

## THE STUDENTS' STRATEGY IN LEARNING ENGLISH VOCABULARY AT SMP METHODIST PANTAI LABU

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### **Abstract**

*This study aims to identify vocabulary learning strategy used, analysis repetition strategy implementation, examine effectiveness on vocabulary retention, and formulate an adaptive model for local contexts. Using a qualitative case study approach, data were collected from one primary and three supporting informants through interviews, observations, document analysis, and stimulated recall sessions. Analysis revealed that the primary informant developed a sophisticated multi – modal repetition system with four techniques; temporal spacing, multi – modal reinforcement, contextual variation, and self-testing. Development factors included prior learning experiences, parental influence, teacher methodology, and assessment patterns. Thematic analysis yielded five themes: systematic organization, multimodal implementation, metacognitive awareness, contextual influences, and strategy evolution. This research strategies gaps in literature by examining vocabulary learning in rural coastal schools, adaption of repetition strategies to local contexts, and integration of traditional strategies with innovative elements under limited technological resources. Findings contribute to developing more inclusive vocabulary learning models for diverse educational contexts in Indonesia.*

**Keywords:** *vocabulary strategies, repetition strategies, EFL, rural education, socio-cultural context*

### **Abstrak**

*Penelitian ini bertujuan untuk mengidentifikasi kosakata yang digunakan, menganalisis implementasi strategi pengulangan, menguji efektivitas pada retensi kosakata, dan merumuskan model adaptif untuk konteks lokal. Dengan menggunakan pendekatan studi kasus kualitatif, data di kumpulkan dari satu informan utama dan tiga informan pendukung melalui wawancara, observasi dan analisis dokumen, dan sesi mengingat kembali. Analisis mengungkapkan bahwa informan utama mengembangkan sistem pengulangan multi-moda, variasi konstektual, dan pengujian diri. Faktor-faktor pengembangan meliputi pengalaman belajar sebelumnya, pengaruh orang tua, metodologi guru dan pola penilaian. Analisis tematik menghasilkan lima tema; organisasi sistematis, implementasi, multi-moda, kesadaran metakognitif, pengaruh kontekstual dan strategi. Penelitian ini menyusun strategi kesenjangan dalam literatur dengan memeriksa pembelajaran kosakata di sekolah-sekolah pesisir pedesaan, adaptasi strategi pengulangan ke konteks lokal, dan integrasi strategi tradisional dengan elemen-elemen inovatif di bawah sumber daya teknologi yang terbatas. Temuan penelitian ini berkontribusi pada pengembangan model pembelajaran kosakata yang lebih inklusif untuk konteks pendidikan yang beragam di Indonesia.*

**Kata kunci:** *strategi kosakata, strategi pengulangan, EFL, pendidikan pedesaan, konteks sosial budaya*

## 1. INTRODUCTION

This study aims to identify vocabulary learning strategy used by a student of SMP Methodist Pantai Labu in learning English vocabulary, with a special focus on the variety of repetition strategies applied. More specifically, this study seeks to: (1) identify the types of vocabulary learning strategies used by the student; (2) analyze the implementation of the repetition strategy in the context of vocabulary learning; (3) examine the effectiveness of the repetition strategy on vocabulary retention; and (4) formulate a model of the repetition strategy that is adaptive to the local socio-cultural context.

The importance of vocabulary learning cannot be overstated, as vocabulary is a fundamental aspect of language acquisition. Mastery of vocabulary enhances the ability to understand and produce language, which is crucial for effective communication in daily interactions. In the context of EFL (English as a Foreign Language) learners, especially in rural areas, a strong vocabulary foundation can significantly improve students' confidence and competence in using English in various settings (Schmitt, 2021). According to Schmitt (2021), effective vocabulary learning strategies, such as repetition, can lead to better retention and recall of vocabulary, thereby enabling learners to use new words more fluently and accurately in real-life situations.

The significance of this research lies in its contribution to the development of a contextual vocabulary learning model for schools in rural areas. By understanding how a student adapts the repetition strategy according to the local context, this research is expected to provide new insights for the development of more effective and meaningful vocabulary learning methods. Additionally, this research contributes to the enrichment of literature on vocabulary learning strategies in the context of EFL (English as a Foreign Language) in Indonesia, especially for rural areas.

This study employs a qualitative case study approach, utilizing semi-structured interviews and structured observations as data collection methods. The semi-structured interviews are designed to gain in-depth insights into the student's experiences, beliefs, and practices related to vocabulary learning strategies. The structured observations aim to document the implementation and effectiveness of the repetition strategy in a natural classroom setting. These methods provide a comprehensive understanding of the student's vocabulary learning strategies, particularly the repetition strategy, within the local socio-cultural context.

The research questions are as follows:

1. What vocabulary learning strategies are used by the student?

2. How is the implementation of the repetition strategy in vocabulary learning for the student?

To what extent is the effectiveness of the repetition strategy on the retention of the student's English vocabulary?

The literature review in this study includes several main concepts related to vocabulary learning strategies. First, the concept of vocabulary learning strategies that refer to the approaches, methods, and techniques used by students to learn new words (Schmitt, 2020). Second, the typology of vocabulary learning strategies developed by Oxford (2023), which divides strategies into six categories: memory, cognitive, compensatory, metacognitive, affective, and social. Third, the concept of repetition strategy which refers to students' efforts to systematically repeat new words to increase retention (Nasution, 2022). In the context of my research, it also considers socio-cultural aspects that affect vocabulary learning. In accordance with Vygotsky's view of socio-cultural learning, this study assumes that vocabulary learning strategies cannot be separated from the social, cultural, and economic context in which learning takes place. Thus, the adaptation of the repetition strategy to the local context of Labu Beach is an important focus in this study.

The theoretical framework of this research also includes the concept of "Contextual Vocabulary Learning" developed by Wijaya and Putri (2021), which emphasizes the importance of associating vocabulary learning with a meaningful context for students. In addition, this study also refers to the "Community of Practice" theory from Wenger (2020), which sees learning as a process of participation in a community that has common interests and goals. Learning English vocabulary is one of the fundamental components in foreign language mastery. Schmitt (2020) defines vocabulary as "a collection of words that are understood and can be used by individuals, including the ability to recognize shapes, understand meanings, and use words in the right context." In the context of learning English in Indonesia, Muliastuti (2021) emphasized that vocabulary mastery is one of the main indicators of success in learning a foreign language, especially at the junior

high school level. Recent developments in vocabulary learning theory show a shift from a simple rote approach to a more integrative and contextual approach. Widodo (2021) identified that effective vocabulary learning must include four main dimensions: (1) recognition of word forms, (2) understanding of meaning, (3) mastery of collocations and associations, and (4) usability in context. In the context of junior high school students,

Nuraeni and Rahmawati (2022) found that students tend to master the basic recognition and understanding dimensions, but often experience difficulties in the dimensions of association and contextual use.

Vocabulary learning strategies have undergone significant development in the last two decades. The latest comprehensive taxonomy was developed by Oxford (2023) which categorizes vocabulary learning strategies into six main groups:

1. Memory Strategy is Includes association techniques, semantic grouping, and visualization.
2. Cognitive Strategies include repetition, note-taking, word analysis, and dictionary use.
3. Compensation Strategy is a strategy to guess the meaning of the context and the use of synonyms.
4. Metacognitive strategies are learning planning, progress monitoring, and mastery evaluation.
5. Affective Strategies Emotion and motivation management in vocabulary learning.
6. Social Strategies Collaborative learning and interaction with native speakers or fellow learners.

The repetition strategy is one of the most commonly used cognitive strategies in vocabulary learning. Nasution (2022) defines the repetition strategy as "a systematic effort to repeat the target vocabulary with the aim of increasing long-term retention." Although often seen as a traditional strategy, various contemporary studies show that structured and adaptive repetition strategies remain one of the most effective approaches in vocabulary learning. Another important aspect of the repetition strategy is contextualization. Widyawati's research (2020) shows that contextualized repetition in real communicative situations has a more significant impact on vocabulary understanding and retention. In the context of junior high school, Abidin et al. (2021) developed a "Contextual Repetition Approach" model that integrates vocabulary repetition in project-based communicative activities.

The development of information technology has brought a new dimension in vocabulary learning strategies. Permatasari and Kuswandi (2022) examined the effectiveness of a mobile application based on the spaced repetition system (SRS) on the

vocabulary mastery of junior high school students. However, in the context of rural schools with limited access to technology, the challenges of implementing technology-based strategies are significant. Yulianto (2023) identified that only 23% of schools in rural areas of North Sumatra have adequate internet access to support technology-based learning. This condition encourages the development of vocabulary learning strategies that optimize limited resources. Interestingly, several studies show adaptive innovation in responding to technological limitations. Simbolon et al. (2022) developed a "Low-Tech Vocabulary Enhancement" model that adapts technology-based learning principles into a physical format. The model includes the use of index cards with a color-coding system, a structured vocabulary logbook, and a peer-review rotation system that simulates the features of an SRS application.

The socio-cultural approach to vocabulary learning emphasizes the importance of social, cultural, and community contexts in the language acquisition process. Referring to Vygotsky's theory, Wenger (2020) emphasized that language learning, including vocabulary, cannot be separated from the socio-cultural context in which learning takes place. The researcher understood the informants in the field that English vocabulary learning was still influenced by the socio-cultural of the region. In the context of coastal schools such as Pantai Labu Methodist Junior High School, Tambunan's research (2023) identifies the potential for the integration of maritime context in English vocabulary learning. The "Maritime Vocabulary Context" model he developed integrates marine terminology, fishermen's activities, and coastal cultural elements into vocabulary learning. The results showed that the approach that linked the target vocabulary to the socio-cultural reality of students significantly increased the relevance and retention of learning.

The measurement of the effectiveness of vocabulary learning strategies has undergone a significant evolution. Traditional approaches that rely on simple written tests are now enriched with multidimensional measurement methods. Putrawan and Sari (2021) developed the "Vocabulary Acquisition Assessment Framework" which includes four dimensions of measurement: Receptive Recognition is the ability to recognize the basic form and meaning of words Active Production is the ability to use words in sentences accurately Contextual Understanding is the ability to understand the nuances of meaning in various contexts Smooth Access is the speed and ease of accessing words in memory.

Based on the literature review above, several significant research gaps have been identified. First, the majority of research on vocabulary learning strategies in Indonesia is

still focused on urban contexts with adequate access to resources. Research in rural contexts, especially in coastal schools with specific socio-economic characteristics, is still very limited. Second, although the repetition strategy has been extensively researched, the adaptation of the repetition strategy to the local socio-cultural context has not been widely studied. How the repetition strategy is modified and adapted according to the socio-cultural reality of students in rural areas is still a research question that requires further exploration. Third, the integration of traditional iteration strategies with innovative elements such as local contextualization, multimodality, and collaborative approaches in the context of limited technological resources still requires more in-depth study. This study seeks to fill this gap by comprehensively examining how vocabulary learning strategies, especially repetition strategies, are applied and adapted in the specific context. Through an in-depth qualitative approach, this research is expected to produce a model of repetition strategies that are adaptive to the coastal socio-cultural context, as well as contribute to the development of vocabulary learning theories that are more inclusive of the diversity of educational contexts in Indonesia.

## **2. METHODOLOGY**

This study uses a qualitative case study approach to investigate the vocabulary learning strategies used by eighth grade students at Pantai Methodist Junior High School. This design was chosen to facilitate an in-depth exploration of the individual learning process in its natural context. As Creswell and Poth (2023) point out, case studies are invaluable for "exploring constrained systems through detailed and in-depth data collection involving multiple sources of information." This methodological approach allows for a thorough examination of the repeatability strategy that emerges as a significant finding. Research Participants This study involved one main informant and three supporting informants, all eighth-grade students at Pantai Methodist Junior High School. The main informant (referred to as Student A) was selected using a purposive sample based on the following criteria: (1) demonstrated consistent growth in English vocabulary over the previous academic year; (2) willingness to participate in multiple in-depth interviews; and (3) recommendations from English teachers as reflective learners. Three supporting informants (Students B, C, and D) were selected to provide a triangulation perspective and represent varying levels of achievement in English language learning.

Data are collected through several techniques to ensure a comprehensive understanding of vocabulary learning strategies:

In-depth interviews: Four semi-structured interviews were conducted with key informants over a 3-week period, each lasting 10 – 15 minutes. A single interview was conducted with each supporting informant. All interviews are recorded with permission and transcribed verbatim. Classroom observations: Six classroom observations were conducted to observe vocabulary learning in an authentic context. Observation focuses on student behavior during vocabulary instruction, strategies used during self- practice, and interactions that support vocabulary acquisition.

Document analysis: The main informant's vocabulary notebook, English assignments, and vocabulary acquisition. Document analysis: The main informant's vocabulary notebook, English assignments, and vocabulary learning logs are examined to identify patterns in the implementation of the repetition strategy. Stimulated recall sessions: Two stimulated recall sessions were conducted with the lead informant, using video recordings from class activities to encourage reflection on vocabulary learning strategies. Data Analysis Procedure The data analysis follows the six-phase thematic analysis framework of Braun and Clarke (2021):

- a. Introduction to data: All interview transcripts, observation notes, and document analysis findings are reviewed multiple times to develop a thorough understanding.
- b. Initial coding: Open coding is performed on all data sources, identifying segments related to vocabulary learning strategies.
- c. Identify themes: The initial code is grouped into potential themes, with special attention to strategies related to iteration.
- d. Theme review: Themes are reviewed for internal coherence and distinctiveness, with adjustments made as needed.
- e. Theme definition: The final theme is named and defined, specifically focusing on its iteration and implementation strategy.
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- j. Report production: Findings are compiled into a coherent narrative supported by direct citations and evidence observational. To ensure trust, triangulation is implemented through several data sources and member checking is carried out with the main informant.

Thematic analysis of interview transcripts, observation notes, and document artefacts yielded five major themes related to repetition strategies: (1) Systematic Organization, (2) Multimodal Implementation, (3) Metacognitive Awareness, (4) Contextual Influences, (5) Strategy Evolution.

### 3. FINDINGS AND DISCUSSIONS

The most significant finding of this study is the broad reliance of key informants on systematic repetition strategies for vocabulary acquisition. An analysis of all data sources reveals that Student A has developed a sophisticated multi-modal repetition system that goes beyond simple rote memorization. During the interview, Student A explicitly described this approach: "I didn't just read the word once or twice. I had a system I wrote every new word three times, said it aloud five times, and then revisited the next day, three days later, and one week later. Without this pattern, I quickly forget his words." \* Analysis of documents from Student A's vocabulary notebook confirms this systematic approach, revealing a structured system in which new vocabulary items are recorded with color-coding to indicate the stages of repetition. Each word is accompanied by a timestamp indicating when the word has been reviewed, with a checkmark for the completed repeat cycle. All three supporting informants confirmed awareness of the repetition strategy but indicated a less structured implementation. Student B noted: *I do repeat words sometimes, but not in an organized way like [Student A]. I usually only read the word list a few times before the exam.*



Analysis identified four distinct repetition techniques employed by the primary informant:

1. **Temporal Spacing:** Student A implemented a deliberate spaced repetition schedule. Observational data confirmed that vocabulary review occurred at increasing intervals (same day, next day, after three days, after one week), consistent with research on optimal learning intervals.
2. **Multi-Modal Reinforcement:** The primary informant engaged multiple sensory channels during repetition. As described during the stimulated recall session: *"I write the word, say it aloud, and sometimes draw a small picture or make a gesture related to it. Using different ways to practice helps me remember better."*
3. **Contextual Variation:** Unlike simple repetition, Student A practiced vocabulary in varying contexts.
4. Document analysis revealed that the third and fourth repetitions typically involved using the word in different sentences or situations, creating deeper associative networks.
5. **Self-Testing Component:** The repetition system incorporated self-assessment. Student A explained: *"After completing the repetition cycle, I test myself by covering the English word and trying to recall it from the Indonesian meaning, then vice versa."*

The data revealed several key factors that influenced the development of the primary informant's repetition strategy:

1. **Prior Learning Experiences:** Student A attributed strategy development to previous difficulty with vocabulary retention: *"In sixth grade, I failed several vocabulary tests because I only studied the night before. My teacher suggested trying repetition with specific timing, and it worked so well that I kept improving it."*
2. **Parental Influence:** Interview data indicated that Student A's approach was partially shaped by parental guidance: *"My mother uses repetition to memorize important information for her work. She taught me the basic method when I was younger."*
3. **Teacher Methodology:** Classroom observation confirmed that the English teacher frequently employed structured review activities, providing an instructional model that reinforced repetition strategies.
4. **Assessment Patterns:** Document analysis of test materials showed that vocabulary assessments were frequent and cumulative, creating extrinsic motivation for developing effective retention strategies.

While all informants employed repetition to some degree, significant variations emerged in implementation: (1) Student B utilized repetition inconsistently, primarily before assessments (2) Student C combined repetition with technological tools (vocabulary apps). (3) Student D relied on repetition within social learning contexts (study groups).

The findings regarding systematic repetition strategies align with several recent studies while extending understanding in important ways. The structured implementation of repetition by the primary informant demonstrates greater sophistication than the basic repetition techniques documented by Kusumawardani (2020), who found that Indonesian junior high students typically employed simple rereading without systematic spacing or multimodal engagement. The temporal spacing component of Student A's strategy particularly aligns with Nurhayati's (2021) research on optimal memory formation in vocabulary acquisition. Nurhayati found that increasing intervals between vocabulary review sessions enhanced retention rates among 14-15-year-old Indonesian students. However, while Nurhayati's study implemented researcher-designed spacing schedules, the current findings demonstrate student-initiated development of similar strategies, suggesting metacognitive awareness of effective learning principles. The multi-modal reinforcement techniques observed in this study extend beyond what Pratiwi and Marlina (2023) documented in their research on structured repetition. While their study found that combining verbal and written repetition improved retention by thirty five percent, the current study reveals more sophisticated integration of visual, kinesthetics, and contextual elements into repetition practice.

#### **4. CONCLUSIONS**

This case consider has uncovered that reiteration methodologies play a principal part in English lexicon procurement among eighth-grade understudies at SMP Methodist Pantai, with the essential witness illustrating a especially advanced usage of these techniques. To begin with, the think about highlights that successful redundancy procedures amplify past basic repetition practice to incorporate orderly worldly dispersing, multimodal engagement, relevant variety, and self-assessment components. The essential informant`s organized approach illustrated metacognitive mindfulness of memory arrangement standards that upgraded the viability of essential redundancy.

Moment, the discoveries light up how redundancy procedures create inside particular instructive and social settings. Unequivocal instruction in organized reiteration strategies, consolidation of dispersed learning standards into educating strategy, and appraisal plan that energizes efficient audit seem improve lexicon procurement Furthermore, making a difference understudies create metacognitive mindfulness of their redundancy hones seem

encourage more viable methodology usage.

In conclusion, this consider affirms the central part of redundancy procedures in lexicon securing whereas uncovering the advanced ways these procedures can be actualized when understudies create metacognitive mindfulness of successful learning standards. Understanding these forms can educate more compelling educational approaches to lexicon instruction in Indonesian EFL settings.

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