# The Use of Photovoice Techniques to Explore Students' Strategies in Learning English Vocabulary 

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#### Abstract

This study aimed to investigate the vocabulary learning strategies used by students in learning English vocabulary and students' problems faced in learning English vocabulary , particularly those in the English Education Study Program. This research used a descriptive qualitative method. The tools of data collection were Photovoice and Structured interviews. Researchers used thematic analysis for the study, here were steps of thematic analysis were Familiarizing with the data, Generating initial codes, Defining and Naming themes, and the last Producing the report. Based on data analysis, research results show that this research found that students use strategies in learning English vocabulary. particularly those students tend to rely more heavily on the "Discovery dimension" strategy when learning new vocabulary. This strategy involves actively seeking out and discovering new words, than the "Consolidation dimension" strategy focuses on reinforcing and developing vocabulary once it has been learned. Using Photovoice, where students take photos to show their learning, gave insights into their strategy. It also showed that spelling is the hardest part of learning vocabulary for them, while understanding the meaning is the easiest. So, understanding these challenges can help develop more effective teaching strategies for vocabulary learning.


Keywords: Photovoice, Strategy,Vocabulary


#### Abstract

Abstrak: penelitian bertujuan untuk menyelidiki strategi yang digunakan mahsiswa dalam mempelajari kosakata bahasa Inggris dan masalah yang mereka hadapi, khususnya bagi mahasiswa di Program Studi Pendidikan Bahasa Inggris. Penelitian ini menggunakan metode deskriptif kualitatif dengan alat pengumpulan data berupa Photovoice dan wawancara terstruktur. Analisis data dilakukan dengan analisis tematik yang meliputi langkah-langkah seperti mengenali data, membuat kode awal, mendefinisikan dan menamai tema, serta menyusun laporan. Hasil penelitian menunjukkan bahwa siswa cenderung lebih mengandalkan strategi "Discovery dimension" untuk belajar kosakata baru, yaitu strategi yang melibatkan pencarian aktif dan penemuan kata-kata baru, dibandingkan dengan strategi "Consolidation dimension" yang berfokus pada penguatan dan pengembangan kosakata yang sudah dipelajari. Penggunaan Photovoice, di mana siswa mengambil foto untuk menunjukkan cara mereka belajar, memberikan wawasan tentang strategi mereka. Penelitian ini juga menemukan bahwa pengejaan adalah bagian tersulit dalam mempelajari kosakata bagi mereka, sedangkan memahami arti kata adalah yang paling mudah. Memahami tantangan-tantangan ini dapat membantu mengembangkan strategi pengajaran yang lebih efektif untuk pembelajaran kosakata.


Kata kunci: Kosa kata, Photovoice, Strategi

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## Introduction

According to Crystal, D. (2003), Learning English is a very important language in this globalization era because its title as an international language requires that all people in the world communicate using English. So we need to improve our English skillsin the world community. Such as our vocabulary. Vocabulary is the basic knowledge to know the meaning of language. According to Injeeli, P. (2013), the estimated figures of 2,500 or 5,000 words are considered underestimates for non-native-speaking students entering the university level. So, without good vocabulary mastery, anyone will have difficulty speaking, reading, listening, and writing. Teachers and students are two distinct components that collaborate to support students' learn and achieve their learning objectives Nurtaat (2022). So, lectures/teachers play an important role in contributing to the students' interest or disinterest when learning English, which is compounded by the limited vocabulary that hinders their ability to express themselves in written or spoken activities. Amrullah (2019) stated that low vocabulary acquisition have no writing correctly. Lail, H. (2018) stated that the problem of unknown vocabulary is one of the most significant problems for learners.

However, in Mataram university students must achieve at least a 500 minimum score in English education program. Which is one of the requirements to get a bachelor's degree through the TOEFL test. Based on student experience, one of the causes is the lack of vocabulary mastery. It's significant factor that makes the TOEFL test difficult for students, as it can lead to problems during the test. Besides that, students have a problem when they choose and determine the right vocabulary learning strategies. As stated by Oxford \& Crookall (1990) Students must have strategies or methods themselves to solve problems they encounter. These strategies help them figure out the best way to tackle a problem and find a solution. As suggested by Melani, et al.(2015) The more strategies the learners applied to learn the words, the more likely that the words could be recalled. This study employs the Photovoice technique which is commonly used in the health and education fields, is applied in this study. The researcher is interested in researching students' strategy in learning vocabulary. The reason is that researcher want to know the vocabulary learning strategies used by students because it can provide an understanding of the effectiveness of the methods used and the obstacles that may be encountered in the learning process. Therefore, this research will use the Photovoice techniques to understand and represent the vocabulary learning strategies of students.

Concept of vocabulary. Acording to Hatch \& Brown (2001: 1). Vocabulary refers to a collection of words that are understood and used by someone in a particular languag. Having a good vocabulary is crucial for reading, listening, speaking, and writing effectively. As stated in Thornbury (2006) several factors make some words more difficult to learn. These factors are, Pronunciation, Spelling, Length and complexity, Grammar and Meaning.

Concept of Strategy. According to Schmitt (1997), In Rohmatillah, (2017), there are two strategies used students, namely : The discovery dimension and the consolidation dimension. The use of Discovery Dimension strategies for students learning vocabulary cannot be separated from daily activities that make them comfortable learning vocabulary. The Consolidation Dimension strategy is used by students to develop and add vocabulary, in learning to use the consolidation strategy, students carry out activities such as studying with friends or study groups, learning by memorizing vocabulary, and learning cognitive and metacognitive. Types of Learning Strategy Discovery Dimension: Strategies to find the meaning of new words. Determination Strategies (DET): Using context and references to guess word meanings. Social Strategies (SOC): Interacting with others to understand new words. Consolidation Dimension: Strategies to remember and use previously learned vocabulary. Memory Strategies (MEM): Techniques to retain vocabulary. Cognitive Strategies (COG): Mechanical means like memorizing. Metacognitive Strategies (MET): Using knowledge of cognitive processes to regulate learning.

Concept of photovoice. Photovoice is a research technique where students use photos to express their experiences and perspectives. In education, it can empower students to share their insights through images. Photovoice is a research tool that has many advantages for all involved in the process. The following are the advantages of Photovoice as revealed by Wang, C., \& Burris (1997) : Different Point of View, Describing Needs. Sampling from Different Settings and Photos for better understanding.

The implementation of photovoice Preparation:
(1)Train paticipant on how to use smartphones to take photos that show their learning process. (2) Phototaking: Students take pictures over a week of different ways they learn vocabulary, like using flashcards, watching movies, or using apps. (3) Analysis: The researcher looks at all the photos and notes from discussions to find common methods and any issues the students face.

## Research Method

This research employs a descriptive qualitative method to describe the factual condition of both the subject and the object of research. Qualitative descriptive methods are generally used to describe phenomena that occur in nature, according to Bogdan and Taylor (2011).

This study uses Photovoice as a part qualitative approach for the media to get data, In the qualitative approach, the researcher chose it because the researcher wanted to see what students' vocabulary learning strategies are used, and the difficulties when learning vocabulary.

The setting and subject is Students from Mataram University, aged 17-24, with a TOEFL score of 500 or more.

## The procedure for conducting Photovoice :

(1) Determine the research topic and conduct a literature review, they are organized into two dimensions (Discovery dimension and Consolidation Dimension) So the contents of this study do not come out of the main discussion. (2) Recruit the studentThe researcher tries to find the most suitable location for this research. The researcher chose the students english education program. (3) Intruction of the Photovoice Technique. The researcher informs students about the Photovoice research design and explains the types of image data they must take, such as: Reflecting Vocabulary Learning Strategies, Problem in, Everyday Activities Supporting Learning. (4) Provide time. The Thirteen students be informed about the time limit they can take these pictures, namely during the learning process of vocabulary. (5) Interview Student. In this stage, has choosen and will be interviewed individually with questions the researcher has prepared.

Thematic analysis is a method for identifying and analyzing patterns of meaning in a dataset. It illustrates which themes are important in the description of the phenomenon under study. To collect the data, researchers used thematic analysis for the study. There were steps of thematic analysis, as follow: Familiarizing with the data, Generating initial codes, Defining and naming themes, and the last Producing the report.

## Result and Discussion

The results of the study showed that the photos collected by the students represent students' strategy in learning vocabulary.

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Figure 1. Student Photovoice Results

## The vocabulary learning strategy used by students : The discovery dimension.

The discovery dimension strategy includes two strategies; the First, Strategy determination refers to efforts to discover and acquire new vocabulary or find new words. Seven student use this strategy, this includes various strategies from three student such as Reading, Photos showing a screenshot of material in English language, Reading using books is an activity that plays an important role for students in adding vocabulary (Nikijuluw, 2020). Beside that one student involve in determination strategy by reading comic. According to Juliana, J. (2021), said that learning vocabulary by using comic increasing vocabulary mastery is effective. Beside that read quotes in Instagram application is also great for student, it can see the the result photovoice, student capture Instagram application as an object where she learn vocabulary. As stated by Putri et al., (2022) The use of an Instagram to learn is effective because apart from seeing an update from someone they can also learn inadvertently.

Two Students also learn vocabulary by watching YouTube, especially native speakers' vlogs, picture of student paying attention to the video. YouTube will also be a big library of free videos for learners that will inspire them to become independent learners. English-based YouTube vlog content is expected to influence students' vocabulary. The most effective educational tools are those that make learning enjoyable for pupils, which in turn boosts their motivation to learn and, as a result, their comprehension of the material Ikhlasa et al., (2023).

In addition, one student discusses game that can support in learning vocabulary, student showing a game application, it's related to the expert, Arce et al., (2022), the importance of using games in language learning, highlighting their ability to provide learners with a sense of accomplishment and motivation to continue learning.

One of the student engagement in expanding vocabulary is through answering multiple-choice questions. Photo showing an exercise book.According to Riggs, et al., multiple-choice questions can be an effective tool in enhancing vocabulary knowledge by providing learners with a range of options to choose from, thus encouraging active engagement and critical thinking.

Secondly, social strategy, seven student use this strategy This strategy involves social interaction as a means to discover new vocabulary. Students learn vocabulary by learning with friends, in study groups or native speakers. One picture showing student participating in an online game and communicating with players from various countries in English. So, this
method makes learning no longer boring, because they can learn while playing. There are also pictures showing students discussing with their colleagues, and photos showing screenshot of WhatsApp groups with her foreign friends to improve their vocabulary. So, with the social strategy, the goal is to help in pronouncing new vocabulary, they can share new vocabulary and exchange vocabulary gained from each other's experiences. As said by Lin, (2018), studying with friends or groups is petrifying in the learning process, such as correcting mistakes, explanations, and suggestions, and getting lots of resources.

## Consolidation dimension

Consolidation dimension, comprises 3 parts, the first is memorize strategy. In helping EFL students learn vocabulary, students also use a method, namely memorizing. This strategy involves efforts to understand the structure and usage of words more deeply. This includes activities such as analyzing word structures and practicing known words. This situation can help students in learning vocabulary. According to research conducted by Sozler, (2012), the use of memory strategy is one of the most effective strategies in the vocabulary learning process, especially in the use of images, keywords, and acronyms. In this strategy, the researcher find three of student maintain the vocabulary by repeat them with multiple times, another student use this strategy with memorize the list of vocabulary that student find when reading a book, the another one who use this strategy just memorize naturally. Meanwhile the twoo of the student did not use this strategy.

The researcher also concludes that EFL students use cognitive and metacognitive methods in learning vocabulary. This strategy involves efforts to understand the structure and usage of words more deeply. and metacognitive Strategies that involve selfawareness of the learning process and efforts to organize and control the learning process. This includes activities such as reflecting on the learning process and measuring learning progress. In cognitive strategy, four students use this strategy, one students practice is by playing games, enjoys playing quiz games that test her memory of new words, which is effective cognitive strategy that makes learning fun. Two student use this strategy by using practical methods. Also 1 student use list words to memorize vocabulary that he find when reading.

While in metacognitive strategy, four students use this strategy, first student use song lyrics application as a media to help improve vocabulary through the Spotify application. by listening to songs, besides that to develop vocabulary, the second student involve in this strategy, because he monitoring about
his learning progress. The third student learn vocabulary by watching movies. This picture of student watching a movie focusing on pronunciation of every character in the movie, and remembering all the new words. According to Fauzi et al., (2021), learning by watching movies will be more effective for students because learning to use movies can be more interesting and enjoyable. So, learning vocabulary will be easier. Students watch movies, when they spent time alone increasing pronunciation and remembering all new words. Picture showing students paying attention to watching a movie. The last student planning his vocabulary learning process to actively practice new words in daily life, particularly at work. Student awareness and can plan their own learning methods to develop vocabulary so that the learning process is more fun.

According to Yong, (2013), cognitive and metacognitive strategies are strategies needed by novice students in learning vocabulary. The researcher found that the use of cognitive and metacognitive learning in EFL students was being done. With the explanation above, the researcher concludes that the use of these two strategies helps EFL students in learning vocabulary.

## The Problem in learning vocabulary

However, in the process of learning vocabulary, EFL students also have difficulty learning vocabulary. According to Thornbury (2006) five factors make it difficult for students to learn vocabulary. The first factor is pronunciation. This aspect identifies that EFL students have difficulty in learning vocabulary, especially in vocabulary pronunciation.

## (1) Pronounciation.

One of the problem students encountered in mastering vocabulary was pronunciation. Four students shared their experiences encountering problems in pronunciation, especially when words do not follow common pronunciation rules or are similar to other words with different pronunciations. They highlighted how these challenges impacted their ability to communicate and understand conversations.

They had difficulty remembering the right way to pronounce them, especially when words sounded similar but had different meanings. This often made things confusing and made it hard to communicate well. For instance, words like "quite" and "quit" as stated by students 5 M . which are really close but mean different things. So, the students had difficult in learning pronunciation.

The statement above was support by Gower, et, al. (2000) said that saying words right is super important when you're learning new words, because if you say them wrong, it's tough to understand.In other researchers, Thonbury said that there were some students" difficulties in vocabulary, one of which was pronunciation. According Thonbury said the potential difficulty in learning pronunciation was unfamiliar with sounds. Pronunciation was the way in which a particular person pronounces the word of a language. So, if the students become proficient in it, they will find it easy to comprehend when learning vocabulary.
(2) Spelling.
five Students had problem in spelling English vocabulary, especially when dealing with additional prefixes, suffixes, and affixes. They didn't know how to spell the words. Four students talked about having trouble with spelling, especially when changes in the structure of words confused them. They mentioned finding it hard to spell words with extra prefixes and suffixes and affixes because these changes can change the meaning of the word and make spelling more difficult. For example, students mentioned difficulty in distinguishing between words such as "help" and its noun form "helpance," indicating the complex difficulties caused by word structure. Also, long and complicated words like "antidisestablishmentarianism" made spelling even harder. While some students, like Daffa, sometimes had problem in spelling, So, the student difficult with it.

Difficulty in pronouncing and writing spelling words is difficult to understand, especially for words with the same pronunciation but different spelling which makes English vocabulary users confused in learning vocabulary (Alshahrani, 2019, p. 66). In other researcher, According to Thonbury also mentioned that when sounds and spellings don't match, it can lead to saying and writing words wrong. According to Thonbury, to understand in spelling, the reader knew the sound spelling. It meant that the students must know about how to spell correctly.
(3) Meaning.

The findings showed that students had difficulty understanding the meanings of words. Especially when dealing with words
that have different meanings or subtle differences. Two Students mentioned that different meanings of the same word often led to confusion, so they had to check the definitions to be sure. On the other hand, one students pointed out that understanding the context and using non-verbal clues were crucial for figuring out what words mean.
The finding about were relevant to the what experts say. Abuhabil et al., (2021) said that students had difficulty with words that they did not know the meaning of, and it made it difficult for them to learn English. These difficulties make students confused with the same words but different meanings.
(4) Length and complexity.

The difficulty of words that have a long and complex level makes them difficult, three student had problem when it came to understanding, pronouncing, spelling words with lots of syllables, and writing long words. making them harder to understand and remember. Sujadi and Wulandari (2021) also said that long words are harder to learn than short words because their meanings can be cause problems, especially due to their length and complexity. So, students have difficulty with words that have a length and complexity.

## Conclusion

The study highlights the learning strategies employed by students, particularly those in the English Education Study Program, which tend to rely heavily on the "discovery dimension" strategy. This strategy involves actively seeking out and discovering new vocabulary, whereas the "consolidation dimension" focuses on reinforcing and developing vocabulary once it has been learned. Photovoice techniques, where students document their learning experiences through photos, provide valuable insights into how they learn and the strategies they use. The study also identifies the challenges faced by students in learning vocabulary, particularly those who use English as a foreign language. According to Thornbury (2006), there are five difficulties students face in learning vocabulary, including pronunciation, spelling, meaning, length, and complexity. The study found that the most common challenge faced by students was spelling, while the least common was meaning. These findings suggest that students face significant challenges in learning vocabulary, and that understanding these challenges can inform more effective teaching strategies.

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