

# CHAPTER I INTRODUCTION

In this chapter will discuss the background and significance of vocabulary learning strategies (VLS) in the context of English as a Foreign Language (EFL) learners. We will explore the importance of vocabulary in language acquisition and communication, as well as the role of VLS in enhancing learners' understanding and use of new words.

## 1.1 Background of the Research

Vocabulary is the foundation of language and plays a fundamental role in oral language development, early literacy, and academic achievement according to David Wilkins, "vocabulary is important because it's the basis of all language". The direct teaching of vocabulary is crucial, as it is strongly related to reading comprehension, and there is a high correlation between academic success and vocabulary size. Additionally, vocabulary knowledge is not only a predictor of academic achievement but also a predictor of intelligence and fluency in a language. Therefore, a rich vocabulary is essential for expressing ideas, communicating effectively, and understanding increasingly complex texts.

Learning vocabulary is crucial for EFL (English as a Foreign Language) students as it is the foundation of language and plays a vital role in all language skills, including listening, speaking, reading, and writing. According to a study, exploring the vocabulary learning strategies used by EFL learners can reveal individual differences in vocabulary learning among students.

Vocabulary learning is limited due to a lack of second language input, and most words are learned through classroom instruction. Nowadays, teaching vocabulary not only consists of teaching specific words but also equipping language learners with strategies necessary to expand their vocabulary. The use of online platforms stimulates students to learn new words and phrases, provides them with instant feedback, and helps them enhance their vocabulary development and knowledge. Therefore, EFL students need to learn vocabulary that is relevant to their daily lives, academic studies, and future careers.

This is particularly important as vocabulary learning strategies (VLS) are the specific approaches and techniques that individuals use to acquire, retain, and use new words. These strategies are essential for language learners, as they can significantly impact the development of vocabulary knowledge. According to Wenden and Rubin (1987), VLS can be defined as "the special thoughts or behaviors that individuals use to help them learn or retain new information" (O'Malley & Chamot, 1990: 1). VLS encompass a range of actions, from the initial process of learning new words to retaining them in long-term memory and using them in oral or written communication

Schmitt (1997) did propose two broad categories of VLS: discovery and consolidation. Discovery strategies refer to the techniques used to identify new words and phrases, such as guessing from context, using word parts, and using dictionaries or other resources to find the meaning of unfamiliar words. Consolidation strategies, on the other hand, refer to the techniques used to retain and use new words, such as repetition, association, and using new words in context. Consequently, it can be concluded that Schmitt and McCarthy (1997) did

categorize VLS into discovery and consolidation strategies. These categories are still relevant today and are widely used in vocabulary learning research and instruction.

The relationship between male and female and the use of VLS has been a topic of interest in language learning research. Several studies have explored this relationship, with some indicating that male and female students may employ different VLS. For example, a study by Kobayashi and Little (2018) found that male learners tended more towards memory strategies, while females scored higher in the use of social strategies. However, it is important to note that the differences in VLS use between male and female are generally insignificant, as highlighted in a study that showed there are generally insignificant differences in terms of VLS used by male and female students.

The relationship between vocabulary learning strategies (VLS) with male and female in the context of EFL (English as a Foreign Language) students in Indonesia is multifaceted. Alqahtani (2015) emphasizes the importance of vocabulary mastery in foreign language learning, highlighting that the meanings of new words are often emphasized in books and classrooms. Additionally, Arina Afiyati Shadikah et al. (2017) underscore the significance of male and female in VLS and their impact on vocabulary mastery, indicating the essential role of vocabulary mastery in language acquisition and its influence on learners' language development and proficiency.

Baleghizadeh, Sasan, et al. (2013) also provide insights into the influence of male and female on the use of VLS. A study on gender differences in the use of VLS and self-efficacy beliefs found that male learners tended more towards

memory strategies, while females gained a greater score for using social strategies. However, the overall use of VLS did not show significant differences, highlighting the complexity of the relationship between VLS and gender differences.

Therefore, this study aims to investigate the relationship between male and female EFL Learners and the use of vocabulary learning strategies among EFL learners, and to determine which strategies are most effective for male and female learners. In light of these findings, the author uses Schmitt and McCarthy (1997) theory as based for this research by Using both 15 male and female from various department and semester as

## **1.2 Problem of the Research**

Based on the background above, the research problem of this research is “What are the differences in EFL Learner’s Vocabulary Learning Strategies for male and female EFL Learners”

## **1.3 Objective of the Research**

Based on the research question, the objective of this research is to find out the differences in EFL Learners’ Vocabulary Learning Strategies based on their male and female.

## **1.4 The Operational Definition of the Terms**

To order avoid understanding about, it is necessary to provide some explanation about some of the terms that was used in this research.

### **1.4.1 Vocabulary Learning Strategies (VLS)**

Vocabulary Learning Strategies (VLS) are the specific approaches that learners use to understand and remember new words. In this study, the researcher focuses on Discovery strategies and Consolidation Strategies based on Schmitt (1997).

### **1.4.2 EFL Learners**

EFL learners are individuals who are learning English as a foreign language, typically in a non-English-speaking country. These learners may have a different native language, and they are studying English to communicate with others or for academic and professional purposes.

## **1.5 Significance of the Research**

### **1.5.1 Theoretical Benefit**

This research lies in its potential to advance understanding of the topic of vocabulary learning strategies for male and female EFL learners. It contributes to the development of more inclusive and effective language learning approaches, and serves as a foundation for further research in this area.

### **1.5.2 Practical Benefit**

- a. For teachers, it can provide teachers with a better understanding of gender-based differences in vocabulary learning strategies, enabling them to design more effective and inclusive language learning programs. It encourages teachers to adapt their teaching methods to cater to the specific learning needs of male and female EFL learners.

- b. For further researchers, it is hoped as a starting point for further research into the topic of gender differences in vocabulary learning strategies, allowing researchers to build upon your findings and expand the knowledge base.

### **1.6 Scope and Limitation of the Research**

The scope of the research was the differences of VLS used by male and female EFL Learners in learning new English vocabulary in terms of how they do it

