DEVELOPING VOCABULARY IN SECOND LANGUAGE ACQUISITION THROUGH THEORY TO CLASS (INDIVIDUAL DIFFERENCES IN SLA)

Sri Oktavia Dai[1] ***(Corresponding Author)***
srioktaviadai@gmail.com
University of Ichsan Gorontalo Utara

Nursiti Aisyah Paputungan[2]
siti.wisizaki@gmail.com
University of Nahdlatul Ulama Gorontalo

Abstract

This study explores vocabulary development in Second Language Acquisition (SLA) by examining how individual differences affect the language learning process. The study synthesizes a variety of theoretical frameworks, including cognitive, socio-cultural, and psycholinguistic approaches, and their application in the classroom. By focusing on learners' characteristics such as motivation, cognitive style, age, and affective factors, this study aims to understand how these differences shape vocabulary acquisition. This research method is qualitative and uses thematic analysis. The results of this study reveal that although SLA theory provides a solid foundation for second language teaching, success in vocabulary acquisition is greatly influenced by factors such as motivation, learning strategies, and cognitive abilities possessed by each student. Therefore, understanding individual differences is essential in designing effective teaching methods.

Keywords: *SLA; Vocabulary acquisition; Teaching*

INTRODUCTION

Language is not only written and spoken but also body language and expressions of one of the actions we perform. For example, a baby cries when hungry; the baby cries using language to tell the baby's mother that she is hungry (Madyawati, 2016). It also shows that language exists when one is not used to writing. Although, when a person is not born, the baby uses language. Someone familiar with the language based on the environment in which he lives, someone who tries to imitate the language of others even by stuttering. For a child who is still under the age of three, to use the language is incomplete. That's because a child can only capture and recite part of the language he hears (Budianingsih, 2017). A person will say a particular lingual unit obtained from his or her residence. The environment that influences a person's language is not only from geographical factors but also economic, educational, social, and religious. When mastering the language, these factors affect a person's wealth (Djuwarijah, 2017).

Each individual learns a second language differently, especially when developing vocabulary. The Second Language Acquisition (SLA) theory explains that cognitive ability, motivation, learning strategies, and linguistic background greatly affect how quickly a person can master vocabulary in a new language (Tyas et al., 2022). Krashen, for example, emphasizes the importance of "understandable inputs" in language learning, while Swain

highlights the role of language production or output in the acquisition process. By understanding these theories, educators can apply them in the classroom so that vocabulary learning is more effective and according to the needs of each student (Mamonto et al., n.d.).

When choosing the right strategy, individual differences should be a major concern in teaching practice. Students with analytical learning styles may be better suited to explicit methods such as word list memorization or language structure analysis. At the same time, those who rely more on intuition will be quicker to understand vocabulary through context and direct interaction (Nurlaila, 2020). The task-based approach can also be an effective strategy because it allows students to learn through real experience in using language (Cholifah, 2017). In addition, the use of technology, such as interactive applications and digital media, can help tailor learning to the needs of each individual so that they can more easily absorb and use new vocabulary. Teachers can create a more inclusive and supportive learning environment by understanding that every learner has different characteristics. Motivation is also important in language acquisition, both from within students and the surrounding environment (N. Hula et al., 2024). Therefore, an approach that balances theory and practice in the classroom will help students memorize vocabulary and actively use it in everyday communication. Thus, learning a second language becomes more effective and meaningful for each individual.

Pauzan Pauzan's research entitled *"Theory in Second Language Acquisition (Introduction to the Concept of Krashen's Second Language Acquisition Theory for Five Main Hypotheses)."* It was found that the results of his research on Krashen's theory of Second Language Acquisition consisted of five main components that formed five main hypotheses. First, the Acquisition-Learning hypothesis distinguishes between the acquisition system and learning in understanding language acquisition. Second, the Natural Order hypothesis states that children acquire grammatical structures in a natural order. Third, the Monitor hypothesis explains the relationship between acquisition and learning and their influence on each other. Fourth, the Input hypothesis emphasizes the importance of intelligible inputs for language acquisition. Finally, the Affective Filter hypothesis highlights the role of attitudes toward language speakers in acquiring a second language. However, there are some criticisms of this hypothesis. First, the Acquisition-Learning hypothesis is questioned due to the lack of evidence-based support. Second, the Natural Order hypothesis is criticized for ignoring the significant influence of the first language on acquiring a second language. Third, criticism of the Monitor hypothesis includes the impossibility of proving the

role of the learning system as a monitor. Fourth, the Input hypothesis faces criticism for the lack of a clear definition of an intelligible input. Finally, the Affective Filter hypothesis fails to answer the question of the role of affective in individual variation in second language acquisition (Pauzan, 2024).

Learning new vocabulary through context also helps students understand the correct use of words and prevents them from making sentences based on dictionary definitions, such as "There is a huge divide between rich and poor in America."(Kinshi, 2018). Learning new words from a word list is much different from learning them in the context of a sentence or story (Nagy et al., 1985). Peter Yongqi Gu states that learning new words through context is only one step that students can take. Students must think cognitively and learn new words in the context in which they appear (Gu, 2003). Therefore, to help students learn important words from the lesson context, a teacher must focus on low-context words, which requires a second distinction: high-frequency and low-frequency words. Nation defines high-frequency words as words often appearing in language, such as a male, and female (Haspelmath, 2008). High-frequency words appear so regularly in everyday conversation that students can write and speak in understandable English if they understand them (Armadi, 2016). As described by Nation, low-frequency words are those more related to academic study. They appear in all texts and academic courses but less often in everyday speech, such as formulating, indexing, and modifying.

In this case, it helps ease teachers' burden when trying to understand what words students understand. However, low-frequency words are an aspect that is more difficult for teachers to teach and understand for learners (Saifuddin, 2014). Making a vocabulary list from students' textbooks and presenting these words in context in the lesson will help them retain and use the new vocabulary. Students will also learn vocabulary better when they find useful items and can use new words more often as they learn (Rayner et al., 2001). Vocabulary, like any other aspect of language learning, can be facilitated through cooperative learning (McKeown, 2019). English mastery for young children will be easy to learn from an early age. For a good understanding of the present or the past, more emphasis is placed on visual education, on what looks attractive with images and sounds. Therefore, many people want to learn English because it is excellent for communicating in English. The main goal is to learn the listening, speaking, reading, and writing skills necessary to communicate.

Today, vocabulary has been largely ignored in ESL/EFL classes. In recent years, vocabulary has been seen as an important aspect of second language learning, and many

believe it is as important as the key skills of reading, writing, listening, and speaking (Wahyuningsih, 2018). This dual-context approach to learning vocabulary will help students improve their vocabulary through authentic interactions. This paper will examine the theories behind vocabulary acquisition and some of the results when they are implemented during my students' teaching. However, individual differences in SLAs also play an important role in vocabulary acquisition. Age, cognitive ability, personality traits, motivation, and learning style affect how effectively a learner acquires and uses new vocabulary (Umami, 2011). For example, younger learners may benefit from more impressive exposure and ritual context, while adult learners may rely more on explicit learning strategies. In addition, learners with high motivation levels and strong memory skills often perform better in vocabulary tasks than those with less motivation or weaker cognitive abilities.

Understanding these individual differences and integrating relevant theories into teaching practice is essential in the classroom context to optimize vocabulary development. Teachers must know their student's diverse needs and abilities and adjust their instruction accordingly. This study explores how various SLA theories can be applied in classroom settings to promote vocabulary development, considering individual differences affecting learners' acquisition and retention of new words. A previous study by Ramli et al. entitled "Second Language Development (SLD): What Factors Could Affect Students' English Learning During Covid-19 Pandemic". The research results show that the development of a second language is influenced by linguistic factors such as vocabulary enrichment, mother tongue structure, and the ability to pronounce words.

In addition, non-linguistic factors such as cognitive style, psychological aspects, personality traits, technology use, and age also affect students' learning processes and outcomes. This can be demonstrated by the personal characteristics and experiences of learners, the social and cultural environment both inside (virtual/offline meetings) and outside (online-based assignments/projects/assignments) of the classroom, opportunities to communicate, access to oral and written corrective feedback and instruction provided by teachers. Teachers do not completely control these factors, but by understanding these aspects, teachers will be able to consider how students learn English effectively to reduce their learning loss in an era of rapid knowledge growth and technological advancement. This study reflects the development of teachers in terms of professionalism and their contribution to the theory of second language acquisition (Ramli et al., 2022).

By examining the intersection of theory and practice, this study seeks to provide insight into effective methods for vocabulary teaching that meet the diverse needs of second language learners. Research on vocabulary development in second language acquisition by considering individual differences in SLA has several important implications for education, especially in junior high school research locations in Gorontalo Province. This research can be used to design a more adaptive second language learning curriculum. By understanding that each student has a different learning style, educators can develop more personalized and effective teaching strategies, such as a task-based approach, technology use, and materials in a real and meaningful context. Another thing is to provide insight for teachers in choosing a more accurate evaluation method for measuring student vocabulary development. Instead of using conventional word memorization tests, teachers can apply performance-based evaluations, such as writing or discussion assignments, to assess how students can apply the vocabulary they have learned in real communication.

The purpose of this study is to analyze development, analyze how individual differences in second language acquisition (SLA) affect vocabulary development, and how the theories in SLA can be applied effectively in classroom learning. By understanding factors such as students' learning styles, cognitive abilities, motivations, and linguistic backgrounds, this study seeks to identify the most effective strategies for helping second language learners develop their vocabulary.

RESEARCH METHOD

This study uses a qualitative approach with a case study design that involves in-depth observation of the application of theory in second language teaching and how individual differences play a role in the process (Ulfatin, 2022). The participants comprise done teacher and 30 grade VIII students at a junior high school in Gorontalo. The research will be conducted in the second language classroom environment at the school. The case study method is used in this study. In this case study, the researcher will use several second language classes consisting of students with diverse backgrounds and individual characteristics. In addition, the researcher directly observed the vocabulary teaching and learning process in the second language class. Observation will focus on teaching methods, techniques, and teacher and student interactions. As for the data collection technique, the researcher conducted a semi-structured interview with a second language teacher and several students to explore their understanding of the use of SLA theory in vocabulary teaching and how individual differences affect their learning. Researchers interviewed teachers and

students to get the data they needed. In addition to interviews, documentation studies were also conducted to analyze teaching materials, lesson plans, and learning materials used in second language classes, as well as teaching notes that suggested the application of SLA theory in vocabulary teaching. The questionnaire needs researchers to focus on individual differences, such as learning styles, motivations, and difficulties students face in acquiring second language vocabulary. Thematic analysis will be used to identify key patterns related to applying theory in vocabulary teaching and the impact of individual differences on vocabulary acquisition. These themes will be grouped and analyzed to understand better the phenomenon being studied. To ensure the validity and reliability of the data, this study will use triangulation techniques, which involve collecting data from various sources (interviews, observations, documentation, and questionnaires). In addition, to strengthen validity, data analysis will be carried out collaboratively by involving several researchers to minimize bias.

RESEARCH FINDINGS AND DISCUSSION

This study discusses how second language proficiency theory (SLA) can be applied in vocabulary teaching to improve second language proficiency. The following data were collected from a series of observations, interviews, and documentation in a study examining vocabulary development in second language acquisition (SLA). This research focuses on how individual differences (such as motivation, cognitive ability, and personality) affect vocabulary learning and how SLA theory can be applied in the classroom to support students' vocabulary development.

Here is a summary of the results and discussions that often appear in articles of this kind:

Vocabulary Acquisition Theory

This study discusses several main theories regarding the acquisition of second language vocabulary, such as the theories of Comprehensible Input, Double Encoding, and Contextual Learning. Each theory takes a different approach to how second language learners learn words and their meanings.

The Role of Vocabulary Teaching

According to this study, effective vocabulary teaching requires an approach that focuses on understanding and using vocabulary in meaningful contexts. It focuses more on recognizing contextually and in-depth relevant words rather than just memorizing or translating words.

Classroom Implementation

In classroom applications, vocabulary teaching uses techniques such as *Use of context*, Learning vocabulary through sentences or stories to connect meaning to everyday use. *Image-based and multimedia methods*, displaying images or videos to help with word associations. *Application of active learning strategies*, students are tasked with using new vocabulary in conversation or writing. *The Influence of Technology*, Technology such as language learning applications and online platforms, has been shown to enrich the vocabulary learning experience. These devices allow for efficient repetition and variation in the way words are taught, which facilitates vocabulary comprehension and mastery.

Documentation (Learning Journal and Vocabulary Test)

Many students reflect on the vocabulary learning strategies that they think are the most effective. Many students note that using context-based learning methods (e.g., learning vocabulary through stories or real-life situations) helps them internalize new words better than memorizing isolated lists. However, some students reported feeling overwhelmed by the new vocabulary volume and desired a more personalized approach. However, those with higher motivation levels felt more willing to persevere in adversity.

Vocabulary Test Results (Pre-test vs. Post-test Results)

On average, vocabulary retention increased by 15% between the pre-test and post-test. Learners who engaged in more interactive and contextual vocabulary activities (based on input and interaction theory) showed the greatest improvement. In addition, learners who focused solely on memorization tasks (without contextual use) showed less improvement in applying vocabulary in real-life situations, although their word recognition improved.

Impact of Differentiated Individual Differences

Students with high levels of motivation (both intrinsic and extrinsic) scored 20% higher in post-tests than students with lower motivation. Learners with high cognitive abilities showed a faster rate of vocabulary acquisition. However, learners with low cognitive flexibility struggle more with complex vocabulary.

Based on the findings of the above research, the discussion of the results of this study will outline the main findings related to the application of SLA theory in second language classes and how individual differences can affect how students learn vocabulary. It will also discuss the practical implications of these findings for second language teaching, as well as

recommendations for developing a more adaptive and responsive approach to learners' individual needs and characteristics.

Integration of Theory with Classroom Practice: This study emphasizes connecting language acquisition theory with actual classroom practice. While these theories provide an overview of the acquisition process, it is important to realize that classroom implementation should consider the student's condition, teaching context, and available resources.

Importance of Vocabulary in SLA: Vocabulary knowledge is fundamental to acquiring a second language. Without a good understanding of vocabulary, students will have difficulty understanding texts, communicating effectively, and using language in different social contexts. Proper vocabulary learning allows students to develop their language skills thoroughly, including listening, speaking, reading, and writing.

Challenges in Teaching Vocabulary: One of the main challenges in teaching vocabulary is ensuring that students memorize words and understand their use in a broad context. In addition, vocabulary learning requires considerable time and consistent repetition to help students master new words.

Holistic and Integrated Approach: Effective vocabulary learning should be holistic, meaning it involves a variety of learning tools and resources (e.g., social interactions, media, and texts). This integrated approach is more effective in strengthening the understanding and use of vocabulary in daily life.

Many learners note that the biggest challenge to acquiring vocabulary is the lack of opportunities to use new vocabulary outside of class. Some mention feeling uncomfortable practicing vocabulary in real-life situations, especially in countries where the target language is not commonly spoken. Teachers observed that more motivated learners (either by intrinsic or extrinsic factors) actively participated in vocabulary-building exercises. In contrast, less motivated students tended to detach themselves or rely on passive learning strategies such as memorization.

CONCLUSION AND SUGGESTIONS

The study concludes that vocabulary development in second language acquisition requires diverse approaches based on relevant theories adapted to the teaching context. Properly using SLA theory in the classroom can help improve the effectiveness of vocabulary teaching and facilitate a more natural and meaningful language acquisition process for students. Based on the study's findings, several suggestions were made to improve vocabulary development in second language proficiency (SLA) by considering individual differences

among learners. This advice will guide educators and researchers in optimizing vocabulary teaching methods and strategies.

1. Differentiated Instruction: Teachers must improve their vocabulary teaching to meet the needs of learners with different abilities, learning preferences, and motivation levels. For example, visual learners may benefit from mind maps, while auditory learners may find podcasts or vocabulary songs more useful.
2. Input and Interaction: Teachers should ensure that learners are exposed to rich and understandable input (e.g., through authentic texts, listening activities, or multimedia resources) while also encouraging meaningful interactions among peers. Role-playing, collaborative assignments, and discussions can allow learners to practice new vocabulary in context.

REFERENCES

Armadi, S. (2016). Peranan Metode Mengajar terhadap Penguasaan Bahasa Inggris Siswa. *Intelegensia: Jurnal Pendidikan Dan Pembelajaran*, *1*(1), 66–74.

Budianingsih, T. (2017). Peran Neurolinguistik dalam Pengajaran Bahasa. *jurnal Al-AZHAR INDONESIA SERI HUMANIORA*, *3*(2), 137. https://doi.org/10.36722/sh.v3i2.203

Cholifah, M. (2017). Pengajaran Bahasa Berbasis Tugas (Task Based Language Teaching): Pendekatan yang Efektif dalam Pengajaran Bahasa Inggris. *Jurnal Ilmiah Bahasa Dan Sastra*, *4*(2), 131–139.

Djuwarijah, S. (2017). Pemerolehan Bahasa Telegram Dan Kalimat Anak Usia Prasekolah Dan Sd. *Konstruktivisme*, *9*(1), 19–38.

Gu, P. Y. (2003). Vocabulary learning in a second language: Person, task, context, and strategies. *Tesl-Ej*, *7*(2), 1–25.

Haspelmath, M. (2008). *Frequency vs. iconicity in explaining grammatical asymmetries*.

Kinshi, K. (2018). Developing vocabulary practice tests for effective use of English dictionaries. 研究叢書, *3*, 92.

Madyawati, L. (2016). *Strategi Pengembangan Bahasa pada Anak*. Jakarta: Prenada Media Group.

Mamonto, S., Syahreni, S., Aisyah, S., Yuniarti, Y., Suparmanto, S., Asep, N., Much, D., M Kholis, A., Yeasy Agustina, S., & Widhiya, N. (n.d.). *Pengantar Belajar Bahasa*.

McKeown, M. G. (2019). Effective vocabulary instruction fosters knowing words, using words, and understanding how words work. *Language, Speech, and Hearing Services in Schools*, *50*(4), 466–476.

N. Hula, I. R., Mariana, A., Paputungan, M. Z., & Petta Solong, N. (2024). International Language Literacy: Technical Assistance in Proofreading Scientific Articles for Publication in Accredited Journals. *Mejuajua: Jurnal Pengabdian Pada Masyarakat*, *4*(1), 72–81. https://doi.org/10.52622/mejuajuajabdimas.v4i1.151

Nagy, W. E., Herman, P. A., & Anderson, R. C. (1985). Learning words from context. *Reading Research Quarterly*, 233–253.

Nurlaila. (2020). Konsep Pemerolehan Bahasa Dan Implikasinya Terhadap Pembelajaran Bahasa. *Jurnal Studi Pendidikan*, *12*(1), 47–64.

Pauzan, P. (2024). Theory in Second Language Acquisition (Recognition of Concepts Toward Krashen's Second Language Acquisition Theory for Five Main Hypotheses). *Journal on Education*, *6*(4), 20876–20888. https://doi.org/10.31004/joe.v6i4.6210

Ramli, R., Winarno, W., & Fitriawati, F. (2022). Second Language Development (SLD): What Factors Might Affect Students' English Learning During Covid-19 Pandemic. *Eralingua: Jurnal Pendidikan Bahasa Asing Dan Sastra*, *6*(1), 153. https://doi.org/10.26858/eralingua.v6i1.26688

Rayner, K., Foorman, B. R., Perfetti, C. A., Pesetsky, D., & Seidenberg, M. S. (2001). How Psychological Science Informs the Teaching of Reading. *Psychological Science in the Public Interest*, *2*(2), 31–74. https://doi.org/10.1111/1529-1006.00004

Saifuddin, M. (2014). Between Acquisition and Learning: Adult Second Language Acquisition Process. *Educate*, *3*(2).

Tyas, P. A., Perdhani, W. C., & Budiana, N. (2022). *Second Language Acquisition and Teaching: Sebuah Pendahuluan*. Media Nusa Creative (MNC Publishing).

Ulfatin, N. (2022). *Metode penelitian kualitatif di bidang pendidikan: Teori dan Aplikasinya*. Media Nusa Creative (MNC Publishing).

Umami, M. (2011). The social context of early child second language acquisition (SLA). *Register Journal*, *4*(2), 177–195.

Wahyuningsih, D. (2018). Second Language Acquisition for Children. *Al-Ishlah: Jurnal Pendidikan*, *10*(2), 208–215.