



## IMPROVING VOCABULARY ABILITIES THROUGH ACTIVITIES

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**Abstract:** *This study aims to develop models of Vocabulary Learning Strategies (VLSs) and Integrative Motivation (IM) to predict vocabulary acquisition among university students. The research employed a predictive design, identifying IM and VLSs as predictors of vocabulary skills. IM was defined through integrativeness and attitudes toward learning situations as independent variables, with motivation serving as the dependent variable. The study adopted a non-interventional approach, relying on survey research to describe, record, and analyze naturally occurring phenomena without manipulating variables.*

Data were collected through three instruments: a questionnaire on VLSs, another on IM (adopted from the Attitude Motivation Test Battery), and the Vocabulary Levels Test (Version B). These tools were translated into Bahasa Indonesia to ensure compatibility with the study's participants—Indonesian university students. Preliminary research on students in Batam highlighted vocabulary, learning strategies, and motivation as critical areas of concern, as evidenced by a mean English proficiency score of 5.5 compared to the minimum expected score of 8.

The study followed a structured process, beginning with the identification of research issues and objectives, followed by a literature review and the development of research instruments. A pilot test was conducted to validate and ensure the reliability of the instruments, with invalid items removed before the final survey. Data from the survey were analyzed using multivariate techniques. The findings are expected to provide valuable insights into the relationship between motivation, learning strategies, and vocabulary acquisition, contributing to the improvement of English language education for university students.

**Introduction:** Vocabulary is a fundamental aspect of language learning, encompassing both verbal and nonverbal communication. In English language education, vocabulary plays a pivotal role, as learners need sufficient vocabulary to communicate fluently and accurately. Vocabulary serves as a foundational element of language acquisition, alongside grammar and pronunciation. The more words a learner knows, the better their language comprehension and communication skills.

However, elementary school students often face challenges in learning and retaining vocabulary, particularly when traditional teaching methods are employed. Despite years of language instruction in schools, many students still struggle to acquire sufficient vocabulary for effective communication.



The 1990s marked significant growth in research on learning strategies, with efforts focusing on identifying strategies for language components such as grammar and vocabulary. Skehan described this period as an "explosion of activity" in the field. These strategies aim to help learners process, understand, and retain information, thereby promoting independence in learning.

English, as a global language, is widely studied, including in Uzbekistan, where it is a compulsory subject from primary to university levels. The language's importance as a tool for international communication motivates many learners to study it seriously. Research shows that European teenagers, for instance, increasingly rely on online platforms for both entertainment and information, emphasizing the need for digital literacy in modern education.

Digital literacy has become an essential skill for students in the digital age. It involves not only technical proficiency with digital tools but also the ability to evaluate and use information effectively from various digital sources. Education systems worldwide are integrating digital literacy into their curricula, with initiatives to provide access to computers and high-speed internet in schools. This shift supports the development of students as competent communicators in diverse contexts and media. English has become an international language because many people around the world use it as a means of communication. It is studied as a foreign language by Uzbek students and serves as a compulsory subject or subject of local content from primary school to university level. As a foreign language, many people study it seriously to have a good perspective to become an international world community.

Statistics show that most European teenagers read web pages not only for entertainment but also for information, this percentage is 91% in Finland (Statista, 2015). Authorities in many countries have taken the initiative to integrate digital skills into curricula to ensure that students can use digital resources to their advantage. For example, all Nordic countries teach the use of digital technologies as a general skill needed in all subjects, as well as as a tool for specific tasks, thus starting to implement national strategies for media literacy. In addition, schools provide computers with broadband connections and high connection speeds.

### **Literature Review**

Learning strategies are rooted in the concepts of learning and strategy. Language learning strategies are methods used by learners to enhance their understanding, retention, and use of a target language. Vocabulary learning strategies (VLSs), a subset of language learning strategies, are crucial for mastering vocabulary and achieving communicative competence.

Effective VLSs allow learners to process unfamiliar words, store them in long-term memory, and recall them when needed. These strategies are categorized into three main areas: discovering the meaning of new words, retaining vocabulary knowledge, and expanding vocabulary. Classroom-based research on vocabulary acquisition in foreign language contexts remains limited, underscoring the need for further studies in this area.



Vocabulary acquisition is an ongoing process, as learners continue to encounter new words throughout their lives. Measuring vocabulary levels helps educators assess students' language proficiency and tailor teaching approaches accordingly. Tools like the Vocabulary Levels Test assess vocabulary mastery, with research showing that mastery of 2,000 words enables basic communication, while 3,000 words are sufficient for understanding written texts. Advanced vocabulary knowledge, such as 5,000 words, allows for comprehension of complex academic materials.

Several studies highlight the reliability of measuring vocabulary levels and their relationship to language proficiency. For instance, findings from Spain, Croatia, Poland, and other countries show consistent reliability across various indicators, such as students' attitudes toward learning, integrativeness, and motivational intensity. The Vocabulary Levels Test, as a tool to measure students' vocabulary mastery in terms of academic and general vocabulary. Some of their studies show that vocabulary size is directly related to English language proficiency in various situations. For example, mastery at the level of 2000 words show the ability to master very basic lexical meanings and is needed in daily verbal communication. It showed that the next 2000 words provided additional material for oral discourse, while mastery at 3000 words was the most likely threshold for students to be able to understand various written texts. At a higher level, some researchers revealed that mastery at a level of 5000 words can help students understand higher-level texts that are usually found in writing, academic writing. There are still possibilities, some words that have not been known during the reading process, but the level of knowledge and experience allows students to deduce the meaning of many words from the context and to understand most of the communicative content of the text being read.

### **Methodology**

The study aims to develop models for vocabulary learning strategies (VLSs) and integrative motivation (IM) to enhance students' vocabulary skills. IM and VLSs were identified as predictors of successful vocabulary acquisition, with integrativeness, attitudes toward learning, and motivation serving as key variables.

The research utilized a survey design to collect data naturally without manipulating variables. Instruments included adapted questionnaires measuring VLSs and IM, as well as the Vocabulary Levels Test. These tools were translated into Bahasa Indonesia for Indonesian university students, who were the study's participants.

Pilot tests were conducted to ensure the validity and reliability of the instruments. The final survey included valid items from the pilot study, and data were analyzed using multivariate techniques. The study focused on university students in Batam, where preliminary research revealed a mean English score of 5.5, below the minimum expected score of 8. The study highlighted key areas of concern: vocabulary, learning strategies, and motivation.

The research procedure involved several steps:

1. Defining the issue, objectives, and goals.
2. Conducting a literature review.



3. Designing and piloting the questionnaire and vocabulary test.
4. Collecting and analyzing data from the main survey.

The purpose of the present study is to develop the VLSs and IM model for future referenes and use among university students. In order to auhieve this goal, the study opted to determine the level of IM and VLSs that predict vocabulary skills. To what is called prediction design, some researohers anticipate the results of their research using certain variables as preditors. The IM and VLSs in this study were identified as predictors of successful vooabulary skills.

### Conclusion

This study highlights the importance of **Vocabulary Learning Strategies (VLSs)** and **Integrative Motivation (IM)** as critical predictors of vocabulary skills, particularly among university students. It underscores that vocabulary learning is a lifelong process, forming the foundation for effective communication in foreign language acquisition. The findings validate the strong relationship between motivation, learning strategies, and English proficiency. Moreover, the research supports the notion that integrative motivation, which includes attitudes toward learning situations and integrativeness, plays a pivotal role in vocabulary acquisition.

The use of **survey research methods** and multivariate analysis allowed for the exploration of the natural phenomena affecting university students' English proficiency in Batam. The results indicated significant gaps in vocabulary acquisition, attributed to weaknesses in learning strategies and motivational factors. The study utilized validated and reliable instruments, including adapted questionnaires and the Vocabulary Levels Test, ensuring accurate data collection and analysis.

The findings emphasize that:

1. **Vocabulary mastery is essential** for both academic and everyday communication, with specific thresholds (2000–5000 words) linked to varying levels of proficiency.
2. The development and application of **effective vocabulary learning strategies** are necessary to enhance long-term memory retention, recall, and usage.
3. **Motivational factors**, such as integrativeness and positive attitudes toward learning situations, significantly influence vocabulary acquisition.

This research offers practical implications for educators. It highlights the need to prioritize **vocabulary measurement and targeted teaching approaches** early in language learning. Furthermore, it suggests integrating motivational components and adaptive learning strategies into curricula to foster independent learning and improve students' outcomes.

In conclusion, this study reinforces the need for a comprehensive, integrative approach to teaching vocabulary that aligns with students' motivational profiles and learning strategies. Future research can expand on this foundation by exploring the interplay of digital literacy and technology-based tools in vocabulary learning, considering the increasing importance of digital skills in education and communication.