Exploring English Vocabulary Learning Strategies of Students in a Private Senior High School in East Jakarta

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Abstract. This study examines the vocabulary learning strategies of grade 11 students at a private high school in East Jakarta, focusing on four categories: cognitive, metacognitive, memory and activation strategies. Using a quantitative descriptive method, data was collected from 169 students attending English classes. The data was collected using a questionnaire with a Likert scale and open-ended questions. The questionnaire consisted of 4 vocabulary learning strategies items: Cognitive Strategy, Metacognitive Strategy, Memory Strategy, and Activation Strategy. Each item consisted of 10 questions. The findings showed a diversity in strategy use, with digital tools and contextual inference being the most frequently used cognitive strategies. Metacognitive strategies such as goal setting and self-assessment were not consistently applied, while memory strategies such as repetition and auditory reinforcement proved effective for vocabulary retention. Activation strategies, including using new words in online conversations and interactions, highlighted the integration of technology in learning. This research emphasizes the importance of diverse and targeted teaching strategies to improve students' vocabulary acquisition and overall English proficiency.

Keywords: *Vocabulary learning strategies, EFL students, senior high school*

Introduction

Mastering a foreign language is a must in the era of globalization. Among the many foreign languages that exist, English must be learned. English is an international language used by many countries, so many countries require learning English in schools and universities (Yuliani et al., 2023). Nowadays, many people from different linguistic and cultural backgrounds use English as their common language, and the majority of them continue to improve their language proficiency. (Maesaro & Wijirahayu, 2025) argues that cross-cultural competency could build a better language learning process, especially in teaching English overseas. It is employed in a variety of settings, for a range of objectives, and in hybrid forms where speakers successfully interact in other languages (Rose et al., 2021). Therefore, we need to learn English, as it is an international language used by many countries.

Mastering a foreign language requires basic knowledge, such as vocabulary. Vocabulary mastery is one of the important factors supporting language proficiency, which is the ability to speak, listen, read, and write effectively in a language. If we learn vocabulary well, we will quickly understand the context of the language (Rosyada-AS & Apoko, 2023). Often, students are required to learn specific vocabulary to communicate fluently in English. In addition, learning English must also be followed by its meaning to build a meaningful understanding of the language and know the context of the language (Hestiana & Anita, 2022).

According to Krisnayanti & Winarta (2021), aspects such as pronunciation (Utami & Apriani, 2023), spelling, word meaning, and word expansion make students find problems in learning English. One of them is vocabulary. (Surmanov & Azimova, 2020) found that the

difficulties students face in learning vocabulary vary. Almost all students have difficulty in pronouncing words correctly. One of the reasons they have difficulty learning vocabulary is because the words have different grammatical forms, known as exaggerations. Therefore, students need strategies to learn vocabulary.

Learning strategies are needed to learn vocabulary so that learning can be maximized. Additionally, one of the key elements in learning a language is having effective learning practices. Specific methods are employed to accomplish learning objectives through learning techniques (Wijirahayu, Perdhana, et al., 2024). Learning strategies can make learning fun and faster, and students can reflect on it. Students can choose the learning style that suits them best based on language learning strategies. For example, students can learn English through activities such as watching movies, listening to music, reading books or writing essays (Anggarista & Wahyudin, 2022). Therefore, learning strategies are needed for the effectiveness and success of language learning.

This research focuses on exploring the different learning strategies used by EFL students in high school. The main objective is to find out what learning strategies EFL students use to learn English vocabulary. Understanding these strategies can provide valuable insights for educators to develop more targeted and effective teaching methods, which can improve students' proficiency in English. This study was conducted in a private school located in East Jakarta to provide insight into what strategies are used by students so that teachers in private schools can develop appropriate teaching methods for their students.

Theoretical Framework
English Vocabulary

Speaking, writing, reading, and listening are the four components of language learning, and vocabulary is the knowledge of words and their meanings utilized in these areas (Satrio et al., 2023). In another way, vocabulary refers to understanding words and their meanings in both written and spoken language. Therefore, one of the most crucial parts of learning English is expanding one's vocabulary because it helps one communicate and express ideas. Students will be skilled in English and achieve academic success if they possess a strong vocabulary in the language (Nella et al., 2020). This statement leads one to the conclusion that vocabulary, or the understanding of words and their meanings in both written and spoken form, is a crucial component of learning English and will facilitate communication.

Vocabulary is a very important basic aspect in learning English. It is very important for students to be able to speak, listen, read and write English well (Yudha & Mandasari, 2021). Having a strong English vocabulary makes it easier to communicate with native speakers. However, learning new words should be accompanied by understanding their meanings to gain a deeper comprehension of the language. This understanding helps us grasp the context in which the language is used. In addition, it helps us to avoid mistakes in understanding written or spoken text (Hestiana & Anita, 2022).

The impact of vocabulary mastery in learning English is that having a large vocabulary can build confidence to communicate in English. In addition, it can help in conveying ideas, ideas, and emotions effectively so that communication becomes more efficient (Muhayyang et al., 2023). By mastering vocabulary, we can also know the meaning or meaning of words in a discussion. This aspect is very important to avoid misunderstanding (Hestiana & Anita, 2022).

Learning Strategy

A method for gaining and using knowledge is called a learning strategy. This technique helps students understand the material and solve issues more effectively. By teaching students how to study successfully and use their knowledge for success, learning strategy instructors want to transform their students into more proactive learners. Actions that facilitate more straightforward, quicker, more pleasurable, and more successful learning on many occasions are included in learning methods. To be more precise, language learning

strategies are the acts, behaviors, plans of action, or methods that help students become fluent in a foreign language. A learning strategy essentially encourages students to apply critical thinking skills and make use of available resources to obtain a variety of knowledge and address language learning obstacles (Taufik et al., 2023).

Examining the strategies used by English language learners to acquire vocabulary can reveal variations in each student's level of vocabulary proficiency. It can inspire and encourage EFL educators and curriculum designers to produce resources and exercises to benefit students and advance their vocabulary acquisition. Students who frequently struggle throughout their academic careers due to a lack of vocabulary acquisition tools or word learning strategies end up in a circle of dissatisfaction and continuing failure (Ghalebi et al., 2020)

Material and Method

This study uses a descriptive quantitative method to explore vocabulary learning strategies among eleventh-grade high school students learning English. The collection of numerical data that can be statistically analyzed through this method makes it possible to find patterns and trends in students' experiences. This study used research instruments in the form of a Likert Scale questionnaire (Wijirahayu, Perdhana, et al., 2024). This study focuses on four items of vocabulary learning strategies: Cognitive Strategy, Metacognitive Strategy, Memory Strategy, and Activation Strategy. The survey questionnaire used in this study is a Likert Scale, ranging from 1) Never to 5) Always, to determine the vocabulary learning strategies used by students. The sample of this study was all eleventh-grade students in a private high school in Duren Sawit, East Jakarta, with a total of 169 people. The data were analyzed thematically, focusing on four items of vocabulary learning strategies.

Results and Discussion
Results

This research examines 4 strategies: Cognitive Strategies, Metacognitive Strategies, Memory Strategies, and Activation Strategies. This study involved 169 eleventh grade Upper Secondary School students.

Cognitive Strategies

The following table presents the research results regarding cognitive strategies in vocabulary learning strategies. There are 10 items answered by 169 respondents. These questions were answered by respondents on a Likert scale from 1 (Never) to 5 (Always).

Table 1.
Cognitive strategies related to vocabulary learning

No	Question	N	Never	Seldom	Sometimes	Often	Always
1.	I use synonyms or related words to help me understand new vocabulary.	169	3,6% 6	5,9% 10	54,4% 92	24,3% 41	11,8% 20
2.	When I learn a new word, I write it down several times to help me remember it.	169	12,4% 21	19,5% 33	38,5% 65	18,3% 31	11,2% 19
3.	I try to guess the meaning of new words based on context.	169	1,8% 3	3,6% 6	29,6% 50	38,5% 65	26,6% 45

Item	N					
4. I write down new words to review them later.	169	13,6% 23	16,6% 28	40,8% 69	16,6% 28	12,4% 21
5. I write down new words and their definitions in English.	169	14,2% 24	18,3% 31	42,6% 72	14,2% 24	10,7% 18
6. I use a dictionary or online translator to check the meaning of unfamiliar words.	169	4,1% 7	5,3% 9	24,9% 42	20,1% 34	45,6% 77
7. I practice new vocabulary by using it in sentences.	169	2,4% 4	8,3% 14	47,9% 81	27,2% 46	14,2% 24
8. I make a list of words with similar meanings to increase my vocabulary.	169	12,4% 21	16,6% 28	46,2% 78	14,8% 25	10,1% 17
9. I make personal notes or summaries for new vocabulary to help strengthen my understanding.	169	13,6% 23	17,2% 29	43,8% 74	16% 27	9,5% 16
10. I write words on little pieces of paper, wall charts, and posters, and I stick them somewhere in my house.	169	36,1% 61	16,6% 28	33,7% 57	7,1% 12	6,5% 11

The findings reveal that respondents' use of various cognitive strategies in learning vocabulary is inconsistent and highly variable. The most frequently used strategies include using a dictionary or online translator to check unfamiliar words (45.6% always and 20.1% often) and guessing the meaning of new words based on context (26.6% always and 38.5% often). The result suggests that digital tools and contextual inference are the most preferred strategies for learning vocabulary, possibly due to their immediate accessibility and practicality.

In addition, the data shows that even though many students sometimes use synonyms to understand new vocabulary (54.4%), fewer students use this strategy frequently (24.3%) or always (11.8%). This shows that although the strategy is quite familiar, it is not consistently implemented. Similarly, writing new words several times to memorize them is sometimes employed by 38.5% of respondents, but only 18.3% use this strategy often, and 11.2% always do so. This finding may suggest that the repetition of memorization is considered less interesting or practical compared to other strategies.

Another finding is that 46.2% of respondents sometimes list words with the same meaning, whereas only 14.8% often and 10.1% always use this method. 43.8% of respondents sometimes make personal notes or summaries for new vocabulary, and 16% use this approach often. This shows that this strategy is seen as a complementary rather than the primary method of learning vocabulary.

In contrast, the least used strategies were writing vocabulary on small pieces of paper, wall charts, or posters and sticking them in visible locations. Only 7.1% of respondents use

this method frequently, and 6.5% always use it. This could be due to the effort needed to implement this method or a lack of understanding of its benefits.

Table 2.
Metacognitive Strategies

No	Question	N	Never	Seldom	Sometimes	Often	Always
1.	I set a goal for myself of how many new words I want to learn each week.	169	21,3% 36	17,2% 29	39,1% 66	16 27	6,5% 11
2.	I review my vocabulary learning progress regularly.	169	8,3% 14	19,5% 33	44,4% 75	16 27	11,8% 20
3.	I plan and organize time specifically for vocabulary practice.	169	16% 27	25,4% 43	38,5% 65	13,6% 23	6,5% 11
4.	I monitor my understanding of new words while reading or listening.	169	3% 5	9,5% 16	31,4% 53	35,5% 60	20,7% 35
5.	I choose specific topics or themes to focus on for learning vocabulary.	169	6,5% 11	17,2% 29	40,2% 68	23,7% 40	12,4% 21
6.	I use self-assessment or quizzes to track my vocabulary progress.	169	12,4% 21	16% 27	37,9% 64	22,5% 38	11,2% 19
7.	I set a schedule to review and refresh vocabulary that I have learned previously.	169	18,9% 32	21,9% 37	43,8% 74	8,9% 15	6,5% 11
8.	I prioritize learning vocabulary that I find useful in daily life or studies.	169	3% 5	8,3% 14	36,7% 62	34,9% 59	17,2% 29
9.	I evaluate my vocabulary using online tests.	169	11,2% 19	22,5% 38	39,1% 66	13,6% 23	13,6% 23
10	I look up the definitions of words using the textbook's illustrations.	169	7,1% 12	21,3% 36	40,8% 69	23,1% 39	7,7% 13

This survey identified that most EFL high school students apply various metacognitive strategies to learn vocabulary, but the consistency in using these strategies varies. As in

statement number 11, 39.1% of respondents sometimes set weekly targets for learning new words. Meanwhile, only 6.5% always do so. Although target setting is recognized as a strategy, many students do not apply it regularly. Similarly, regular review of vocabulary progress is not standard, with only 11.8% constantly reviewing, despite the importance of this for improving the ability to remember new vocabulary.

Time management for vocabulary learning also shows mixed results. However, 38.5% of respondents sometimes plan a specific time for vocabulary practice, but only 6.5% consistently allocate such time. This indicates a lack of structured study habits, hindering vocabulary growth. Conversely, in statement 14, monitoring comprehension of new words is done more frequently, with 35.5% often and 20.7% constantly monitoring their comprehension when reading or listening. This reflects an awareness of the importance of active engagement in language learning.

Another strategy identified is choosing a specific topic or theme for vocabulary learning. However, 40.2% sometimes use this method, while only 12.4% always do so. Similarly, 37.9% of respondents sometimes use self-assessment or quizzing to track vocabulary progress, while 11.2% always do so. The infrequent use of self-assessment tools suggests that students may not fully realize the benefits of monitoring and improving their learning.

The study also highlighted students' prioritization of practical vocabulary. Around 36.7% sometimes and 34.9% often prioritize learning valuable vocabulary for daily life or studies. Furthermore, strategies like evaluating vocabulary using online tests and using textbook illustrations were used less frequently, with only 13.6% often and always evaluating their progress and 7.7% always using textbook illustrations. This suggests students may not fully utilize available resources to improve vocabulary learning.

Table 3.
Memory Strategies

No	Question	N	Never	Seldom	Sometimes	Often	Always
1.	I use flashcards or digital tools to help me remember vocabulary.	169	20,7% 35	16% 27	36,1% 61	16% 27	11,2% 19
2.	I use pictures to help me remember new words.	169	16% 27	20,7% 35	35,5% 60	15,4% 26	12,4% 21
3.	I use songs or rhymes to make the words easier to remember.	169	9,5% 16	5,9% 10	29% 49	31,4% 53	24,3% 41
4.	I practiced pronouncing the new words out loud to strengthen my memory.	169	7,7% 13	13,6% 23	42% 71	17,2% 29	19,5% 33
5.	I imagined how I would use new words in conversations with others.	169	3,6% 6	8,9% 15	38,5% 65	22,5% 38	26,6% 45
6.	I listen to audio recordings of	169	7,7%	14,2%	42,6%	18,9%	16,6%

No.	Statement	N					
	new words to remember pronunciation.		13	24	72	32	28
7.	I organize new words into categories (e.g., animals, food, emotions) to remember them.	169	13,6%	18,3%	39,6%	18,9%	9,5%
			23	31	67	32	16
8.	I repeat new vocabulary several times to help memorize it.	169	7,1%	9,5%	40,2%	26,6%	16,6%
			12	16	68	45	28
9.	I draw diagrams or mind maps to remember connections between words.	169	29%	24,3%	33,7%	6,5%	6,5%
			49	41	57	11	11
10.	I try to remember the English words that are similar to Indonesian words, like "computer" and "Komputer."	169	8,3%	8,9%	42%	23,1%	17,8%
			14	15	71	39	30

The data above is from a survey conducted on 169 respondents, revealing various memory strategies used by students. The most used strategy is listening to audio recordings of new words to remember the pronunciation, found in item 26, with 42.6% of respondents stating that they sometimes use this strategy. In comparison, 16.6% stated that they always use it. This shows the importance of auditory reinforcement in helping students remember the pronunciation and understand new words effectively.

Another strategy is repeating new vocabulary several times to help memorize it (item 28); 40.2% stated they sometimes repeat words, and 26.6% do so frequently, highlighting repetition as a cornerstone of vocabulary retention. Imagining new words in conversation (item 25), with 38.5% of respondents sometimes using it and 26.6% always doing so. This imaginative practice may help with contextual understanding, although some rarely use it (3.6% never use it).

Similarly, 39.6% sometimes and 18.9% often grouped words into categories, although only 9.5% always used this method. This strategy appears quite effective, although it is less effective for students who rarely or never use it (18.3% and 13.6%, respectively).

Among the participants, flashcards or digital aids (item 21) were sometimes used by 36.1% of the respondents, while 20.7% reported never using them. A smaller percentage (11.2%) stated that they always rely on these tools. This suggests that while digital aids and flashcards are popular, they are not universally preferred or consistently used.

Songs or rhymes were another strategy (item 23), with 31.4% using them frequently, 24.3% always incorporating them into their learning, and 29% sometimes using them. This suggests that auditory aids are one of the preferred strategies for retaining vocabulary.

On the other hand, drawing diagrams or mind maps is a less popular strategy, with 33.7% sometimes using them and 29% never utilizing them. This suggests that while these tools can be effective for some, they are not universally favored among students.

Linking English words with similar Indonesian words, such as "computer" and "computer," is another important strategy. 42% of respondents sometimes use this strategy, and 17.8% always rely on it. This approach highlights the benefits of utilizing linguistic similarities to build vocabulary.

Table 4.
Activation Strategies

No	Question	N	Never	Seldom	Sometimes	Often	Always
1.	I actively try to use new vocabulary in conversation.	169	5,9% 10	12,4% 21	53,8% 91	15,4% 26	12,4% 21
2.	I participate in discussions or debate to apply new vocabulary.	169	20,7% 35	20,1% 34	36,1% 61	14,8% 25	8,3% 14
3.	I try to use new words when asking or answering question in class.	169	11,8% 20	24,3% 41	38,5% 65	17,2% 29	8,3% 14
4.	I practice speaking English with classmates or friends to use new words.	169	10,7% 18	18,9% 32	40,8% 69	16,6% 28	13% 22
5.	I use new vocabulary to describe images or objects that I see.	169	6,5% 11	13,6% 23	49,7% 84	20,7% 35	9,5% 16
6.	I create sentences or short story using new vocabulary.	169	10,1% 17	19,5% 33	44,4% 75	18,3% 31	7,7% 13
7.	I ask teacher or others to correct me when I use new vocabulary to learn from mistakes.	169	14,8% 25	15,4% 26	38,5% 65	16,6% 28	14,8% 25
8.	I try to use new vocabulary on social media or in online interactions.	169	5,3% 9	8,9% 15	42% 71	25,4% 43	18,3% 31
9.	I teach or explain new vocabulary to others to strengthen my understanding.	169	15,4% 26	16,6% 28	43,8% 74	13% 22	11,2% 19
10	I watch videos or read books in English to apply my vocabulary knowledge.	169	4,1% 7	8,3% 14	34,9% 59	26,7% 45	26% 44

The findings from a survey of 169 respondents show various activation strategies EFL students use to apply and strengthen their vocabulary knowledge. Most respondents (53.8%) said they sometimes actively try to use new vocabulary in conversation (item 31), suggesting

that while this strategy is proper, its consistent application remains challenging. Only 15.4% of students engage in this practice frequently, indicating a moderate commitment to integrating new vocabulary into real-life use.

Regarding engaging in discussions or debates to apply vocabulary relatively infrequently (item 32), the data shows that 36.1% of respondents said they sometimes engage in this activity to apply new vocabulary, and 20.7% never do. This suggests that while discussions can be practical for vocabulary activation, they may be hindered by students' confidence or limited opportunities in the classroom environment.

Similarly, using new vocabulary in classroom interactions, such as asking or answering questions (item 33), with 38.5% sometimes trying to use new words when asking or answering questions, shows a tendency to integrate vocabulary into the academic context. 17.2% often use this strategy.

In addition, practicing speaking English with peers (item 34), with 40.8% of students sometimes using this approach. However, consistent use was limited, as only 13% reported always practicing with classmates. This highlights the need for more structured speaking opportunities in the classroom.
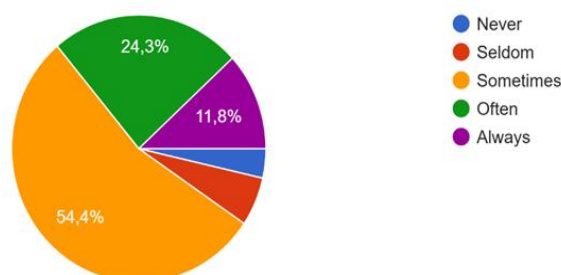

Figure 1.
Synonyms or related words for new vocabulary

In the cognitive strategy category, the data showed that 54.4% (92 respondents) of participants sometimes used synonyms to help understand new vocabulary. This data shows a significant percentage and indicates that students are likelier to use synonyms to understand new vocabulary.
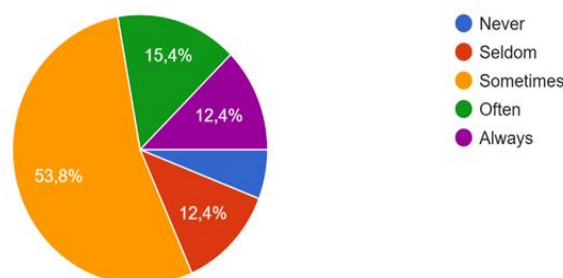

Figure 2.
Using new vocabulary in conversation

In addition, the highest percentage is also found in the activation strategy. The data shows that 53.8% (91 respondents) of the participants reported that they sometimes use new vocabulary in conversation. This shows that almost half of the respondents actively try to incorporate new vocabulary into their conversations.

Discussion

The findings regarding using cognitive strategies in vocabulary learning reveal a complex landscape of student preferences and practices. The predominance of digital tools, such as dictionaries and online translators, suggests a shift towards more accessible and immediate methods for vocabulary acquisition, aligning with contemporary educational trends that emphasize technology integration in learning environments (Duy, 2024). However, the inconsistent application of strategies like using synonyms or writing new words multiple times indicates that while students know various techniques, their actual implementation may be hindered by perceived effectiveness or engagement levels (Huang et al., 2024). Moreover, the low frequency of visual aids, such as word charts or posters, could reflect a lack of understanding of their potential benefits in reinforcing vocabulary retention (Zhou, 2024). This variability underscores the need for targeted instructional strategies that introduce diverse vocabulary learning methods and foster a deeper understanding of their practical applications and benefits in language acquisition contexts

The survey findings indicate a notable inconsistency in applying metacognitive strategies among EFL high school students for vocabulary acquisition, highlighting a gap between awareness and practice. While a significant percentage of students recognize the importance of setting learning targets and reviewing vocabulary progress, only a tiny fraction consistently engages in these practices, suggesting a need for more structured study habits to enhance vocabulary retention (Radić-Bojanić, 2021). The low frequency of self-assessment and topic-focused learning further implies that students may not fully leverage available resources or understand the advantages of these strategies in their learning processes (Ruswandi et al., 2024). Additionally, the mixed results regarding time management reveal that while some students attempt to allocate specific times for vocabulary practice, many fail to do so regularly, which could impede their vocabulary development (Guartazaca Tacuri, 2023). This inconsistency underscores educators' need to implement targeted interventions that foster regular use of effective vocabulary learning strategies, promoting greater autonomy and student engagement (Farahdiba et al., 2024).

The findings on memory strategies utilized by students align with recent research emphasizing the importance of auditory and repetitive learning techniques in vocabulary retention. As highlighted in the survey, listening to audio recordings is supported by studies indicating that auditory reinforcement significantly aids memory retention and pronunciation mastery (Alyami et al., 2019). This aligns with the notion that auditory strategies, such as listening to recordings or songs, facilitate better understanding and recall of new vocabulary (Karpicke et al., 2019). The effectiveness of categorizing words also supports cognitive research, which suggests that organizing information can enhance retrieval by creating meaningful connections. Lastly, linking English words with similar Indonesian words reflects a broader linguistic approach that leverages existing knowledge to foster vocabulary acquisition. This technique has improved language learning outcomes (Wu & Lin, 2014). These studies underscore the significance of diverse memory strategies in supporting effective vocabulary learning among students.

Additionally, almost half of the respondents (49.7%) (item 35) favored describing pictures or objects using new vocabulary, although only 9.5% consistently used this method. 20.7% stated that they often use this strategy. The findings underscore the importance of visual aids and contextualized learning in vocabulary acquisition. The use of technology in enhancing vocabulary mastery support the learning strategies acquired by the students (Devitriana & Wijirahayu, 2025)

Creative strategies, such as writing sentences or short stories with new vocabulary, were quite popular, with 44.4% of respondents stating that they sometimes and 18.3% often practiced these. However, 19.5% of respondents who rarely use these strategies and 10.1% of respondents who never use these strategies indicate potential barriers such as limited motivation or lack of instruction in creative writing practices. Furthermore, 38.5% of respondents sometimes asked teachers or peers to correct mistakes, indicating their willingness to learn from mistakes, but 14.8% never used this strategy, perhaps due to fear of judgment when raising questions or being shy. The role of teaching media in assessment motivated the students to learn more (Widyasari & Wijirahayu, 2025)

Digital platforms and social media play an important role in vocabulary activation, as 42% of respondents sometimes and 18.3% always try to use new words in online interactions. This highlights the growing influence of technology in language learning. However, 5.3% of students never use this approach, highlighting the need for encouragement to engage in meaningful online interactions.

In addition, 43.8% of respondents sometimes teach or explain new vocabulary to others, but only 11.2% always use this strategy to deepen understanding. This shows that peer-to-peer learning is an underutilized but effective strategy for enhancing vocabulary comprehension.

Watching videos or reading books in English is a popular strategy, with 34.9% sometimes engaging in these activities and 26.7% doing so frequently. The percentage of students using this method reflects its accessibility and attractiveness. Despite that, 4.1% of respondents never use this strategy, which suggests that not all students have the same motivation to use multimedia resources. In line with research that argues that popular culture such as music, movies, and social media can be valuable tools for effective teaching and learning because they are relevant to students (Wijirahayu, Ananda, et al., 2024).

Research indicates that while many students recognize the importance of using new vocabulary in conversation, as evidenced by the 53.8% who sometimes engage in this practice, a significant portion struggles with consistent application, with only 15.4% doing so frequently. This aligns with studies suggesting that active engagement in vocabulary use is critical for retention and mastery yet is often hindered by factors such as confidence and classroom dynamics (Zuhairi & Mistar, 2023). The moderate engagement in discussions (36.1% sometimes) and classroom interactions (38.5% sometimes) further underscores the necessity for structured opportunities that encourage students to practice their vocabulary in supportive environments, as noted by research emphasizing the role of social interaction in language learning (Rianyansa & Maisarah, 2024).

Moreover, the popularity of creative strategies like writing sentences or stories (44.4% sometimes) points to a preference for contextualized learning experiences that can enhance vocabulary retention; however, barriers such as limited motivation or lack of instruction may impede consistent use (Romrome, 2024). The role of digital platforms is also significant, with 42% of respondents using new vocabulary in online interactions, reflecting a growing trend toward technology-mediated language learning that can provide flexible and engaging contexts for practice (Thuy & Thu, 2023). Furthermore, peer teaching strategies are underutilized despite their potential benefits, as indicated by the 43.8% who sometimes teach others new vocabulary; fostering a collaborative learning environment could enhance comprehension and retention (Jang & Chang, 2023)

The students in this study use synonyms to understand new vocabulary. This indicates that this approach is practical because it helps them expand their vocabulary. This aligns with research showing that using artificial intelligence tools such as ChatGPT significantly improves EFL students' vocabulary skills through synonym practice. The study showed a significant improvement in vocabulary acquisition compared to those taught through traditional methods, which highlights the value of using synonyms in improving comprehension and retention of new words (Min, 2024).

Most respondents agreed that using vocabulary in conversation helps them strengthen their memory of the vocabulary. Research shows that when students actively use new vocabulary, it strengthens their learning and memory, supporting the idea that conversational practice is beneficial for vocabulary retention (Kaur & Abdul Aziz, 2020).

This study showed several main findings. First, in the category of cognitive strategies, it was found that participants sometimes used synonyms to help understand vocabulary. The data shows a significant percentage, which indicates that students tend to use this approach to help them understand vocabulary. From this finding, students may be used to using this approach in learning and understanding vocabulary.

Secondly, in the category of metacognitive strategies, it was found that most students review their vocabulary learning progress regularly. This indicates that many students review their progress in vocabulary learning regularly. The explanation for this finding may be that some students review vocabulary progress regularly so as not to forget the vocabulary that has been learned. Third, in the category of memory strategies, it was found that many students listened to audio recordings of new words to remember their pronunciation. It seems that students may be more accustomed to listening to audio recordings to remember the pronunciation of new words.Fourth, students actively tried to use the new vocabulary in conversation. This data has the highest percentage in the activation strategy. This indicates that many students apply or use the vocabulary they have learned into daily conversation.

Conclusion

The findings reveal that EFL high school students predominantly rely on digital tools and contextual inference as cognitive strategies for vocabulary acquisition, with dictionary use, online translators, and guessing meaning from context being the most frequently employed methods. Auditory reinforcement and repetition are key memory strategies, such as listening to songs and rhymes. In contrast, activation strategies like engaging in conversations or creative writing are moderately used but inconsistent. This work advances the field by highlighting the role of digital and auditory methods in modern vocabulary learning, aligning with contemporary educational trends that emphasize technology integration and contextualized learning. It underscores the importance of fostering structured study habits, integrating diverse and interactive methods, and leveraging peer-to-peer and multimedia resources for better engagement and retention. Future research could explore the efficacy of gamified vocabulary tools, the impact of collaborative learning models, and the creation of tactics that close the gap between awareness and regular use. Further experiments might include longitudinal studies on the sustained impact of varied strategies and their scalability in different educational contexts, contributing to the refinement of language acquisition techniques globally.

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