

# TEACHERS' STRATEGIES IN TEACHING VOCABULARY AT SMP 27 DEPOK

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**Abstract:** Vocabulary is one of important aspects in English skill. Without proper vocabulary, the English skill of students would be getting difficult or blunt. This study aims to find out the problem faced by students and teacher's strategies in learning vocabulary at SMP Negeri 27 Depok. The sample of this research is 34 students, and two English Teachers. This research is case-study research by conducting a descriptive qualitative method. The steps that writer collects the data by observing and interviewing both students and teacher as well. The result of this study are the problems faced by students in learning vocabulary, as follows: (1) Students of SMP Negeri 27 Depok have difficulty understanding new vocabulary, (2) Students do not memorize vocabulary, and finally, (3) Students are still lacking in terms of writing structure. The strategies that teachers used are (1) Encouraging students to use e-dictionary, (2) Encouraging students to memorize more vocabulary, (3) Teachers teach through some classical games, and lastly, (4) The teacher gives students a task. And the student's responses are the strategy is fun, students can practice writing well, students enjoy in playing games.

**Keywords:** vocabulary, teaching vocabulary, teacher's strategy in teaching vocabulary,

**Abstrak:** Kosakata merupakan salah satu aspek penting dalam keterampilan bahasa Inggris. Tanpa kosakata yang tepat, kemampuan bahasa Inggris siswa akan menjadi sulit atau tumpul. Penelitian ini bertujuan untuk mengetahui permasalahan yang dihadapi siswa dan strategi guru dalam pembelajaran kosakata di SMP Negeri 27 Depok. Sampel penelitian ini adalah 34 siswa, dan dua Guru Bahasa Inggris. Penelitian ini merupakan penelitian studi kasus dengan melakukan metode deskriptif kualitatif. Langkah-langkah penulis mengumpulkan data dengan mengamati dan mewawancarai siswa dan juga guru. Hasil dari penelitian ini adalah permasalahan yang dihadapi siswa dalam mempelajari kosakata, sebagai berikut: (1) Siswa SMP Negeri 27 Depok mengalami kesulitan memahami kosakata baru, (2) Siswa tidak menghafal kosakata, dan yang terakhir, (3) Siswa masih kurang dalam hal struktur penulisan. Strategi yang digunakan guru adalah (1) Mendorong siswa untuk menggunakan kamus elektronik, (2) Mendorong siswa untuk lebih banyak menghafal kosa kata, (3) Guru mengajar melalui beberapa permainan klasik, dan yang terakhir, (4) Guru memberikan tugas kepada siswa. Dan tanggapan siswa adalah strateginya menyenangkan, siswa dapat berlatih menulis dengan baik, siswa senang bermain game.

**Kata kunci:** kosa kata, pengajaran kosakata, strategi guru dalam pengajaran kosakata

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## 1. INTRODUCTION

As professional educators and supporters of student learning and well-being, teachers are expected to follow ethical guidelines and respect the values of fairness, equity, and diversity in their teaching processes. Based on Wati (2018) Being

a teacher is a profession, and being a teacher is a professional job. Professional teachers are responsible for planning and delivering quality teaching because the educators selected are those who are trained and aim to facilitate student learning and growth.

Teaching is not just about imparting knowledge or delivering information. As being stated by Fitriyah & Arfani (2022) students can learn about the environmental system through the process or activity of teaching. Therefore, teachers will also be involved in guiding, facilitating, and creating an environment that allows students to be actively involved in the learning process. Teachers are essential in supporting students' development into active students who creates meaning, use knowledge, and exercise critical thinking.

Rajagopalan (2019) said the teacher helps the students by directing, motivating, and advising them. A fundamental component of teaching is instruction, and by giving students helpful instruction and assisting in their understanding of the material being taught, teachers work to support students' learning. Teachers serve as guides who help students navigate the learning process and support their learning journey using various instructional strategies, abilities, and interests.

Rajagopalan also stated (2019) that there are three main components of teaching. They are a scientific process, content, communication and feedback. To create a welcoming and inclusive learning environment, differentiate instruction to meet the needs of various students, and continually reflect on their practice to improve student learning outcomes, teachers draw on their professional knowledge, skills, and experiences. From the meaning of teaching above, teaching is the act of imparting knowledge, abilities, and values to others using various techniques. A teacher's job is professional, and teaching is a profession.

Teachers are critical in helping students become active learners who can create meaning, apply knowledge, and develop critical thinking.

Vocabulary is an important aspect of the language used in time to English objects. One of them is writing abilities; Students can express themselves more clearly and effectively if Students have a strong vocabulary. An extensive vocabulary will enable students to recognize and understand a wider variety of words and phrases, which will improve comprehension of written skills. As being stated by Afzal (2019) The foundation of learning a second language is vocabulary. Understanding and speaking clearly in a foreign language can only be accessed with a good vocabulary. So, when trying to learn a new language, vocabulary is a crucial area that students need to concentrate on.

Salawazo et al., (2020) states the number of words someone knows and employs in language activities is called their vocabulary. It is a group of words and meaning to communicate with others as a main part of the language. Vocabulary includes all the words and phrases a person has learned and can understand or use to communicate with others. Vocabulary also encompasses the meanings, pronunciation, and usage of those words. People can continue to expand their vocabulary throughout their lives, as they encounter new words and phrases in their reading, writing, speaking, and listening activities.

When learners begin to study a new language, they often focus on building their vocabulary as a first step. As learners continue to expand their vocabulary, they become better equipped to understand and express themselves in

the new language. One of the knowledge areas in a language is vocabulary, which plays an excellent role in helping learners learn a language (Veronika et al., 2020).

Learning vocabulary is often a challenge for students. Students usually must improve their skills by getting the right strategies and support. As reported by Andriani et al., (2019) vocabulary is a complex subject, and students have problems in the mastery of vocabulary because vocabulary skill includes some aspects. Understanding word meanings is one component of vocabulary. Students need to learn the definitions of new words and how to use them in context. Students will better communicate effectively and accurately if they understand spoken, written language and master the various facets of vocabulary.

Based on the explanation, having a suitable vocabulary is essential for learners to access and understand all forms of oral and written communication. According to Sriwahyuningsih et al., (2019) One of the most important aspects of learning and teaching a foreign language is vocabulary because it gives students access to all forms of verbal and written communication in that language. Overall, vocabulary is one of the most important aspects of learning and teaching a language, and students who prioritize expanding their vocabulary will be better prepared to learn and communicate in a foreign language.

Several studies have previously been conducted by several related researchers who have the same thoughts about teachers' strategies in teaching English vocabulary. There are three

previous studies. The first study by Yulianti (2018) was about teacher's strategy in teaching English vocabulary. This study aims to learn how teachers teach English vocabulary and what media they use. Class VIII. Students at MTsN 2 Mataram and the English teacher there served as the study's subjects. Researchers use observation of schools, interviews, and questionnaires to gather data. To motivate students to learn English so that they can enjoy learning, the English teacher at MTsN 2 Mataram uses games that use cards and cutting versions, according to the data collection results.

The second study was conducted by Isnaini (2022) the descriptive qualitative approach was used in this study because the aim was to discover the teaching vocabulary strategies used by English teachers at SMP Muhammadiyah Plus Salatiga by describing the strategies used for teaching writing and the difficulties faced by the teacher. The steps researchers took to gather data through observation and interviews. The teacher uses the GTM method (Grammar Translation Method) as an exercise to increase students' knowledge because students do not know the meaning of sentences and are lacking in grammar and vocabulary, which is a challenge experienced by teachers.

The third relevant research is Widodo et al., (2022) which used qualitative research, with the subjects being junior high school students. Data was taken by observation, interview, and documentation methods. By performing a test technique, data validity follows the data collection through three stages: reduction, data display, and conclusion. From the results of this

study, it was found; the teacher's teaching strategies in increasing students' English vocabulary, the obstacles teachers face in the learning process, and the difficulties students face in enriching English vocabulary.

With the presence of English lessons at school, it is hoped that students will be able to master and develop their abilities in foreign languages because learning English in education is very important to hone their ability to apply interactions in foreign languages. Many problems were found with students, especially in vocabulary and writing, when the author's experience was during teaching practice at SMP Negeri 27 Depok. In contrast, a group of words and meanings is central to communicating with other people in English. This vocabulary is an urgent subject for students to speak a foreign language.

The role of the teachers is very important and highly expected in the teaching and learning process. In the process of teaching and learning, teachers have different teaching styles. The treatment given by the teacher can be accepted differently for each student. Education & Development (2019) reported that if the curriculum is well-developed and taught, students will be given special skills that will allow them to achieve a bright future and participate in the development process. Teachers' teaching styles are a shift in attitudes, behaviors, and acts in teaching-learning that try to overcome student weariness so that students have a high interest in learning.

A teacher's teaching style shows how he or she perceives how to execute the teaching. Pursuant to Ridwan et al., (2019) For teaching

style when learning English, students prefer to learn with the teacher giving clear and detailed explanations of the material they need to know. Teachers are required to be able to improve the competence of their students. It is because as educators, the teachers should understand the differences in the advantages of each student.

Teachers should have passion when they teach and certain subject. Then, it needs a step to teach certainly. Majid said that a strategy is a planned pattern that is used intentionally (2021). Activities or action teachers who are unable to manage to learn well, particularly those who do not understand strategies, methods, and teaching media well, will create an uninteresting, monotonous, and boring learning environment. So, that is why teacher are expected to have fun, easy going, friendly and nice teaching style to be given to the students.

The researchers realized that vocabulary mastery is essential for students to increase their interest in acquiring knowledge of English. Based on the researcher's experience during teaching practice at SMP Negeri 27 Depok, the researchers determined that the vocabulary mastery of some students was still limited or there were still many who had not understood primary or more intensive English vocabulary. It can be found when the teacher asks students to write, read or know the meaning of some words in English. English teachers at SMP Negeri 27 Depok carry out several material techniques to improve and develop students' vocabulary. In developing vocabulary, sometimes students think that English is complicated. Therefore, the researcher stated that this research is essential to describe Teacher's strategies to improve students'

vocabulary in writing English in SMP Negeri 27 Depok.

Based on the background above, the researchers will analyze the problems of the student in learning vocabulary and teacher's strategies for improving students' vocabulary in English writing at SMP Negeri 27 Depok.

## 2. RESEARCH METHODS

The research method suitable for this topic is a qualitative descriptive research method. This method will allow researchers to gain an in-depth understanding of the teacher's experience in teaching English, especially in the vocabulary teaching strategies in writing skills, and also enable researchers to study various teaching strategies, assessments, and learning media used by English teachers in the English vocabulary development in students. Several data collection techniques used in qualitative research methods are interviews, observation, and video recorded.

The researcher will explain the procedures of this research methodology in the systematic presentation section. It is divided into several sections: Observation, Video recording, Interviews, Data Collection Methods, and Analyzing data.

For observation techniques, researchers can make direct observations in English classes to observe and study the teaching strategies used by English teachers. The observation process is one of the data collection techniques used in research. Observation is carried out by systematically

observing phenomena or behavior in the research object.

Activities, interactions, or situations related to the research topic can be observation objects. Chosen observation must be consistent with the objectives and research objects. Participant observation, structured observation, and video observation are all techniques that can be used. Observation is carried out by systematically and methodically observing the objects and subjects of research. During the observation process, researchers must pay attention to factors influencing observation results, such as the environment, atmosphere, and changes in the object of study.

In the documents taken from the observation, the data collected is in the form of photos, sound recordings, personal documentation, notes, or other documents that will be obtained when taking direct action in the field. Teaching materials and other related documents can also be used to get an analysis of these documents to learn about teaching strategies, assessments, and learning media used in learning English Vocabulary.

Researchers can use interview techniques which will be conducted by asking several questions related to the method used in teaching English, especially vocabulary development for students of SMP Negeri 27 Depok. Researchers will interview English teachers using *Bahasa Indonesia* to obtain detailed and transparent information.

The data to be collected results from the observation, sound recording, and interview. Researcher will prepare interview questions for 2

(two) English teachers at SMP Negeri 27 Depok. Regarding an interview, Kvale remarks that an interview is a discussion between two or more people about a subject that interests both of them (2022). Researchers will conduct 10 until 20 Minute interviews with teachers using the same questions. Inquire about their strategy and challenges in increasing students' vocabulary. The interview will be recorded using a phone voice recorder. Researchers will also observe two classes, which contains 34 students.

Transcription begins after the researcher has finished observing, interviewing, and collecting other documents. A Transcript is a practice of writing what the respondent says repeatedly. The transcript must produce the same results as the interview notes. All data must be checked continually, ensuring no information additions or reductions are obtained.

The researchers selected the data to analyze from the information gathered and categorized the data using coding. It is known that the data analysis will use several encodings; there are 3 (three) coding, including open coding, axial coding, and selective coding. The researcher will describe the data analysis in words, sentences, and paragraphs. It uses Grounded Theory as the primary analysis in this study. As stated Mohajan (2022) it is an essential structural operation in GT (Grounded Theory) research that enables data analysis and successive steps to serve the purpose of the research procedures.

Researchers will obtain new theories and concepts based on the data obtained by employing this theory in analyzing qualitative data to make it easier to interpret interview responses can be more easily solved and analyzed. The first step in

exploring this research will be open coding. During open coding, researchers will create several categories and name them based on criteria determined during the interview. Because the researchers had two participants, they used names like T1 for the first English teacher and T2 for the second English teacher. The second step is axial coding, in which researchers divide code that contains strategies for problems faced by teachers in increasing student vocabulary related to questions asked during research. The final stage in coding analysis is selective coding. The researchers identified categories that were well structured, systematic, and correlated with the core categories through selective coding. After completing the selective coding, the coding of the reported data is explained in words, sentences, and paragraphs to answer the researcher's questions.

### **3. RESULT**

This section presents a discussion of the results of this study. The researcher found that the students' writing test results on descriptive text, for the students' vocabulary section, the results were quite good. Researchers give their scores in the descriptive text based on the general structure in the descriptive text, namely Identification and Description. This section of the text is assessed for the general structure of the descriptive text, whether the sentences are complete or incomplete. Researcher in assigning the scoring, taking guides from the journal Syahputra et al., (2020), which contains scoring systems in learning by giving points as follows:

In the point system used in assessing student test results, the assessment taken starts from a good score of 80-100, then if the results get enough scores, will be given a score of 60-79, and if the student's test results are still less than the general structure provisions than descriptive text will be given a score of 30-59. After doing the test, next step is to check the test student.

The researchers found that many students had difficulty in mastering vocabulary in this learning. Of the 31 students who took the descriptive test, there were still few students who got scores with good (sufficient) score and insufficient score. The researchers saw that after conducting the test, many students did not know the basic vocabulary to write the text correctly and did not understand the general structure of the descriptive text.

#### A. Students' problems in learning vocabulary

The findings of this study indicate several problems in learning vocabulary. The researchers interviewed the students (S) at SMP Negeri 27 Depok. The results are following.

**Table 1. Students' problems in learning vocabulary**

No	Problem	Amount	Percentage
1	Students have difficulties in understanding new vocabulary	6	20 %
2	Students do not try to memorize vocabulary	10	32 %
3	Students are still lacking in writing a new word	15	48 %
	Total	31	100 %

Based on the table 1 above, the students have three problems in learning vocabulary. There are 15 (48%) students who are still lacking in writing a new word. Then, there are 10 (32%) students who do not try to memorize vocabulary. Last, there are 6 (20%) students who have difficulties in understanding new vocabulary.

#### **Finding 1: Students have difficulty in understanding new vocabulary**

From the results of the interviews, two teachers gave that opinion student have difficulty in new vocabulary. As shown in their answer below:

*The students feel difficult in understanding the vocabulary, especially the descriptive text (S1, 2023)*

*They find the words difficult. (S2, 2023)*

From the student's opinion, it can be concluded that students have difficulty to accepting new vocabulary, because they did not find learning English in elementary school, so their vocabulary was very minimal.

#### **Finding 2: Students do not try to memorize vocabulary.**

The two teachers concluded that students do not trying to memorize vocabulary. The following statements confirm it:

*Students feel difficult to memorize vocabulary. (S4, 2023)*

*Sentences or words they've just heard, they don't memorize it. (S7, 2023)*

From the interview results, the first teacher stated that students are difficulty to memorize new vocabulary, and the second

teacher said that students don't memorize it. On the contrary, vocabulary is the basis for learning English.

**Finding 3: Students are still lacking in the structure of writing.**

Based on the results of the interviews, the next teacher's problem is that students lack writing structure. Two teachers arguing about the same thing about writing structure.

*The writing structure, they lack mastery of the structure. (S8, 2023)*

*The structure of writing needs to be improved. (S5, 2023)*

Students writing skills varied. Some were able to implement writing, and some were not. For now, students' ability to write English is still unable to make perfect sentences because they still have to review tenses. Students need to be retrained to use the structure as a condition for writing sentences.

In conclusion, many students at SMP Negeri 27 Depok still have difficulty memorizing new vocabulary and lack the ability to write in English. This was stated because, during elementary school, they did not get English lessons, so they rarely even heard the basic vocabulary. This made students still fumble to apply new vocabulary in writing skills.

**B. Teacher's strategy to teach Students' vocabulary**

The findings of this study indicate several points for English teacher strategies to improve students' vocabulary at SMP Negeri 27 Depok. In findings of this study, researcher interviewed

English teachers and he/she shows that, having strategies to improve vocabulary. The coding used for Teacher (1) = T1, while for Teacher (2) is T2. The researcher made some conclusions based on the interview's findings.

**Table 2. Teacher's Strategies to teach students' Vocabulary**

No	Teacher's Strategies	T1	T2
1	Encourage students to employ E-dictionaries	V	V
2	Encouraging students to memorize	V	V
3	Teaching with the classic games	V	V
4	The teacher gives students a task	V	V

Based on the table 2 above, the teachers used four strategies in their teaching vocabulary in EFL classroom. They are encouraging students to employ E-dictionaries, encouraging students to memorize, teaching with the classic games, and the teacher give students a task.

**Finding 1: Encourage students to employ E-dictionaries**

According to an interview with all the English teachers, they strongly believe that using a e-dictionary is necessary for students to increase their vocabulary. Students can look up unfamiliar words, learn about their meanings, and learn how to use them in context. The following statements of the teachers are:

*They can open an e-dictionary, and students can open the internet. (T1, 2023)*

*Because there is an online dictionary that they will use. (T2, 2023)*

As a tool for vocabulary development, dictionaries are important. Because using a dictionary enables students to learn independently by allowing them to research the meanings, pronunciations, and usage of words on their own, it not only helps students increase their word knowledge but also improves their writing abilities.

### **Finding 2: Encouraging students to memorize.**

From the interview results, the teacher has the same opinion about increasing students' vocabulary by memorizing new vocabulary. The teacher strongly believes that encouraging students to memorize words is an effective way to improve their vocabulary. Following are the results of the interview:

*They have to memorize proper words at every meeting. (T1, 2023)*

*By giving deadline of task to memorize each meeting. (T2, 2023)*

Students can build a practical vocabulary for writing by memorizing words and their definitions. They can write more effectively and develop their language skills as a result.

### **Finding 3: Teaching with the classic games**

To the results of an interview, teachers strongly believe in incorporating games into teaching as an effective method to improve student's vocabulary. Learn with method game, it encourages them to explore new words, apply them in different contexts, and boosts their motivation to learn. As shown in their answer below:

*In game mode, for example, word connect game, tongue twisters, Simons says, etc. Well, that's how the teacher applies this*

*strategy to students so they can master vocabulary. (T1, 2023)*

*I enter the type of game-based learning. (T2, 2023)*

Learning with games makes learning fun and interesting, allows students to participate actively, and strengthens their understanding of words. Playing games can make students quickly remember what they have learned.

### **Finding 4: The teacher gives students a task.**

When learning vocabulary, tasks are extremely important. As teachers, they support giving students meaningful and focused tasks. These tasks might require students to complete vocabulary exercises or to write sentences using new words. It can be seen in the teacher's statement:

*Apart from that, I also give tasks in English (T1, 2023)*

*I give a lot of tasks. (T2, 2023)*

In giving a task, it allows students to rehearse what they have learned. In that way, students can recall the vocabulary the teacher has taught and practice their writing skills by doing the task.

To conclude the statement from the implementation of the teaching strategies of the two English teachers at SMP Negeri 27 Depok, they have similarities in their teaching. They will apply this strategy when introducing new vocabulary. Teachers are also aware of students' lack of ability to write English, and that will be a challenge for them in teaching.

### C. Student's response in learning strategy used by teachers

The findings of this study indicated students' response in learning strategy used by teachers. The data are following.

**Table 3. Student's response in learning strategy used by teachers**

No	Student's response	Amount	Percentage
1	The strategy is fun	15	48 %
2	Students can practice writing well	6	20 %
3	Students enjoy in playing games	10	32 %
	Total	31	100 %

Based on the table 3 above, the students gave three kinds of responses. There are 15 (48 %) students who gave the answer that the strategy is fun. Then there are 10 (32%) students who said that they enjoy in playing games. Last, there are 6 (20%) students who stated that they can practice writing well.

#### **Finding 1: The strategy is fun**

Making learning English fun can motivate students to participate actively and explore new language skills. When students find joy in learning, their progress and retention of English improve. When interviewed, some students said:

*It's really fun and exciting (S1, 2023)*

*The strategy is easy to understand (S2, 2023)*

Creating fun learning is something that a teacher must prepare. Creating a fun learning atmosphere is a pride for the teacher because

creating a learning atmosphere is the main thing in the classroom because it will build students' enthusiasm for learning.

#### **Finding 2: Students can practice writing well**

Students must develop their writing skills to communicate in writing effectively. Teachers can train students to write in various writing genres, improve their grammar and vocabulary, and improve their overall writing skills. Some students also said that they:

*It can improve writing skills to be more increased and can improve writing that is lacking (S1, 2023)*

*It can Improve ability in English lessons through writing skills (S2, 2023)*

*The teacher can tell me nicely if there are mistakes in the English words I write, which can improve my writing ability (S3, 2023)*

*Interesting, because studying can improve writing skills in learning English. (S5, 2023)*

Students feel that they also have to train themselves with various writing tests. With the help of their teacher in improving their writing skills, students also feel confident in their abilities, because the teacher helps them well if there are mistakes in their writing.

#### **Finding 3: Students enjoy in playing games.**

Games give students an enjoyable, interactive learning experience that inspires them to participate actively, building an environment where learning and skill development are enjoyable for students. It enables them to learn in a more relaxed and enjoyable environment. As being stated by students while interviewed:

*It's good because there are several sessions where implementing the game system in groups is fun and interesting (S1, 2023)*

*Because my teacher uses many learning methods, for example by playing and in groups. (S3, 2023)*

*Teachers sometimes implement learning with groups or by playing games. (S4, 2023)*

This is because junior high school students are transitioning from elementary school students who still like to play. From learning while playing, joy can be created by the teacher, one of which is through games to achieve the desired learning goals.

With the implementation of the strategies taught by the teacher to students, student responses became the focus of this study. Several students said they enjoyed the strategy they used, which made them focus more on their studies. Master also coached them firmly. The students hope that their English teacher can teach them well so that they can be more confident in applying English in everyday life.

Therefore, the descriptive text writing test results of some students who used the teaching technique are relatively good. As a result, if students' understanding is improved, learning becomes more effective. Next, the students' response is so excited to learn using games, and they understand more easily. Students like the classroom situation where the teacher can liven up or build a fun atmosphere so that they can focus on their learning.

#### **4. CONCLUSION**

Based on the results, the problems faced by students in improving vocabulary are found out as

follows: (1) Students of SMP Negeri 27 Depok have difficulty understanding new vocabulary, (2) Students do not memorize vocabulary, and finally, (3) Students are still lacking in terms of writing structure. English teachers believe that the strategies they apply effectively teaching students' vocabulary acquisition. The strategies implemented are: (1) Encouraging students to use e-dictionary, (2) Encouraging students to memorize more vocabulary, (3) Teachers teach through some classical games, and lastly, (4) The teacher gives students a task to complete vocabulary exercises or writing sentences using new words to practice their writing skills. The students' responses are (1) the strategy is fun, (2) Students can practice writing well, and (3) Students enjoy in playing games.

This study focused on teachers' methods to improve students' vocabulary, particularly their writing ability. The researchers suggest that other researchers, especially those who want to pursue outline teaching, investigate this research more deeply in the future because further research might be needed to solve this important problem for students in the teaching and learning process.

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