

## **A Survey on the Teachers' Strategies in Teaching Vocabulary at The Seventh Grade Students of SMP Level in Letti Island**

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### **ABSTRACT**

This study was aimed at investigating teachers' strategies for teaching vocabulary in the seventh grade of junior high schools in Letti Island. The subject of the research was two English teachers at a Junior High school in Letti Island. The research explored the data about the strategies for teaching vocabulary implemented by English teachers at the seventh-grade SMP level in Letti Island. This quantitative research was conducted using a survey method, in which the data was collected through interviews and questionnaires. The findings of this study showed that the teachers applied several strategies to teaching vocabulary in the classroom, such as listening and doing, listening and repeating, question and answer, substitution, listening and identifying concept mapping, spotting the difference, and labeling the picture. The teachers strongly agree that vocabulary strategies can help the students be more proactive and learn English more easily. The teachers also believed that vocabulary strategy could attract students' interest in learning English vocabulary so they could perform better in front of the class when expressing their ideas and be more creative in learning vocabulary. The teachers also positively perceived the use of teaching vocabulary strategies for promoting foreign language acquisition.

***Keywords: Teacher Strategy, Vocabulary Teaching, Vocabulary Learning***

### **INTRODUCTION**

The English language has a significant role worldwide, including in Indonesia, as it serves as an international medium for connecting people who speak different languages. Learning English has become increasingly important for individuals to enhance their competitiveness in various areas of life, including education, technology, society, and culture. Vocabulary is a crucial component of language acquisition and plays a central role in language learning.

Vocabulary is considered a vital element in English language teaching and is regarded as a contributing factor to language acquisition. It is a fundamental aspect of language learning that needs to be nurtured and developed by both native and non-native speakers before they delve into learning basic grammar and pronunciation. Mastering English is a challenging task as it requires proficiency in four language skills: listening, speaking, reading, and writing. In addition to these skills, students are required to learn about grammar, spelling, vocabulary, and pronunciation to support the development of the four language skills. Each skill is interconnected, and students must learn all four skills efficiently and accurately to use them effectively. Hedge (2000) highlights

the importance of vocabulary in foreign language learning, while Nation (2001) emphasizes its crucial role in all language skills for English (EFL) learners, including listening, speaking, reading, and writing. Indonesian students need to master vocabulary to communicate effectively in English and compete globally. Vocabulary is one of the essential aspects of foreign language learning, and with good mastery of it, students will find it easier to excel in English language skills.

Vocabulary is essential because it is an ongoing process that requires consistent learning. More than simply memorizing words is required; one must also understand their meanings in context. The mastery of English vocabulary depends on how motivated the teacher can make their students, as well as the teaching strategies employed. Therefore, the teacher's involvement is crucial in supporting the learning process. The teacher must provide quality materials and employ effective teaching strategies to improve student motivation and participation in class. If the teacher has proper strategies, the teaching and learning process may run smoothly. Richards and Rodgers (2004) believe that a teacher must act as a catalyst, consultant, guide, and model for learning during the teaching and learning process.

The mastery of instructional material, including vocabulary, is heavily influenced by the teaching strategy or method used by the teacher. The accuracy of selecting the right method is crucial in language teaching, as it plays a significant role in improving students' achievements. According to Wassid (2018), the teaching process aims to enhance human quality by developing cognitive, intellectual, and skill dimensions, as well as instilling values in students. By applying appropriate and engaging strategies or methods, teachers can stimulate students' interest in learning and motivate them to explore the subject further. Based on the statements above, the researcher is interested in conducting research entitled "A Survey on Teachers' Strategies in Teaching Vocabulary to the Seventh-Grade Students of SMP Level in Leti Island" with two research questions:

1. What are the teacher's strategies for teaching English vocabulary at the seventh-grade SMP level in Letti Island?
2. What are the strengths and weaknesses of using certain strategies in teaching vocabulary at the Seventh-grade level of SMP Letti Island?

## **METHOD**

This research used a survey to collect data. Through the survey, the researcher investigated the strategies implemented by teachers in teaching English vocabulary, and the researcher also collected some information regarding the strengths and weaknesses of using the strategies in teaching English vocabulary at the schools.

The data was collected using two techniques. The first is observation. Observation was used to get data about the strategy applied by the English teachers in teaching vocabulary. In observation, the researcher followed the teaching and learning process from the beginning until the end by using the observation sheet. The second is the questionnaire. In the questionnaire session, the researcher gave some statements to the English teachers by focusing on strategies for teaching vocabulary. The number of statements was 10. The third is the interview. In order to answer research question number two, the researcher conducted an interview to gather the data. The number of questions was 12 regarding the strengths and weaknesses of vocabulary strategies applied by the teachers.

Moreover, the researcher analyzed the data gathered from the Observation and interview qualitatively. Thus, to analyze the data gathered from the Questionnaire, the researcher used a quantitative method of measurement that was proposed by Arikunto (2006) as follows:

$$p = \frac{F}{N} \times 100\%$$

Where            P = Percentage  
                    F = Answer frequently  
                    N = Number of Respondents  
                    100 = Constant Number

## **RESULT AND DISCUSSION**

The result of this study was gained from the interview and the questionnaire. There were two respondents in this research. They were two English teachers who taught seventh grade in two junior high schools in Letti Island. From those teachers who were given research questions concerning the strategies in teaching vocabulary used by EFL teachers in the seventh grade of junior high school in Letti Island and what the most common strategies in teaching vocabulary applied by EFL teachers in the seventh grade of junior high school in Letti Island were, the research used questionnaires that consisted of ten questions.

### **1. The Strengths and weaknesses of the strategies used by the teacher**

The strengths and weaknesses of the three strategies used by both teachers in different schools to teach vocabulary at seventh grade in Letti Island, and the results from both teachers were strength and the weaknesses from three strategies that both teachers used to teach weakness vocabulary; the three strategies were Listen and Do, Listen and repeat, and Question and answer. The first strategy, Listen and Do, was good because it actively engaged students in listening and applying new vocabulary, which can improve their comprehension and retention. According to Marzano, R.J.(2004), He underlined the importance of active student involvement in learning new vocabulary. Marzano believes that approaches that involve direct interaction with vocabulary, such as with "listen and do" strategies, can improve students' comprehension and retention of that vocabulary. Still, the weakness of Listen and Do was Not all vocabulary can be easily integrated into a "Listen and Do" activity, especially if it is very abstract or technical. According to Harmer, J. (2007) He emphasizes that this strategy often needs to provide opportunities for in-depth discussion or reflection. Its greater focus on physical actions may reduce opportunities for the development of critical and analytical thinking skills. The second strategy was Listen and Repeat; the strategy was good because it can help students improve their auditory skills, as they have to pay attention and repeat the vocabulary heard. Paul Nation (2008), in much of his work and research, may advocate a "listen and repeat" strategy as part of a holistic approach to vocabulary learning, but besides the strength of the strategy that Listen and Repeat has weaknesses and the weaknesses of strategy may not provide enough context for students to understand the meaning and use of vocabulary in real situations. Richards, J. C., & Rodgers, T. S. (2014) Explain that the "Listen and Repeat" method often does not encourage understanding and communicative use of language, so students may only memorize without understanding the context. The third strategy was Question and Answer; the strategy was good because it can improve interaction between

teachers and students, as well as between students and each other, which can improve vocabulary comprehension. According to Thornbury, S. (2005), question and answer is very beneficial in developing speaking and listening skills, as it forces students to process information and respond directly, which is an important aspect of effective communication. Still, the weakness was it may require additional time in class, especially if there is a lot of vocabulary to cover. This strategy may require additional time in class, especially if there is a lot of vocabulary to cover. Brown, H. D. (2001) identified that this strategy can focus too much on right or wrong answers, thereby reducing students' opportunities for critical and creative thinking.

## **2. The Strength and the Weaknesses of the strategies used only by the teacher A**

Strategies that the English teacher, Mrs. Fianti, used. Liu to teach English, especially vocabulary. The strategies were Substitution, Listening and identifying, Concept mapping, Spotting the difference, and Labeling the picture. The teacher gave her opinion about the strengths and weaknesses of the strategies that she used to teach vocabulary. First, the strengths and the weaknesses of Substitution. Substitution is one of the strategies that can be used to teach vocabulary, and the strategy can help students substitute words or phrases to deepen their understanding of how vocabulary is used in different contexts. Still, in the other hand this strategy may have difficulty for the students when they try to choose the right word or phrase. According to Schmitt (2000), Substitution allows learners to practice vocabulary in varied contexts, improving their ability to use words appropriately in different situations. Second, the strengths and weaknesses of listening and identifying are as follows: Listening and identifying is the strategy that the teacher can use to help students improve their listening skills because they must actively listen and identify the vocabulary heard. However, this strategy may be difficult for the students when they try to identify meaning or use more abstract or complex vocabulary through a "listen and identify. According to Vandergrift (2007), this strategy can be challenging for beginners or learners with lower proficiency who may struggle to identify words in fast-paced or accented speech. Third, the strengths and weaknesses of strategy Concept mapping. This strategy allows students to visualize relationships between words and related concepts, helping them understand vocabulary structures and networks. Still, this strategy may have difficulty in understanding the structures and symbols used in concept mapping, thus reducing the effectiveness of this strategy for them. According to Jonassen et al. (2008), learners with less experience in visually organizing information may struggle to adapt to this strategy, potentially reducing its effectiveness. Fourth, the strengths and weaknesses of strategy spot the difference. This strategy can be used to teach vocabulary because it can help students pay attention to the small details that distinguish similar vocabulary or concepts, thus deepening their understanding of the subject matter. However, there are weaknesses that the students can overcome by using this strategy. It may be less effective for teaching very abstract vocabulary or concepts that are difficult to illustrate with visual differences. Five, the strengths and weaknesses of strategy label the picture. This strategy allows students to associate words with concrete images, helping them understand the meaning of vocabulary visually. On the other hand, this strategy has weaknesses, too, because Not all concepts or vocabulary can be represented with images, especially for more abstract or complex concepts. According to Laufer (2005), labeling pictures works well for concrete nouns but might be less effective for teaching verbs, adjectives, or more complex concepts.

## **3. The result of the Interview used Vocabulary Strategies by English Teachers**

### 1. Interview result of the teacher at SMP Negeri Nuwewang

Fianti N Liu, S.Pd, is an English teacher from SMP Negeri Nuwewang. She has been teaching for 11 years. In the teaching-learning process, she always motivated the students to learn English, and she also applied some interesting strategies. Furthermore, she prepared RPP as her guide and also media like a handbook and laptop. Then, she used materials and resources from her handbook and the internet. She applied eight strategies in teaching vocabulary. They listened and did, listened and repeated, questioned and answered, substituted, listened and identified concept mapping, spotted the difference, and labeled the picture. However, she bears in mind what students need in the teaching-learning process. Her reasons for applying the strategies were that they depended on students' conditions and that they were able to learn from the strategies. She also explained the materials taught in Bahasa Indonesia rather than English because her students still had less vocabulary and it was hard to catch what the teachers meant in English when communicating in the classroom. Furthermore, she gave them a topic to get students' responses. However, when students faced problems while doing their tasks, the students would come to her and told their problems.

Furthermore, she applied the strategies because all students were more active in her class. Then, she created the class comfortably. She also hoped her students were not bored with learning vocabulary, such as playing a game or asking them to learn outside the class. However, in learning outside the class, she would ask all of the things her students did in English, and the students would translate them. Hence, every student had the opportunity to talk; she always provided new words in every meeting, and she also had her students find new vocabulary. Then, they should translate it. She had challenges in teaching vocabulary; the students were not confident enough to speak English and were also anxious to speak English. So, some students were afraid to make mistakes. They also often found difficulties in saying things in English. Depending on her, the time required to teach vocabulary was not enough.

### 2. Interview result of the teacher at SMP Negeri 2 Letti

Deslin Rande, S.Pd is an English teacher from SMP Negeri 2 Letti. She has been teaching for nine years. In the teaching-learning process, she prepared a handbook for the media. Furthermore, she prepared RPP as her guide and media-like book and brought text before teaching the learning process. Then, she got resources from the handbook. She preferred to apply some strategies. The most commonly used strategy in teaching vocabulary in class is listen and repeat, listen and do, as well as vocabulary games because she felt that this way greatly helps students to better master English vocabulary, especially in pronunciation, and helps them to think that learning English is not scary and boring but very enjoyable. However, she hoped the strategy would increase student's vocabulary in English and make them active. Therefore, they were fearless in talking. She always varied her strategies. She also encouraged her students by giving them motivation, and she would make class fun by playing games. In her class, all of the students had the opportunity to talk. Then, she would explain vocabulary before the class ended. The challenges she got in teaching speaking. It was the students' need for more vocabulary and motivation to learn English. For her, more than the time spent teaching vocabulary was need

## CONCLUSION

This research focused on investigating teachers' strategies for teaching English vocabulary at the seventh grade of SMP level in Leti Island. Based on the findings explained and discussed in the previous chapters, the researcher concluded some points of the research as follows: the data of the study were gained from interviews and questionnaires, and there were two respondents. From the interview, it can be found that the teacher used nine strategies in teaching English vocabulary they were listening and repeating, listening and doing, question and answering, substitution, listening and identifying, concept mapping, spotting the difference, labeling the picture, and vocabulary game.

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