

VOCABULARY LEARNING STRATEGIES,
VOCABULARY SKILLS, AND INTEGRATIVE MOTIVATION LEVELS
AMONG UNIVERSITY STUDENTS IN BATAM

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ABSTRACT

The Basic elements that contribute to the English proficiency are motivation and vocabulary learning strategies. Yet these two elements are generally acknowledged among language teachers and learners as an essential factor in language competence, but paid less attention in the learning process practically. This research aimed to examine vocabulary learning strategies, integrative motivation, and vocabulary skills among university students in Batam, Indonesia. Vocabulary learning strategies and integrative motivation were independent variables, while vocabulary skills were the dependent variable. This research used quantitative approach. Two questionnaires were used to measure vocabulary learning strategies and integrative motivation, while a test was conducted to measure the level of vocabulary skills. The questionnaire and test were adapted and modified from previous studies. The validity of the data in this research has been verified by language experts and the reliability by pilot test. There were 314 samples. The research revealed the finding on the vocabulary learning strategies through integrativeness and attitudes toward learning situation toward vocabulary skills. The research proposes a new model of vocabulary learning strategies through integrativeness and attitudes toward learning situation toward vocabulary skills. The students with the higher strategies to expand the knowledge of new vocabulary items can ideally have higher level of integrativeness and attitudes to learning situation to achieve higher vocabulary skills. Overall as a conclusion, to master the vocabulary, learners should focus on vocabulary learning strategies as well as integrative motivation.

ABSTRAK

Perkara-perkara asas yang menyumbang kepada kecekapan Bahasa Inggeris adalah motivasi dan strategi pembelajaran perbendaharaan kata. Namun kedua-dua perkara ini diperakui secara umum dalam kalangan guru bahasa dan pelajar sebagai faktor penting dalam kecekapan bahasa, tetapi kurang diberi perhatian secara praktikalnya semasa proses pembelajaran. Kajian ini bertujuan untuk mengkaji strategi-strategi Pembelajaran perbendaharaan kata, motivasi integratif dan kemahiran perbendaharaan kata dalam kalangan pelajar universiti di Batam, Indonesia. Strategi-strategi pembelajaran perbendaharaan kata dan motivasi integratif merupakan pembolehubah bebas, manakala kemahiran perbendaharaan kata merupakan pembolehubah bersandar. Kajian ini menggunakan pendekatan kuantitatif. Dua soal selidik digunakan untuk mengukur strategi-strategi Perbendaharaan kata dan motivasi integratif, manakala ujian pula dilaksanakan untuk mengukur tahap kemahiran perbendaharaan kata. Soal selidik dan ujian diadaptasi dan diubahsuai daripada kajian terdahulu. Kajian ini telah melalui proses kesahan yang melibatkan pakar bahasa dan proses kebolehpercayaan menerusi kajian rintis. Kajian ini mendedahkan penemuan mengenai strategi pembelajaran perbendaharaan kata melalui pengintegratifan dan sikap terhadap persekitaran pembelajaran bagi kemahiran perbendaharaan kata. Kajian ini mencadangkan strategi pembelajaran perbendaharaan kata yang baru melalui pengintegratifan dan sikap untuk mempelajari situasi ke arah kemahiran perbendaharaan kata. Para pelajar dengan strategi yang lebih tinggi untuk memperluaskan pengetahuan tentang perbendaharaan kata baru dengan idealnya dapat mempunyai tahap integrasi dan sikap yang lebih tinggi untuk mempelajari situasi, mencapai kemahiran perbendaharaan kata yang lebih tinggi. Kesimpulannya, untuk menguasai perbendaharaan kata, pelajar-pelajar sepatutnya focus pada strategi perbendaharaan kata dan juga motivasi integratif.

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LIST OF ABBREVIATIONS

<i>ALM</i>	- Audio Lingual Method
<i>AMTB</i>	- Attitude Motivation Test Battery
<i>AVE</i>	- Average Variance Extracted
<i>EFL</i>	- English Foreign Language
<i>ESP</i>	- English for Specific Purposes
<i>IM</i>	- Integrative Motivation
<i>PLS</i>	- Partial Least Squares
<i>SEM</i>	- Structural Equation Modeling
<i>TOEFL</i>	- Test of English as a Foreign Language
<i>SLA</i>	- Second Language Acquisition
<i>VLSs</i>	- Vocabulary Learning Strategies
<i>VLT</i>	- Vocabulary Level Test

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CHAPTER 1

INTRODUCTION

1.1 Introduction

The word vocabulary has long been connoted to the wordlist and any language in the world, either spoken or written, relating to vocabulary. Hence, the vocabulary in English language learning is an essential part and how much vocabulary a person needs is really an important area of research and discussion (Adolphs & Schmitt, 2003). When one learns a foreign language, one would initially refer to the wordlist of the target language. Nevertheless, a language learner is not able to speak, read, write, or understand a foreign language without knowing the vocabulary. The words needed in a communication is actually basic knowledge. The more relevant words a language learner knows, the better for him. Vocabulary, in addition to grammar and pronunciation, is one of the elements of language considered necessary for the mastery of a language expected from all language learners (Bogaards & Laufer, 2004). Even Mehring (2005) believes that vocabulary is just as important as the main skills of reading, writing, listening, and speaking.

As far as mastering a foreign language is concerned, none of the language properties such as grammar, pronunciation and vocabulary should be ignored. However, among the properties of language, vocabulary is central to language acquisition, whether its the first, second, or a foreign language (Decarrico, 2001; Alqahtani, 2015; Hassan, 2015) because it is the basic unit of language (Subekti & Lawson, 2007). Alhaysoni (2012) affirmed that without sufficient knowledge of vocabulary, a person cannot communicate effectively, nor deliver the intended

message. Possessing a limited vocabulary is also a barrier that prevents one from learning a foreign language (Zhihong, 2000). According to Eyraud et al., (2000), vocabulary is central to language and is of critical importance to a typical language learner. Most scholars argue that learning new words is one of the most crucial processes in human development. Some recent studies have focused on the importance of investigating the mastery of foreign language vocabulary (Siriwan, 2007; Li, 2009; Heidari, 2012; Zafar & Meenakshi, 2012; Laraba, 2013; Subon, 2013; Yazdi & Kafipur, 2014). Some indicate that the use of vocabulary learning strategies and its effectiveness is one factor affecting the language learner's success in mastering foreign language vocabulary skills.

Approximately at the same time as vocabulary skill development began to attract the attention of researchers, which was around the 1980s, second and foreign language education research interests shifted from the method of teaching to learning processes. Dörnyei (2005) mentioned that there is an interaction hypothesis that signals a new interest in learners as active processors of input. It has become clear that the responsibility for successful learning rests not only with teachers, but also with individual learners. The learners' characteristics and individual differences that influence the overall trajectory of the acquisition process has attracted the attention of numerous researchers (Dörnyei, 2005, 2009; Takač, 2008; Oxford 1990). The interest in learners' ability to take advantage of learning opportunities has stimulated research into strategies used by learners and the relation of strategy use to learning outcomes.

The learning strategies concept is widely used in SLA, but there is no single generally accepted definition of it (Dembo, 2004; Takač, 2008). However, different researchers might define strategies differently, depending on their research interests and focus. Oxford (1990) stated that learning strategies are all behaviors and actions that learners use to make language learning more successful, self-directed, and enjoyable. Ellis (2003) defined 'strategy' as a mental or behavioral activity related to some specific stage in the process of language acquisition and use. Cohen (1998) stressed that strategies are processes that are consciously selected by learners to enhance learning or the use of L2. Purpura (1999) believed that all conscious and unconscious activities related to learning, use, or testing of language can be called learning strategies. Some scholars (Chamot, 2004; Oxford 1990) make a distinction between strategies, as a more general approach to learning, and techniques or tactics, as specific actions performed at a specific time. Research on language learning

strategies has revealed differences between effective learners' approximate use of strategies. More successful learners were found to employ strategies more consciously, appropriately, and frequently than less successful learners (Oxford & Nyikos, 1989).

Learning strategies in the area of mastering vocabulary can be defined as various ways of language learners to learn new vocabulary in accordance with learners' needs and preferences. The description of vocabulary learning strategies implies that learning strategies can manifest in either observable actions, such as underlining words, practicing patterns or unobservable mental processes in the language learner, such as memorization, emotional control, imagining etc. (Diyono, 2009). It is for this reason that the interest in learning strategies has grown among language educators who are aware of measures to succeed in language learning by emphasizing more on basic learning. This means that a language learner needs to be aware of how to master language proficiency by using strategies. It could be possible to elicit and describe these strategies so that other learners can benefit from their knowledge and experience of learning English as a target language.

Students, as language learners, need to focus on vocabulary learning strategies. It is beneficial in terms of further exploring the difficulties they encounter and offer some innovative ideas to improve learning and teaching vocabulary (Xhaferi, 2008). Initially, strategies that students use to learn new English words should be examined. It might be necessary to enlighten students on some vocabulary learning strategies that they could use for learning new words or enhance the strategies they already have. In general, the terms associated with language learning strategies are defined differently by different scholars. As no one term is similar and learning strategies employed by students as well as the vocabulary instruction by teachers could also vary. Nation (2001) stated that such a condition is known as individual differences. The variation in the learning approach in this study is a challenge for students, and their motivation to overcome this challenge is in their hands.

In dealing with a difficult learning approach, learners often have to develop and utilize a wide range of learning strategies to help achieve success. Efforts to develop strategies need energy and time and there is no guarantee of success. This is where motivation could play a role. In some studies, motivation has been addressed as the main variable in language learning. In fact, besides expert recommendation that vocabulary is the basic requirement for language learners to maximize language

abilities, motivation is pervasive. Gardner (2007; 2012) stated that language is an integral part of growing up and it provides motivation in its own right, which is necessary to communicate and participate in ones' environment. Hence, often this is not the case for foreign languages, especially those learned in school and in particular, by students who study English as a mandatory subject in school or university. There are some advantages in the ability to speak more than one language. Consequently, motivation, as well as capability, can play an important role when learning a foreign language. The ability of language can be translated into the level acquired before the learner continues to achieve another higher and challenging level. Motivation can play a role in any aspect of learner psychology during the learning process.

There are several factors that affect motivation. Gardner (2007) further stated that motivation is a very complex phenomenon with numerous facets. Gardner et al., (1985; 2005; 2007; 2012) proposed that motivation is dependent on two other classes of variables, namely integrativeness and the attitude towards a learning situation. The term integrative motivation was first introduced in 1985 or perhaps even much earlier and has continued to be a part of the concept of motivation related to language learners. Integrative motivation is part of the socio-educational model in Gardner's theory and through the concept of integrative motivation, students are integratively motivated to learn a language other than their mother tongue. In the language learning process, for reasons such as a genuine interest to communicate with other language community members, positive feelings toward that community or because of a general interest in other groups, students might have an attitude favorable towards language learning (Gardner, 2005).

The importance of the motivation concept, which has been substantiated in numerous studies, is consistent with the importance of vocabulary as the core of a language. The learner needs to acquire vocabulary in the earlier stages of the foreign language learning process. Vocabulary learning strategies, or VLS, is one of the significant issues in English language learning that has caught the attention of researchers for the past few decades (Rahimy & Shams, 2012). Together with VLS, motivation is the also a topic that has been debated. The issue of students as language learners adds to the corpus of recent language research.

1.1.1 Vocabulary learning in Indonesia

EFL vocabulary's place in the Indonesian curriculum seems to be changing in accordance with the existing curriculum, perceived from changing objectives and methods of English instruction in Indonesia. Vocabulary has been viewed differently depending on which method is fashionable (Cahyono & Widiati, 2008). Looking back at the 096/1967 Ministerial Decree, the instruction of English subjects in secondary schools was aimed to equip students with a working knowledge of English through the development of language skills in reading, listening, writing, and speaking, in that order (Huda, 1999). This teaching method guideline had been earlier developed by adopting a version of the Audio-Lingual Method (ALM). Through this method, it can be assumed that grammar teaching was so elevated but vocabulary teaching was suppressed. As Seal (1991) suggested, this dominant teaching methodology results in an immediate and devastating effect on vocabulary teaching and research, whereby vocabulary learning is kept to a minimum.

A modified version of the ALM was then adopted in the following curriculum, implying quite a similar practice of vocabulary teaching in the Indonesian education system. However, as evident in English textbooks used in junior and senior high schools, vocabulary teaching according to the 1975 curriculum seemed to gain greater attention (Cahyono & Widiati, 2008). Each lesson presents a list of vocabulary that students have to focus on. This indicates the uniform list of words that secondary school students throughout Indonesia have to master. The set of items for teaching vocabulary was decided earlier. However, this curriculum was changed again in 1984 and this new curriculum implemented a communicative method for English instruction in Indonesia. Officially, English instruction was geared towards the objective of enabling junior high-school students to develop English language skills related to reading, listening, speaking, and writing in thematic situations in accordance with individual developmental levels and interests, using 1000 word-level and appropriate structures as well as senior high-school students using 2500 word-level and appropriate structures (Depdikbud, 1986).

The 1994 curriculum adopted the meaningfulness approach (*pendekatan kebermaknaan*), which is a version of the communicative approach, so that the objective of English instruction is not misinterpreted (Huda, 1999). In this curriculum, the language components (grammatical structures, vocabulary, and pronunciation)

were considered necessary and the linguistic form was used as the organizing principle (Cahyono & Widiati, 2008).

The 2004 and 2006 curricula known as the Competency-Based Curriculum (CBC) and the school-level curriculum or KTSP (*kurikulum tingkat satuan pendidikan*), emphasized the development of communicative competence covering linguistic competence, discourse competence, sociocultural competence, and strategic competence. Linguistic competence, in particular, includes such components as grammar, vocabulary, and pronunciation.

When students begin campus life, the English subject is expected to play a real practical role. Based on the current regulations pertaining to the National Education System in Indonesia (the 1989 Education Law No.2 and the 1999 Government Regulation on Higher Education No.60), education at the tertiary level is mainly designed for producing professionals. The students in higher education are prepared to pursue specific and major subjects to support their future profession. However, they are still required to take mandatory subjects called general education courses and English is one of the courses. In some campuses, the subject is graded 1 and 2, or provides an overall four credits or two separate subjects. English is supposed to function not only as an effective and efficient means of interaction but also as a medium of instruction. Moreover, English is meant to develop and disseminate knowledge in the field of technology and arts that could uplift the quality of life enhanced by national cultures. English, as a subject, is general English that basically refers to students' competence in integrated language skills, such as speaking, writing, reading and listening, that has turned to emphasizing the grammatical structure. The focus on how vocabulary is taught and learned is not specific but it is part of the university and lecturers' prerogative on learning activities (Baso, 2014; Agustrianti et al., 2014). English will be more widely required in various sectors, such as education, business, tourism, trade etc., which is beyond campus life.

1.1.2 Students' motivation to learn English

There are always items to be improved in English teaching and learning in various circumstances. Educationalists have long been dissatisfied with the state of English language teaching in Indonesia (Bradford, 2008; Astuti, 2013). Despite frequent revisions of the curriculum designed to improve the predicament, students are leaving

school with skills far below those stipulated by the government or desired by local communities, and they are graduating from universities without the communicative skills and knowledge required to compete internationally (Huda, 1999; Madya, 2002; Bradford, 2008). It has been generally concluded that as curriculum changes advocate different methods of teaching, and set different goals, the failure of English teaching in Indonesia lies less with the curriculum, and more on matters such as classroom size and students' level of motivation (Dardjowidjojo, 1997; Madya, 2002; Suharmanto, 2003; Bradford, 2008; Astuti, 2013; Chang & Liu, 2013).

Hence, upon recognizing these deficiencies, the government has, with its recent changes to Indonesia's national education policy, expressed its commitment to address matters that could most effectively improve the state of teaching English in Indonesia. In addition, the shift from a highly centralized system, in which education is closely supervised at the national level, to a more decentralized system of education, as mandated by Law No. 22/1999, allows educators greater freedom when meeting students' needs. This freedom grants greater opportunity to address the challenge of learner strategy and motivation.

Studies on the motivation to learn a second/foreign language reveals that students' motivation is influenced by factors such as teachers, classroom, and assessment (Ghenghesh, 2010; Yeung et al., 2011; Astuti, 2013; Bakar, 2014)). Thus, understanding students' motivation is to know the student's attitude regarding these elements. In the context of Indonesian learners, high school students are initially motivated to learn but their experience in learning English in school decreases their motivation over time (Lamb, 2004). This is supported by some studies on Southeast Asian students in general, whereby students were found to be passive and nonverbal in class and rarely initiate class discussions until they are called upon (Bradford, 2008; Baso, 2014).

Another problem in relating English to the daily life of Indonesian students is to increase their motivation to learn English (Agustrianti, et al., 2014), which is due to the fact that English is a foreign language and not a second language in Indonesia (Liando, Moni, & Baldauf, 2005). The students do not have the experience of using English on a daily basis and they might not be expected to speak English in their future careers. The students use the Lingua Franca in Indonesia, which is Bahasa Indonesia, most of the time, at school and sometimes at home. It is clear then that social and cultural environments do not provide strong support for learning English.

Moreover, from some references to publicity, reliable, and valid research into the measurement of Indonesian learners' motivation toward learning English is lacking (Bradford, 2008). Several studies concerning university students in Indonesia must be interpreted with caution since most of these studies have not been published and lack reliability. More importantly, the discussions solely reference Gardner's two-factor framework and generally conclude that Indonesian university students are instrumentally motivated (Widyaningrum, 2003). Gardner (2012) had also claimed that students at the university-level have higher integrative motivation compared to instrumental orientation. This means that at this level, the students are motivated to acquire language skills due to an interest to be part of the English-speaking community, instead of just for future use and career advancement. In short, students' motivation profile will be required by teachers and the learners themselves.

1.2 Background of the problem

Issues related to factors that contribute to students' English language proficiency in non-English speaking countries, such as Indonesia, involve a complex set of issues, and hence, cannot be related simply to a single cause. Therefore, prior to attempting to have a full picture on the initiative to improve English language proficiency, there is a need to comprehensively understand the issues and thoroughly examine the aspects involved. The issues can be broken down to the basic of language learning process. Achieving a good command of a language is not just an instant or easy process but requires a step-by-step approach. Language learners need to follow several steps before they are able to command a language. For example, a language learner might not be able to effectively talk or write, if they do not have good command of the language. In addition, language learners might not be able to understand the rules of the target language, discover the meaning, or other activities if they do not have the intention and motivation to do so.

Vocabulary is considered to be the main component of language and not always significant when English is taught in schools or other formal classes. If one asks what has been done to develop students' knowledge of English, some educators might come up with a teaching approach that is indicated by academic achievement measured by a very high-frequency of word measurement according to the social context. These days grammar is normally the reflection of a student's achievement in

English (Zhuang, 2008). It could be due to the simplicity of a theory delivering an academic measurement. Therefore, having few words and knowing some rule of language, the English level of these students are then measured. Hence, how students understand the concept of unfamiliar words, endeavour to gain a command of a greater number of words and use the words successfully for communication purposes is still far fetched. How vocabulary learning is not considered very important in second and foreign language pedagogy is pervasive (Siriwan, 2007; Alhaysony, 2012).

Thus, if vocabulary is considered the core component of language proficiency, then the foreign language learner should possess it at the very beginning. It is obvious in language learning, it is almost impossible for a language learner to get rid of vocabulary skills (Bogaards & Laufer, 2004; Nation, 2005). This means that vocabulary is the basis for measuring the level of English. Reliance on language grammar as the only language learning process can only enlighten the learner about the language rule. The learning of English through a grammatical approach could be the best approach for a language learner since knowing the rule might ease them to follow the path and finally to master the language after some time of learning. In fact, it is not the real case (Nation, 2000; Dörnyei, 2005).

There are a number of discussions about whether grammar or vocabulary is more important. The belief that vocabulary is more important and should be given more attention, is due to the argument that poor vocabulary does not provide a basis for building good grammatical knowledge (e.g., Nation, 2001; Bogaards & Laufer, 2004). Learning a new language can, of course, bring some success but this is certainly very rare and far-fetched. The stronger opinion of how important vocabulary is compared to grammar as the basis for a language learner is based on the notion that words put together without proper grammatical connection can still carry some meaning. For example, an incorrect grammatical sentence is "we go zoo last week". Everyone will probably understand the intended meaning that several people went to a zoo last week. Using gestures, hands or mimicry and a written sentence, the meaning can change a little and the words can mean that a certain number of people (as in 'we') went to the zoo several days ago (as in 'last week'). In order to create a meaningful sequence of words, it is still necessary to have at least the most basic knowledge of grammar, eg. the sentence can be converted to "we will go to the zoo tomorrow" or "We go to the zoo". These two sentences may mean differently in grammatical terms, but by possessing knowledge about vocabulary, the listener and speaker can still

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