary can hinder communication and comprehension. This study investigated the vocabulary acquisition strategies used by 120 English Language Education students at UIN Ar-Raniry batch 2024, identifying which strategies were most and least frequently employed. Data were collected using questionnaire covering determination, social, memory, cognitive and metacognitive strategies and analyzed using descriptive statistics. The results showed that metacognitive strategies were most frequently used ($M = 3.94$), followed by determination ($M = 3.68$) and memory strategies ($M = 3.68$), while social ($M = 3.12$) and cognitive strategies ($M = 3.06$) were less frequently used. At the item level, the most and least used strategies within each category were: using English-language media for exposure ($M = 4.25$) compared to self-testing through vocabulary quizzes ($M = 3.55$) in metacognitive strategies; associate the word with words that already know ($M = 3.80$) compared to associating words with pictures to aid recall ($M = 3.43$) in memory strategies; using dictionary ($M = 4.10$) compared to checking word forms ($M = 3.34$) in determination strategies; asking classmates for meanings ($M = 3.85$) compared to asking the teacher for synonyms/antonyms ($M = 2.65$) in social strategies; and verbal repetition ($M = 4.01$) compared to use flashcards to retrieve ($M = 2.60$) in cognitive strategies. These results highlight students' preference for self-regulated and contextual strategies over teacher-dependent approaches, suggesting the need for pedagogical support to promote a more balanced use of VLS.

TABLE OF CONTENTS

ACKNOWLEDGEMENT	iv
ABSTRACT.....	vi
TABLE OF CONTENTS.....	vii
LIST OF TABLES	ix
LIST OF FIGURE.....	x
LIST OF APPENDICES.....	xi
CHAPTER I INTRODUCTION	1
A. Background of the Study	1
B. Research Questions	6
C. Objective of Research	6
D. Research significance	6
E. Terminology	8
CHAPTER II LITERATURE REVIEW	11
A. Understanding Vocabulary in EFL Learning	12
B. Vocabulary Acquisition	18
C. Vocabulary Learning Strategies	21
D. Factors Influencing the Choice of VLS	35
E. Conceptual Framework	37
CHAPTER III METHOD OF RESEARCH	38
A. Research Design	38
B. Population and Sample	38
C. Data Collection Procedure	39
D. Data Analysis	41
CHAPTER IV FINDINGS AND DISCUSSION	44
A. Findings	44
B. Discussion	52
CHAPTER V CONCLUSION	55
A. Conclusion	55
B. Suggestion	57
REFERENCE	60
APPENDICES.....	66
AUTOBIOGRAPHY.....	75

LIST OF TABLES

Table 4.1	Determination strategies employed by participants.....	45
Table 4.2	Social strategies employed by participants.....	46
Table 4.3	Memory strategies employed by participants.....	47
Table 4.4	Cognitive strategies employed by participants.....	48
Table 4.5	Metacognitive strategies employed by participants.....	49
Table 4.6	Descriptive statistics for the frequency of the five categories of VLS used by participants.....	51



LIST OF FIGURES

Figure 2.1 Conceptual Framework	37
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LIST OF APPENDICES

Appendix 1: Appointment Of Letter Of Supervisor

Appendix 2: Recommendation Letter from the Fakultas Tarbiyah dan Keguruan to conduct field research

Appendix 3: Confirmation letter from Department of English Language Education

Appendix 4: Questionnaire Items (Indonesia Version)



CHAPTER I

INTRODUCTION

In this chapter, the researcher has written an explanation regarding five important parts including the background of the study, research questions, research aims, significance of the study, and terminology.

A. Background of Study

Vocabulary acquisition plays an important role in learning English as a foreign language (EFL). For students majoring in English Language Education, especially at UIN Ar-Raniry, Banda Aceh, the ability to master an extensive vocabulary is highly influential to their academic and professional success. Vocabulary is a crucial component of language, acting as the foundation for efficient communication abilities. To clearly explain ideas, thoughts, and concepts, one must have a large and diverse vocabulary.

The process of vocabulary acquisition impacts overall language capacity, which includes speaking, reading, writing, and comprehension (Schuth, Köhne, & Weinert, 2017). Without sufficient vocabulary, it is difficult for learners to master other language skills such as listening, speaking, reading, and writing. For example, students cannot write essays, deliver presentations, or participate in classroom discussions effectively if they lack vocabulary knowledge. In other words, vocabulary serves as the foundation of language proficiency and plays a crucial role in supporting students' academic performance.

In an academic context, students are required to carry out various tasks such as presentations, writing assignments, and group discussions, all of which demand adequate vocabulary knowledge. This situation becomes even more challenging for first-year university students who are still at the beginning of their academic journey. In the case of UIN Ar-Raniry, the 2024 batch of English Education Department students represents the newest cohort of learners. Although they are relatively new, they are already required to engage in academic activities that involve using English, such as presenting in front of the class, writing essays, and speaking during discussions. Limited vocabulary knowledge can make these tasks difficult, thus pushing students to find effective ways to acquire and expand their vocabulary. Thus, efficient vocabulary acquisition not only improves academic performance but also the development of overall communication skills. Vocabulary mastery also plays a role in the formation of students' academic identity, as good language skills enable students to interact effectively in various academic situations. In the context of globalization, vocabulary mastery is one of the basic abilities that students must have in order to compete in the increasingly connected international workplace. As one of the growing countries in language education, Indonesia needs an appropriate approach in improving English language acquisition among university students. Therefore, it is important to examine the factors that influence the vocabulary acquisition process in EFL environments in Indonesia, particularly at UIN Ar- Raniry.

Different learners adopt different strategies in their effort to build vocabulary. Some may use dictionaries or online translators, others may memorize words by writing them repeatedly, use English-language media, or ask friends and lecturers for clarification. These methods are often referred to in the literature as Vocabulary Learning Strategies (VLS) (Schmitt, 1997). VLS represent the practical techniques that students employ in order to achieve the broader process of Vocabulary Acquisition. In this study, therefore, vocabulary acquisition is understood as the overall goal (developing learners' vocabulary knowledge), while vocabulary learning strategies are regarded as the means or instruments through which that acquisition is achieved.

According to Krashen's (1985) Hypothetical Input Theory, vocabulary acquisition is highly dependent on exposure to comprehensible input. Krashen emphasizes that second or foreign language learners can master vocabulary effectively if they are constantly exposed to material that is slightly more difficult than their current level of ability. This theory points out the importance of diversity and contextualization in vocabulary teaching. In this case, an environment rich in comprehensible input, such as conversations with native speakers, reading books, and listening to academic materials, greatly supports the vocabulary acquisition process. The use of various types of rich input, both spoken and written, can accelerate the process of vocabulary acquisition, as learners can associate words with different contexts.

Although this theory was introduced decades ago, many modern studies continue to discuss its relevance and develop new strategies to strengthen vocabulary acquisition in EFL environments. Liu and Zhang (2020) and Smith (2019) emphasize that with the development of technology, the sources of comprehensible input are increasingly varied. Their research shows that the use of technology, such as language learning apps and digital media, enables learners to gain richer exposure to new vocabulary in meaningful contexts.

Previous studies have explored various strategies for vocabulary acquisition. For instance, Liu and Zhang (2020) emphasized the role of technology in providing richer exposure to vocabulary in meaningful contexts. Wahyudin et al. (2021) found that non-English major students in Indonesia used more cognitive strategies, such as constructing sentences with new vocabulary, compared to memory strategies. This study provides important insights into the types of strategies often used by university students, although it does not focus on students majoring in English Education.

Meanwhile, research by Kumar and Akbar (2023) revealed that cultural context and exposure to authentic language greatly influenced the selection of vocabulary learning strategies. They found that strategy preference is strongly influenced by individual background and social interaction in learning. However, this study was conducted in Pakistan, which has different educational characteristics from Indonesia.

A recent study by Tania Tahmina (2023) in Bangladesh highlights the strategies used by high-ability students in vocabulary acquisition, such as repeating words and guessing word meanings from context. This study provides a deeper insight into the differences in strategies based on ability level, although it was conducted in a different country from Indonesia.

Previous studies have explored vocabulary learning strategies in various settings, but there is still limited research focusing on beginner university students in the English Education Department of UIN Ar-Raniry, particularly batch 2024. This gap is significant because these students are at a critical stage of transitioning into higher education, where their ability to acquire vocabulary will directly influence their confidence and performance in academic activities. Moreover, identifying which strategies are most and least frequently used is beneficial not only for lecturers but also for students themselves. By identifying and analyzing the strategies most commonly used by these students, this research offers practical insights into how they can enhance their vocabulary learning process. Furthermore, the findings highlight the variety of available strategies, enabling students to understand their options and choose the strategies that best align with their individual learning styles and needs. This adaptability can improve their learning outcomes and foster greater autonomy in mastering vocabulary.

Theoretically, this study contributes to the development of vocabulary learning theory by contextualizing it within the Indonesian EFL setting. Practically, it benefits students by equipping them with knowledge about diverse strategies and their potential effectiveness, allowing them to make informed decisions about their

learning approaches. Moreover, lecturers and study program managers can utilize the findings to design teaching methods and materials that better support students' vocabulary acquisition. These insights also serve as a reference for further research in similar educational and cultural contexts, both in Indonesia and internationally.

B. Research Questions

Based on the background above, the researcher would like to formulate the research question as follow:

1. What strategies do students use in acquiring vocabulary?
2. What are the most and least used vocabulary acquisition strategies by students?

C. Objective of Research

The aims of this study are:

1. To find out the strategies that students use in acquiring vocabulary.
2. To find out the most and least used vocabulary acquisition strategies among students.

D. Research significance

This research aims to make significant contributions both theoretically and practically in the field of language education, specifically focusing on vocabulary acquisition strategies used by students in learning English vocabulary.

a. Theoretical significance

This study holds theoretical value by providing a descriptive exploration of the vocabulary acquisition strategies employed by university students. By

documenting these strategies, the research enriches the existing literature on language learning and offers new perspectives on the diversity of approaches students take to acquire vocabulary. This study also adds to the theoretical understanding of vocabulary learning by identifying common practices among EFL learners, particularly in the context of higher education in Indonesia.

b. Practical significance

1. For Lecturer

This study provides valuable insights into the specific vocabulary acquisition strategies that students commonly use. Understanding these strategies enables lecturers to design more relevant teaching methods and materials that align with students' learning preferences. This can help facilitate a supportive learning environment for vocabulary acquisition.

2. For Students

By identifying and categorizing the strategies available for vocabulary acquisition, this study helps students reflect on their current practices and expand their repertoire of learning approaches. Students can explore and adopt strategies that align with their personal preferences and learning styles, empowering them to enhance their vocabulary acquisition process more effectively.

3. For Researcher

This research lays a foundation for future studies on vocabulary acquisition strategies in higher education contexts. The findings provide a descriptive framework that can inspire further investigations into the use of

specific strategies across different learner profiles, contexts, and levels. By offering a clearer understanding of the strategies used by EFL learners, this study encourages more research on the role of strategy selection in vocabulary acquisition.

E. Terminology

The following terms are given to make the readers of the research have the same perception for some terms used in this research. In order to avoid miss understanding, so the terms here are to be defined as follows:

1. Vocabulary

Vocabulary is the collection of words known and used by an individual for communication. It serves as the foundation for mastering other language skills, including listening, speaking, reading, and writing.

2. Vocabulary acquisition

Vocabulary acquisition refers to the process by which an individual acquires and comprehends new words in the language they are learning. In the context of this study, vocabulary acquisition refers to the process of gaining new vocabulary and storing it for future use in communication. It includes both intentional learning (through classroom activities or explicit practice) and incidental learning (through exposure, interaction, or media).

3. Vocabulary acquisition strategies

This term in the title of the study refers to the practical ways students use to acquire vocabulary. In this research, the concept of vocabulary acquisition strategies is closely related to vocabulary learning strategies (VLS), because VLS

represent the actual techniques applied by learners in the process of acquiring vocabulary.

4. EFL students

EFL students are those who learn English as a foreign language, usually in a place where English is not the primary language (J. C. Richards and R. Schmidt, 2010). EFL Students term in this research is referred to the students from Department of English language Education from Ar-Raniry State Islamic University who are learning English as a foreign language. The students also become the respondents in collecting the data about their strategy and challenges in acquiring vocabulary, and the most use to least used by them.

5. Determination

Determination refers to learners' independent effort to discover the meaning of words without asking others. In this study, it relates to strategies such as using a dictionary, analyzing word parts, or guessing meaning from context (Schmitt, 1997).

6. Social

Social means interaction with other people in the learning process. Here, social strategies involve asking teachers or peers for word meanings, practicing with classmates, or learning through communication (Schmitt, 1997).

7. Memory

Memory is the ability to store and retrieve information. Memory strategies in this research refer to techniques used to retain vocabulary, such as grouping words, creating associations, or using imagery (Schmitt, 1997; Nation, 2001).

8. Cognitive

Cognitive refers to the mental processes of learning and using knowledge. In this study, cognitive strategies include direct actions like repetition, note-taking, or writing down words to practice them (Schmitt, 1997)

9. Metacognitive

Metacognitive is awareness and regulation of one's own learning. Metacognitive strategies involve planning, monitoring, and evaluating vocabulary learning, such as reviewing progress or paying attention to English input in media (Schmitt, 1997).

