

**THE PRELIMINARY RESEARCH OF VOCABULARY LEARNING STRATEGIES USED BY THE HIGHEST ACHIEVER LEARNERS AT SMA BINA ANAK SHOLEH (BIAS) YOGYAKARTA**

By  
**Lukita Purnamasari**  
12322022

**ABSTRACT**

This thesis describes the vocabulary learning strategies used by the high achiever learners at SMA Bina Anak Sholeh (BIAS) Yogyakarta. The aim of this research is to determine the vocabulary learning strategies used by the high achiever learners at SMA BIAS.

Vocabulary is a basic element of language and a fundamental part of language system. Without vocabulary, language can not be learned comprehensively. When learners have appropriate strategies to learn, it will bring them to be success in learning English language. However, different learning style will affect the different techniques and strategies used by the learners to learn vocabulary. It can also happen to high achiever learners. This study involved 3 high achiever learners at SMA BIAS. The high achiever learners were chosen from each grade. To identify the high achiever English learners in each grade, the researcher asked recommendation from English teacher in that grade and analyzed the learner's score.

The research approach was a descriptive qualitative research. The data were collected from observation, interview, and documentation. The instruments were developed based on Schmitt's taxonomy on vocabulary learning strategies. To confirm the trustworthiness, the researcher used triangulation. To present the research, the researcher used chart and description. The research results show that 5 vocabulary learning strategies were used by the high achiever learners. the strategies such as asking and interacting with others, contextual clues, dictionary use, media use, repetition, study part of speech where are related to social, determination, metacognitive, cognitive, and memory are popular strategies and the learners are enthusiastic in using them.

**Keywords:** *vocabulary, vocabulary learning strategies (VLS), high achiever learners*

## I. INTRODUCTION

Vocabulary is a basic element of language and a fundamental part of language system. Without vocabulary, language can not be learned comprehensively. In almost every activity, vocabulary is vital in making sentences, sharing idea, giving opinion; expressing feeling, requesting something etc. In addition, vocabulary is significance to reach target language in terms of speaking, listening, reading, and writing. Therefore, without vocabulary mastery, it is difficult to communicate well. The importance of vocabulary is asserted by Wilkins (1972) cited in Thornbury (2002:13) by saying that "without grammar, very little can be conveyed, without vocabulary, nothing can be conveyed.

In language mastery, the role of vocabulary is important. In writing, good and clear expressions need a bunch of vocabulary. In addition, a more various vocabulary mastery will allow ideas flow smoothly. In reading, vocabulary mastery will lead language learning to reading comprehension. To do so, language learners must cover to go percent by words in the most. In listening, vocabulary recognition will allow language learners to listen effectively. When students deal with speaking process, vocabulary will support fluency.

Furthermore, in learning non-English lesson, English vocabulary is a means of understanding knowledge and the instruction. Moreover, In this modern era, technology plays an important role in the advancement of teaching and learning process. Most of the instructions in technology devices use English language. If learners do not have sufficient English vocabularies, they will not be able to understand the instruction. Therefore, English vocabulary mastery will support the obtainment of gaining new information and learning materials.

Meanwhile, the importance of vocabulary development have long been recognized by educators. In the early 20th century, Dewey (1910) in Bintz, (2011:44) stated that vocabulary is critically important because a word is an instrument for thinking about the meanings which it expresses. The reputable role of vocabulary knowledge in the second or foreign language learning has been recently avowed by some researchers in the field. Therefore, numerous types of approaches, techniques, exercises and practice have been introduced into the field to teach vocabulary (Hatch & Brown, 1995). It is therefore understandable that these practices go hand in hand with vocabulary learning strategies. The strategies used by the learners in mastering vocabulary are strongly linked to successful language learning. When learners have appropriate strategies to learn vocabulary, it will bring them to be success in learning English language. There are learners, who learn vocabulary traditionally such as by vocabulary memorizing, opening a printed dictionary, etc. There are also learners who learn vocabulary modernly through song, movie, online dictionary etc. In terms of modernly learning, there are learners who prefer to learn vocabulary individually and the others prefer to learn through interaction with others. It depends on the learner's learning style. Different learning style will affect the different techniques and strategies used by the learners to learn vocabulary. It can also happen to high and low achiever learners.

Learners who have high language proficiency level seem to have different vocabulary learning strategies, and different tips and tricks to get a high score of language proficiency outside formal classes and without teacher's help. It seems that high achiever are different from low achiever learners in mastering English vocabularies. Firstly it is the duration of vocabulary learning. Learning duration in the class is not sufficient. Therefore, extra time is needed to learn vocabulary outside the class. It can be through applying for a course or learning independently at home. Secondly, learning capacity seems to be different. High achiever learners will seem learn vocabulary more easily than low achiever learners. For example, when high achiever learner acquire new words or receive new knowledge, they will easily understand the words. Thirdly, high achiever learners will have good self director in learning vocabulary. They are independent learners who are adequate to create their own learning strategies. They will have additional learning strategies outside formal classes such as listening to the English music or movie without subtitle or etc. The next factor is facilities or media they used in vocabulary learning. Learners who have supported facilities and media for learning will have more opportunities to be success. The facilities can be the technology, dictionary, appropriate sources, teachers, etc. The last is the motivation of the learners to learn vocabulary. Learner's motivations in vocabulary learning process come from themselves, teachers, parent, friends, environment, and etc. The motivation that brings students to the task of learning English vocabulary can be affected and influenced by the attitude of a number of people. It is considering what and who these are since they form part of the environment from which the learner engages with the learning process (Harmer, 2007:98). First, the goals are one of the strongest outside motivation which learners perceive themselves to be learning for. Second, the society where the learners live in, such as in a school situation, for example, is the English language part of the curriculum of high or low status?. Third, the people around the learners will be greatly influence to the learner's attitudes to vocabulary learning. Fourth, the curiosity of the learners is also influence the learner's motivation in learning vocabulary. Highly motivated learners will have opportunities for greater success than those who not having motivation and encouragement.

Therefore, it is interesting to conduct a research on describing the patterns of vocabulary learning strategies used by highest achiever learners in SMA Bina Anak Sholeh Yogyakarta.

## **II. RESEARCH METHOD**

The design of this study is descriptive qualitative research. This study used case study approach which it is in depth description and analysis of a bounded system. The process of conducting case study is conflated with both the unit of study (case) and the product of this type of investigation. The researcher focused on a unit of study (individual of the highest achiever learners at SMA Bina Anak Sholeh Yogyakarta) as bounded system. The design of this study is descriptive analysis in form of qualitative research about the pattern of vocabulary learning strategies used by the highest achiever learners.

This study was conducted in SMA Bina Anak Sholeh Yogyakarta. The Population was the high achiever English learners in grade 10<sup>th</sup>, 11<sup>th</sup> and 12<sup>th</sup>. 1 learner was taken from each grade. Research sample was from 3 learners of that school which take English subject. The total numbers of research sample are 3 learners.

The data of this study were taken from high achiever English learners of high school students' at SMA Bina Anak Sholeh Yogyakarta. Researcher collected all the data from the respondents, all data (raw data) were extracted and categorized. To identify the high achiever English learners in each grade, the researcher asked recommendation from English teacher in that grade and analyzed available documents.

The researcher used 3 kinds of data; observation, interview, and documentation. The instrument was based on Schmitt taxonomy on vocabulary learning strategies. The interview data in this research was in the form of sentences or narration from the participants. In addition, the documentations that show the vocabulary learning strategies used by the high achiever were also used as the primary data. The data were gather are analyzed and processed using analysis technique. Finally, the result of this process was used to answer the research question.

### **III. FINDINGS**

From the observation, the researcher found that the frequently used strategy was social followed by metacognitive and determination strategies. The researcher found 3 kinds of activities that included in social strategy, there are asking question to the teacher, interaction with natives, and the interaction between students and teacher. There are 3 activities that related to metacognitive strategy; listening to the audio about dialog and passage, music, and poetry in the class, using newspaper as sources, and testing vocabulary. The 2 activities that related to determination strategy are analyzing part of speech and the use of dictionary to figure out the meaning of vocabulary. Meanwhile, from the result of observation, memory and cognitive strategy were used as the last strategy in mastering vocabulary. The memory strategy includes studying part of speech and cognitive strategy includes presentation and making sentences.

From the interview, the researcher found that the social strategies was still the first frequently used by the high achiever for mastering vocabulary followed by the determination and metacognitive strategies. The researcher found 8 activities which are related to social strategy, 7 activities which are related to determination strategy, and 5 activities which are related to metacognitive strategy. Meanwhile, 4 activities which related to memory and 3 activities which are related to cognitive strategy were found as the least strategies used by the high achiever learners. These result has been confirmed by the second interview that was conducted on Thursday 10<sup>th</sup> March 2016 from 12.00-14.00. The result show that the high achiever learners used social as their primary strategies in mastering

vocabulary following by determination, metacognitive, cognitive, and memory strategies.

In addition, from the document analysis the researcher found that cognitive strategy was the most commonly used strategies by the high achiever in mastering vocabulary. This result was in contrast to the result of observation and interview. From the result of data analysis, the researcher found that there are 4 cognitive document that show the activities which are related to the cognitive strategy, 2 documents that related to metacognitive strategy, and 1 document for each determination and memory strategies. The researcher did not find any document for social strategies.

## IV. DISCUSSION

### 4.2.1 Social Strategies

From the interviews result, the most frequently strategy used by the high achiever was social strategies including ask to someone such as friends, their senior at school, mother, sibling, and teacher. The high achievers have interaction with their friends in group or peer project, teachers, and native speaker. To get a deeper analysis, datum I2/B/QUEST3/SOC/24 can be the example:

*Ini interaksi sama guru, teman, native, atau grup word, peer gitu. Misalnya kemaren aku interaksi sama guru bahasa inggris gitu. Ngomongin kehidupan sehari-hari*

**I2/B/QUEST3/SOC/24**

The utterance is categorized as social strategies because there is the word “interaction” in that utterance. The interaction that conducted by the learners were the interaction with the teacher, friends, natives, group work, and peer. Meanwhile Interaction with others is one of activities that included in social category.

*Asking to someone. Misalnya aku udah nyari artinya udah aku hubungin sama konteksnya. Aku tetep gak ngeh sama artinya ini ya. Aku Tanya sama ke temen atau gak ke kakak kelas. Ke guru pernah tapi jarang.*

**I2/A/QUEST3/SOC/44**

The utterance is categorized as social strategies because there is the word “ask” in that utterance. The high achiever learner asked the difficult word to their friends, their senior at school, and teacher after they identify the meaning by the context of the sentence. Meanwhile, asking to someone about the difficult vocabulary is one of activities that included in social category.

This result has the same findings with the observation result. The researcher found that the high achiever learners asked to the teacher and have interaction with the native speaker in conversation program OBS1/SOC/1. In the class the teacher and the student were communicated in English language OBS1/SOC/3. The high achiever frequently asked to the teacher in class OBS1/SOC/5.

### 4.2.2 Determination Strategies

The second strategies that used by the high achiever learners was determination strategies. The high achiever learners used their previous knowledge to learn vocabulary. They used contextual clues in written and in spoken. They used reference material to figure out the meaning. For the reference material, they used printed dictionary and digital dictionary. The other reference that used is private collection like difficult word book. The high achiever learners analyzed the part of speech when they try to find the meaning of the word. The example of datum for this strategy can be seen below:

*Itu aku belajarnya pake **oxford** biasanya. Atau gak pake **aplikasi kamusku**.*

**I2/B/QUEST3/DET/30**

The utterance is categorized as determination because the learners used printed and digital dictionary as reference material to figure out the meaning of the vocabulary. Meanwhile, reference material to figure out the meaning was included in determination category.

*Ya ngira-ngira aja. Misalnya ada **kata didepannya sama dibelakangnya** kita udah tau artinya jadi ditengah-tengahnya oh berarti ini tu artinya ini*

**I2/A/QUEST3/DET/16**

*kayak misalnya **orang itu kok ngomongnya agak gak enak**. Oh berarti ini artinya agak yang gak bagus*

**I2/A/QUEST3/DET/18**

The utterance is categorized as determination because the learners stated that they guessed the meaning of vocabulary by seeing the word before and after the difficult vocabulary to find the meaning of it in written and they guess the meaning of the difficult vocabulary by gesture and intonation in spoken. The high achiever learners considered the context of the vocabulary in the sentences to get the best meaning of the difficult word. Meanwhile, contextual clues to figure out the meaning were included in determination category.

*Ada yang **analyzing part of speech** itu. Gimana ya, part of speech itu kan ada kayak verb, noun cukup berguna, karna kan kita jadi tau kedudukan kata itu sebagai apa. Jadi kalo kita tau part of speech nya itu akan sangat membantu. Dari part of speech kita bisa kira-kita atau langsung tau meaningnya.*

**I2/C/QUEST3/DET/32**

The utterance is categorized as determination because the learners stated that they analyzed the part of speech of the difficult vocabulary to find the meaning of it. They said that by considering the word's part of speech, they can

guess the meaning of the difficult word. Meanwhile, analyzing part of speech is included in determination category.

Those results were the same with the observation result which it is the high achiever learners used printed dictionary as their reference material in reading OBS1/DET/2 and analyzed the part of speech of the word OBS1/DET/5.

This result was supported by the result of document analysis. Digital dictionary “kamusku” was found on the phone and printed dictionary “oxford” was found in the bag DOC1/DET/1.

#### 4.2.3 Metacognitive Strategies

The high achievers always controlled and evaluated their strategies in mastering vocabulary I2/A/QUEST3/MET/60, I2/B/QUEST3/MET/32. To increase the input of their vocabulary, the high achiever learners got interaction with native speaker. They used media as their sources in mastering vocabulary. The media that used by the high achievers were game, comic, movie, newspaper, song, television, Article, text. Other strategies that used by the high achievers were vocabulary test and planning the way to study vocabulary I2/B/QUEST3/MET/34. To get deeper analysis, datum I2/C/QUEST3/MET/67 can be the example:

*Itu yang test vocab. Biasanya aku cari di internet gitu yang tes vocab kayak tes online gitu apa. Tentang vocab-vocab gitu artinya apa gitu*

**I2/C/QUEST3/MET/67**

The utterance is categorized as metacognitive because the word “test vocab” show that the learners tried to test their self with online vocabulary test that taken from the internet. Meanwhile, testing vocabulary by word test is one of the activities that included in metacognitive category.

*Koran-koran yang pake bahasa inggris, cerita-cerita, kan media banyak bisa pake social media ada, kalo ngapload2 gitu pake bahasa inggris, Koran, novel, pengetahuan ensiklopedia gitu, film ada sih, lagu juga bisa sih*

**I2/B/QUEST3/MET/32**

The utterance is categorized as metacognitive because the learner stated that he used media to improve her vocabulary. He tried to test his vocabulary mastery by using the media like newspaper, stories, social media, novel, encyclopedia, movie, and songs. Using media to improve and to test their vocabulary ability is one of the activities that included in metacognitive category. Therefore it is categorized into metacognitive.

*Aku kan . ya setiap orang kan punya pola belajar masing-masing nah pola yang sering dipake gurunya tu gak cocok sama aku. Terus aku nganuin pola belajarku sendiri. Misalnya kayak suruh ngafalin kata-kata itu kan aku gak bisa kalo langsung ngafalin yang ada disitu. Jadi aku nanyari metodeku*

*sendiri. Aku pake lagu, buku, majalah, Koran terus kadang-kadang aku pake internet*

**I2/A/QUEST3/MET/62**

The utterance is categorized as metacognitive because the learner stated that she tried to evaluate and plan her own vocabulary learning strategies. In that statement, she said that the method and the strategies for mastering vocabulary that introduced by the teacher was not appropriate for her own strategy. Then, she tried to find their own strategies by using book, magazine, newspaper, and sources from internet. Evaluating and planning the way to study were included into metacognitive strategies. Therefore it is categorized into metacognitive.

This result was the same with the result of observation. The researcher found that the learners asked by the teacher to review the newspapers and submit it OBS1/MET/6. The researcher found that teacher gave the audio about dialog and passage, music, and poetry in class as the student's media for mastering English vocabulary OBS1/MET/4. It is supported by the document analysis result. The researcher found list of movies in the laptop and songs in the hand phone of the learners. These results were from document analysis DOC1/MET/6, DOC1/MET/7.

#### **4.2.4 Memory Strategies**

The high achiever learners linked their vocabulary mastery with their prior knowledge. They learn vocabulary through related word, synonym, part of speech, word grouping, and memorizing. To get the deeper analysis, the datum I2/B/QUEST3/MEM/16 can be the example:

*Aku belajar **related word**. Kayak misalnya aku lagi mesen sesuatu terus kita gak tau artinya. Itu aku liat dari kata-kata yang sesuai. Kayak misalnya **small-medium large**. Kalo pas pesen minuman. Aku gak tau kata **medium** tapi aku tau **small sama large** jadi aku ngira-ngira*

**I2/A/QUEST3/MEM/34**

The utterance is categorized as memory strategy because the learner said that he related word for mastering vocabulary. They tried to find the related of the word when they did not know the meaning of the word. For example, when they did not know the meaning of the word "medium", they relate it to other word like "small and medium" words. Meanwhile, using related word is one of the activities that included in memory category.

*Sama aku juga pernah pake yang **sinonim**. Sering dulu sama akhir-akhir ini ada kata terus suruh nyari sinonimnya apa. Itu di TOEFL. Terus pas ngundang natives itu juga kan dia pake nya kata sinonim banyak banget kayak misalnya dia bilang "place" gitu dia bilang "state" yang deket-deket gitu artinya. Jadi disengaja biar kita tau banyak kata.*



## I2/B/QUEST3/MEM/16

The utterance is categorized as memory because the learner stated that he used synonym to master vocabulary. The learner used it when he got TOEFL class and when he listen native English speaker used other word rather than what he usually used in daily communication. Meanwhile, the activity “connect the word to the synonym” was included in memory category. Therefore, it is categorized as memory strategy.

*Ni yang study the word part of speech. Ni perlu ni untuk bisa menganalisis kan harus tau dulu harus belajar dulu. Misalnya kan aku belajar grammar nah itu jadi input buat aku biar bisa nganisis*

## I2/C/QUEST3/MEM/38

The utterance is categorized as memory because the learner stated that he learned part of speech in grammar class as the input for analyzing the difficult word. Meanwhile, the activity “learning the word’s part of speech” was included in memory category. Therefore, it is categorized as memory strategy.

This result was the same with the observation result. The researcher found that the learners learned vocabulary trough synonym OBS/MEM/2 and part of speech OBS1/MEM/5.

Supported result come from document analysis. The researcher found learner’s difficult word list book as reference and they memorize the difficult word DOC1/MEM/2.

### 4.2.5 Cognitive Strategy

In the cognitive strategies, the high achievers learn vocabulary trough Picture & imaginary I2/A/QUEST3/COG/54, I2/B/QUEST3/COG/26. They did vocabulary repetition in writing and speaking. The high achievers tried to take note in class by English language I2/B/QUEST3/COG/10 I2/B/QUEST3/COG/28, I1/B/WRIT/26. They used the vocabulary section book in class to master vocabulary Book section I2/B/QUEST3/COG/30. For the deeper analysis, the datum I2/A/QUEST3/COG/54 can be the example:

*Aku pake yang using picture and imaginary. Pake perumpamaan . aku tu misalnya aku disodorin kata sama artinya. Biasanya aku tu umpamain bikin kalimat bayangin satu keadaan yang gunain kata-kata atau kalimat itu.*

## I2/A/QUEST3/COG/54

The utterance is categorized as cognitive category because the respondent used picture and imaginary for mastering English vocabulary. Meanwhile, using picture and imaginary is one of the activities that included in cognitive strategies.

*Taking note in class. Kalo aku nulisnya biasanya pas pelajaran grammar sama TOEFL. Nah itu aku natet sendiri pake bahasa aku sendiri sepemahaman aku.*

#### **I2/B/QUEST3/COG/28**

The utterance is categorized as cognitive category because the respondent tried to take note in class using their own word and sentences. It gives them an opportunity to use their vocabulary mastery in writing. Taking note in class using their own word is one of the activities that included in cognitive strategies. Therefore this activity is categorized into cognitive.

*Itu yang ngulang-ngulang. Secara tuliskan sama aja kita ngulang-ngulang kata*

#### **I2/C/QUEST3/COG/55**

The utterance is categorized as cognitive category because the respondent tried to repeat what been learned from vocabulary to the sentences in paragraph. He said that writing means repeating the word he learned. Meanwhile, repeating word in written and speaking is one of the activities that included in cognitive strategies.

The same results come from the observation result. The students made sentences from the difficult vocabulary OBS1/COG/2 and they presented their opinion of certain topic in front of the class OBS1/COG/1.

### **4 CONCLUSION**

The researcher made conclusion that the study has discovered that the high achiever learners perceive the substance of vocabulary learning strategies as important things in language learning. However, 5 vocabulary learning strategies were used by the high achiever learners. the strategies such as asking and interacting with others, contextual clues, dictionary use, media use, repetition, study part of speech where are related to social, determination, metacognitive, cognitive, and memory are popular strategies and the learners are enthusiastic in using them.

### **5 SUGGESTION**

Result of the research show that the highest achiever learners have varied vocabulary learning strategies in receptive and productive use. However, the researcher would like to give suggestions and recommendation, as follows:

#### **A. For the learners**

To improve the vocabulary mastery, the learners are suggested to practice listening, reading, speaking, and writing in balance. They can use the media which taken from the internet or non-internet.

B. For the school

The school are suggested to hold continuous the program of “conversation” to support the learners in learning English especially the vocabulary, and keep facilitating the learners with English newspapers and other media to foster a sense of want to read.

C. For English teacher

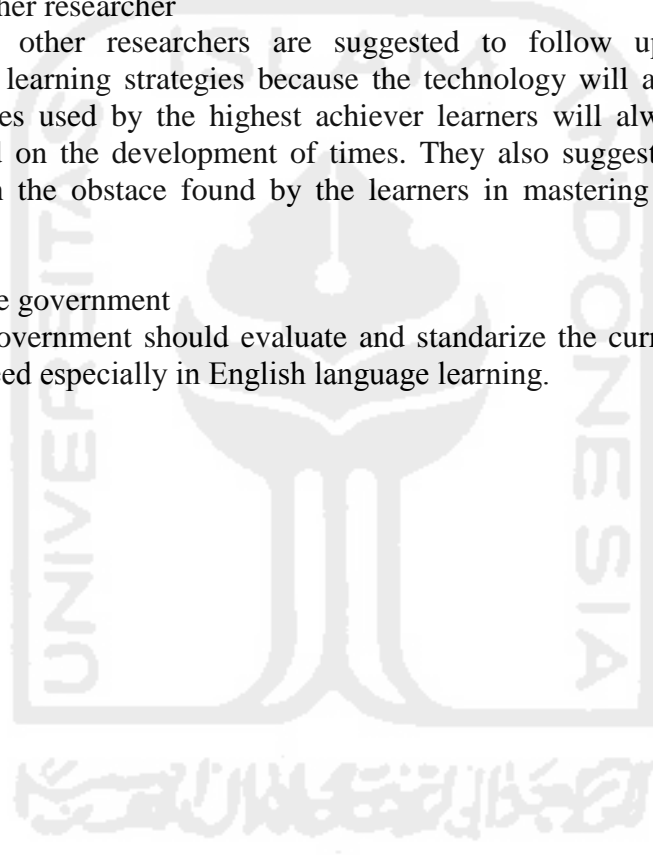
The English teachers are suggested to keep speaking English in the class because it will be the input for the learners and it give the big effect to the learner’s language improvement. They also suggested to vary the English teaching in order to fulfill the four skill; listening, speaking, reading, and writing.

D. For other researcher

The other researchers are suggested to follow up the research on vocabulary learning strategies because the technology will always improve and the strategies used by the highest achiever learners will always changed many ways based on the development of times. They also suggested to carry out the research on the obstacle found by the learners in mastering vocabulary and its solution.

E. For the government

The government should evaluate and standarize the curriculum to meet the learner’s need especially in English language learning.



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## **AUTHOR PROFILE**

NAME : Lukita Purnamasari  
ADRESS : Kaliurang Street KM 13, 5. Yogyakarta  
EMAIL : fazakeyta@gmail.com

