

**ANALYSIS STRATEGIES OF VOCABULARY RETENTION DIFFICULTIES  
OF HIGH AND LOW ABILITY STUDENTS AT THE FIFTH SEMESTER  
OF ENGLISH EDUCATION STUDY PROGRAM UNIVERSITY  
OF MUHAMMADIYAH KOTABUMI  
ACADEMIC YEAR 2024/2025**

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**Abstract:** This research aims to analyze strategies in dealing with vocabulary retention difficulties experienced by students with high and low abilities in the fifth semester of the English Language Education Study Program, Muhammadiyah University of Kotabumi, Academic Year 2024/2025. Vocabulary retention is the ability to store or remember as many words as possible by engaging in various activities. This study uses a qualitative descriptive method with data collection techniques in the form of closed interviews. The results of the study are expected to provide insight into the effectiveness of strategies used by students with different levels of ability and provide recommendations for more effective English teaching.

**Keyword :** Strategies, Vocabulary retention, high and low ability students English learning

***Abstrak:** Penelitian ini bertujuan untuk menganalisis strategi dalam menghadapi kesulitan Retensi kosakata yang dialami oleh mahasiswa dengan berkemampuan tinggi dan rendah pada semester lima program studi pendidikan bahasa Inggris, Universitas Muhammadiyah Kotabumi, tahun akademik 2024/2025. Retensi adalah kemampuan menyimpan atau mengingat kata sebanyak mungkin dengan melakukan berbagai aktivitas. Penelitian ini menggunakan metode deskriptif kualitatif dengan teknik pengumpulan data berupa wawancara tertutup. Hasil penelitian diharapkan dapat memberikan wawasan mengenai efektivitas strategi yang digunakan oleh siswa dengan tingkat kemampuan yang berbeda serta memberikan rekomendasi bagi pengajaran bahasa Inggris yang lebih efektif.*

***Kata kunci :** Strategi, Retensi kosakata, Siswa berkemampuan tinggi dan rendah, pembelajaran bahasa Inggris..*

## **I. INTRODUCTION**

Vocabulary mastery is a fundamental aspect of English language learning as it serves as the foundation for

speaking, reading, writing, and listening skills. Wangdi (2022) stated that basic vocabulary knowledge significantly affects one's ability to communicate. Preliminary research revealed that students experience

difficulties in pronouncing complex vocabulary and fail to recognize the meanings of words in different sentence contexts. According to Sotlikova (2023), vocabulary retention presents a major challenge in the era of globalization, which demands mastery of foreign languages, particularly English as the global lingua franca.

Vocabulary encompasses not only meaning but also spelling, pronunciation, and morphological changes based on grammatical function (Nugroho, 2015). Therefore, lecturers or educators play a crucial role in developing effective learning strategies to help students recall and accurately use vocabulary. A supportive learning environment can also enhance students' abilities to absorb and use English productively.

Vocabulary retention difficulties may stem from various factors such as unsuitable learning content, ineffective instructional approaches, and inadequate teaching strategies. Surmanov & Azimova (2020) emphasized that vocabulary is vital for the use of a second language (L2). They categorized vocabulary into productive (writing and speaking) and receptive (reading and listening) types, which was further supported by Uchihara et al. (2022). Mateo-Valdehita & De Diego (2021) added that productive knowledge includes

understanding the structure, meaning, and contextual use of words.

Factors such as pronunciation, spelling, word length, and meaning are major contributors to challenges in vocabulary acquisition (Salam & Nurnisa, 2021). Low learning motivation exacerbates these difficulties. Students with limited vocabulary often struggle to express their ideas, fear making mistakes, and display passive behavior in English classes. Furthermore, the inability to grasp word meanings accurately becomes a significant barrier in speaking, writing, and reading comprehension.

Chyintia PM et al. (2013) explained that vocabulary recognition poses a challenge for students who struggle with memorization, including difficulties in naming terms, distinguishing between similar words, and understanding multiple meanings. As a result, students face challenges in long-term vocabulary retention. These issues highlight the need for more appropriate strategies to support students in memorizing and applying vocabulary effectively across various contexts.

Several previous studies support these findings. Sudarman (2018), in his research on university students' vocabulary mastery, found that students demonstrated low proficiency and recommended further research on vocabulary learning

approaches. Similarly, Rohmatillah (2017) identified that students face a range of difficulties in vocabulary learning, such as pronunciation, spelling, and grammatical word forms. Anugrah Al Layli (2018) also found that students struggle with long-term vocabulary retention, understanding meanings, and dealing with words that have multiple definitions in English.

This research, titled “Analysis Strategies of Vocabulary Retention Difficulties of High and Low Ability Students at the Fifth Semester of English Education Study Program, University of Muhammadiyah Kotabumi, Academic Year 2024/2025,” focuses on analyzing vocabulary retention strategies among high and low-ability students. The distinction from previous studies lies in the methods used for data collection (observations, questionnaires, and direct tests) and the characteristics of the student sample. The goal of this research is 1) To investigate the strategies students employ to cope with vocabulary retention at English Education Program. 2) To investigate the aspects distinguish high and low ability students in vocabulary retention.

## II. RESEARCH METHODS

The researcher used descriptive qualitative method to answer the questions in this research. Gay et al. (2016) said that

the qualitative research was the collection, analysis, and interpretation of comprehensive narrative and visual (i.e., non-numerical) data to gain insights into a particular phenomenon of interest. Besides, qualitative research is an approach for exploring and understanding the meaning of individuals or groups ascribe to a social or human problem. Within qualitative research, the human investigator assumes a central role as the primary instrument for data collection and analysis (Creswell, 2018).

### Data Source

Primary data sources are data sources that directly provide data to researcher. The data source is the place where the data is obtained. In this research, researchers took two data sources. In this study, data was obtained directly from informants who are closely related to the problems in Sugiyono's (2008) research. The primary data source is five semester students who have a lower grades in vocabulary subject at Muhammadiyah University Kotabumi.

In this research, the subjects will be high-ability and low-ability of the fifth semester. High-ability students in this study are those having scores of vocabulary  $> 80$  in their final semester report. Low-ability students in this study are those having scores of vocabulary  $< 70$  in their final

semester report. From the data obtained from the students' scores in the vocabulary course, there were 11 subjects, 8 students with high abilities and 3 students with low abilities. Data are taken through in-depth interview and video recording to gain an in-depth understanding of students' difficulties in vocabulary retention.

### **Research Instrument**

In this research, the researcher determined some instruments to help her obtaining data.

#### **1. Closed interviews**

In this research, closed interviews were used. Emzir (2012, p. 51) suggests that closed interviews are interviews by asking questions according to certain answer, for example questions that require answers yes or no, or agree, or hesitate, disagree.

#### **2. Documentation**

Documentation is observation directly to get that data obtained by the researcher according to the discussion. This is done to get an overview real in the field and get sources a primer on organizational school on teacher work motivation. According to Sugiyono (2017:240) said that the study documentation is a complement to use of observation and interview methods in qualitative.

In this research, researchers used video recording. Video recording is one of

the data collection techniques qualitative. In research, video recordings are often made to complement the research data. Video recordings can be used to dig deeper into video content when data processing is carried out. Answer to the aspect instrument in vocabulary retention consist of several closed interviews.

### **Data Collecting Tehnique**

#### **1. Closed interviews**

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#### **2. Documents**

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### **Data Analysis**

To analyze the data, the researcher used the process which are very essential in analyzed qualitative data.

#### **1. Data transcription**

According to Poland (1999) in Raihani transcription is data collected from the interviews were transcribed into language Indonesian. After every interview, it is hoped that transcribing can be completed. The researcher is aware that transcription is the process of turning recorded interviews into language that are more comprehensible and simpler to read. The majority of qualitative research uses information gathered via informant conversations and interviews. Every interview and discussion was captured on audio, video, and notepad before being saved to a diskette, flash drive, or other storage device. Transcript refers to the process of sending the recording's outcomes. Words must be transcribed in order to provide data that accurately reflects the interview's details. This is significant because, based on the data gathered, the research formulates a theory regarding the role that information technology use plays in library services. The responder receiver the transcript interview findings for review and explanation. While the majority of respondents returned the transcript fully agreeing with its contents, some respondents changed words pertaining to people's names and abbreviations. Data analysis will be connected in several phrases as follows:

a. Verbatim transcription

Using this technique, all hesitations, repeats, and non-verbal cues are included in the transcription of the data. The goal of verbatim transcribing is to maintain the uniqueness and subtleties of the language that participants used, giving researchers' access to a wealth of data for analysis.

b. Intelligent transcription

Also referred to as intelligent verbatim or edited transcription, this method consists of distilling the main points of the discussion while eliminating superfluous or unnecessary details. To improve readability without sacrificing the dialogue's essential content, intelligent transcribing may include making grammatical corrections, eliminating filler words, and shortening lengthy parts.

In this study, researchers used verbatim transcripts because the interviews were more accurate, complete, detailed, without additions or subtractions.

2. Data condensation

In this step, the researcher selected and chose the data relevant to the theme. Data condensation referred to the process or selecting, focusing, simplifying, abstracting, and transforming the data that appear in the full corpus (body) of written-

up field notes, interview transcripts, documents, and other empirical materials (Miles & Huberman, 1994)

Firstly, the researcher had to gate score from the students, and gave the interview guideline and then transcripts of the interview. After that researcher categorized the meanings or understandings that emerge from these data, it purposed to get an initial sense of data.

This categorization was needed in this research because According to Gay (2016) the categories provided the basis for structuring the analysis and interpretation, without data that are classified and grouped, the researcher had no reasonable way to analyze qualitative studies.

### 3. Data coding

Coding in its most basic form is the simple operation of identifying segments of meaning in your data and labeling them with a code, which can be defined as “a word or short phrase that symbolically assigns a summative, salient, essence-capturing, and or evocative attribute for a portion of language-based or visual data” (Saldana, 2013).

### 4. Data Display

In the next step, the researcher summarized the information collected. It is important to try to summarize the information that the researcher collected in

an appropriate meaningful format that she can share with readers. To do this, the researcher needed to think display because it can also state as displaying data. Gay (2016) sated that display can include matrix, charts, concept maps, graphs, and figures-whatever works as practical way to encapsulate the finding of the study. The researcher shares the findings of students“ difficulties in vocabulary retention.

## III. RESEARCH RESULT

Interview data shows that analysis strategies of vocabulary retention difficulties of high and low ability students at the fifth semester of the English education study program at the University of Muhammadiyah Kotabumi. Vocabulary retention is the ability to store or remember as many words as possible by engaging in various activities (Stavy & NorsehaUnin, 2019). Based on the result of closed interviews conducted with students, it was found that there were three main strategies used in vocabulary, as follows:

### a. Recording

This strategy involves the process of recording or storing vocabulary in various forms so that it can be easily accessed again. Some of the methods used by students in recording are.

- Note down new vocabulary in a notebook or digital app.
- Record their own voice when saying new words.
- Listen to podcasts and music.
- Watch learning video.
- Grouping vocabulary based on certain themes or categories.

#### b. Repetition

This strategy involves repeating words periodically so they can be embedded in long-term memory. Repetition can be done in various ways, such as:

- Reading new words repeatedly.
- Rewrite newly learned vocabulary.
- Use the word in different sentences.

#### c. Retrieving

This strategy relates to students efforts to retrieve information from their memory without looking at notes or references. This method can be done by:

- Take quizzes or active recall exercises that require students to remember previously learned vocabulary.
- Trying to pronounce the word you have learned without looking at the dictionary.

Based on interviews conducted, there are several aspects that differentiate students with high and low abilities in

vocabulary retention. The first, students who have high ability to remember vocabulary tend to use various recording methods, such as watching learning videos, listening to the podcasts or music, and taking notes in various formats, or using language learning applications. The second, repetition frequency and consistency students with high and low abilities repeat new vocabulary more often and consistently. They have the habit of reading, writing, and using vocabulary in daily conversations, while students with low abilities tend to be less disciplined in implementing these strategies. The third, high ability students are more active in testing their memory through retrieval techniques, such as memorizing without looking at notes or using quizzes to recall vocabulary. In contrast, low ability students rely more on reference materials and rarely test their own memory.

## IV. CONCLUSION

The result of interview shows that analysis descriptive qualitative of analysis strategies of vocabulary retention difficulties of high and low ability students. Vocabulary retention is the ability to store or remember as many words as possible by engaging in various activities (Stavy & NorsehaUnin, 2019). Based on the result of

research regarding the strategies used by students in dealing with difficulties vocabulary retention, it was found that three main aspects they used, namely:

a. Recording

This strategy involves the process of recording or storing vocabulary in various forms so that it can be easily accessed again. Some of the methods used by students in recording are.

b. Repetition

This strategy involves repeating words periodically so they can be embedded in long-term memory.

c. Retrieving

This strategy relates to students efforts to retrieve information from their memory without looking at notes or references.

In addition, in this study there are aspects that differentiate students with high and low ability students. The first, high ability students are more active in using audio and video recording strategies such as: podcasts, music, learning video. It can be compared from the results of research and interviews with students with high and low abilities that students with high abilities are more likely to choose learning video because they think that learning videos are more serious, effective, flexible and there are pictures and videos that make it easier for students to learn to remember English

vocabulary, while students with low abilities tend to prefer music as a method for remembering vocabulary because they think that music is more relaxing but listening to music while remembering English vocabulary.

### **Suggestion**

Based on the result of the study, the researcher puts some suggestion to the following parties.

#### **The students**

The first is diversification of learning methods. Students should not only use fun methods such as games or visual media. Instead, they are advised to combine various methods that involve active practice, such as the use of quiz apps, group discussions, and speaking exercises that force them to use new vocabulary in real contexts. The second is consistency in learning, students need to develop consistent study habits by scheduling special time to learn new vocabulary everyday. The use of spaced repetition techniques can be very effective in increasing long-term retention. The third is applying vocabulary in daily life. Students are advised to integrate the vocabulary learned in daily conversations, both in class and in social interactions. This will help them remember vocabulary in a more meaningful context. The fourth in overcoming boredom in

learning. To avoid boredom, students should look for ways to vary their learning activities, for example by watching videos that contain relevant vocabulary, taking conversation classes, or writing essays that require the use of new vocabulary.

### **The lecturer**

The instructor further increases the students vocabulary and creates students are motivated to improve their English vocabulary skills in order to improve the more vocabulary students have. Vocabulary retention, lecturers need to choose interesting strategies to apply in vocabulary

retention, using interesting materials such as: games, memorizing new ones, vocabulary every meeting.

### **The researcher**

Besides this research, it can be used to increase knowledge as well as to adding references, there are several aspects of words that can be analyzed regarding others vocabulary skills in English. Therefore, researchers are better off perform other aspects of English language skills and the results of this research can used as pure knowledge to conduct subsequent research.

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