

# ENGLISH TEACHERS' STRATEGIES ON IMPROVING STUDENTS VOCABULARY MASTERY IN SMP N 1 MATESIH

**Sofian Fajar Nur Alim, Koesomo Ratih**

**Department of English Education, Faculty of Teacher Training and Education,  
Universitas Muhammadiyah Surakarta**

## **Abstrak**

Penguasaan kosakata adalah kemampuan siswa untuk mengenal, memahami, dan menggunakan kata-kata yang terdapat dalam suatu bahasa dengan tepat.. Strategi guru merupakan usaha guru untuk memvariasikan cara mengajar dan menciptakan suasana pengajaran yang menyenangkan di dalam kelas sehingga siswa dapat terlibat dan aktif dalam mengikuti pembelajaran secara aktif bukan pasif. Tujuan dari penelitian ini adalah (1) untuk mengetahui masalah atau kendala yang dihadapi siswa dalam belajar bahasa Inggris, (2) untuk mengeksplorasi strategi yang digunakan guru untuk meningkatkan penguasaan kosakata siswa, dan (3) untuk mengetahui bagaimana strategi tersebut dapat digunakan untuk membantu siswa mencapai tujuan pembelajaran. Metode yang digunakan adalah deskriptif kualitatif, teknik pengumpulan data observasi, wawancara, dokumen tes. Hasil dari penelitian ini mengungkapkan bahwa 3 strategi yang digunakan oleh guru yakni setoran hafalan kosakata, menirukan bacaan guru, dan membaca arti kata-kata sulit dalam kamus berhasil. Berdasarkan hasil penelitian tersebut, implikasi pedagogis dari temuan ini adalah bahwa strategi untuk meningkatkan kosakata siswa sangat penting dalam pembelajaran bahasa Inggris karena kemampuan berbahasa sangat bergantung pada penguasaan kosakata. Dengan demikian, semakin banyak kosakata yang dikuasai, maka semakin besar kemungkinan seseorang terampil dalam menggunakan bahasa tersebut. dari strategi yang telah digunakan oleh guru, siswa dibiasakan untuk berpikir kritis dan dapat menggali informasi lebih dalam, dan Strategi yang tepat yang digunakan oleh guru dalam proses pembelajaran akan membuat siswa menjadi lebih aktif, dan juga mandiri. selain membuat siswa menjadi aktif dan juga mandiri, strategi yang tepat yang telah digunakan oleh guru dapat meningkatkan penguasaan kosakata siswa dan juga meningkatkan nilai siswa.

**Kata kunci** : strategi guru, vocabulary mastery, improving

## **Abstract**

Vocabulary mastery is the ability of students to recognize, understand, and use words contained in a language appropriately. Teacher strategy is the teacher's effort to vary teaching methods and create a pleasant teaching atmosphere in the classroom so that students can be involved and active in participating in learning actively instead of passively. The objectives of this study are (1) to find out the problems or obstacles faced by students in learning English, (2) to explore the strategies used by teachers to improve students' vocabulary mastery, and (3) to find out how these strategies can be used to help students achieve learning objectives. The method used was descriptive qualitative. Data collection techniques include observation, interview, and test documents. The results of this study revealed that the 3 strategies were used by teacher, namely: vocabulary memorization deposit, imitating teacher reading, and reading the meaning of difficult words in the dictionary. Based on that results of this study, the pedagogical implications of these findings are that strategies to improve students' vocabulary are very important in

English learning because language skills are highly dependent on vocabulary mastery, and the right strategy used by the teacher in the learning process will make students more active and independent. In addition to making students active and independent, the right strategy used by the teacher can improve students' vocabulary mastery and also improve students' scores.

**Keywords :** teacher strategies, vocabulary mastery, improving

## 1. INTRODUCTION

According to Wells quoted from the Ministry of National Education in Kepmendiknas No. 22 of 2006 : English is a tool for communicating orally and in writing. Communicating is understanding and expressing information, thoughts, feelings, and developing science, technology, and culture using that language. The ability to communicate in a complete sense is the ability to discourse, namely the ability to understand and/or produce spoken and/or written texts that are realized in the four language skills, namely listening, speaking, reading and writing. These four skills are used to respond to or create discourse in social life. Therefore, English subjects are directed at developing these skills so that graduates are able to communicate and have discourse in English at a certain level of literacy. In learning English, students must be able to produce and understand spoken and written texts in four skills, namely listening, reading, writing, and speaking. Each skill has its own role to build students' ability to learn English. In learning English, these skills reinforce and support each other. In the early stages of learning English so that students can master the four skills of listening, reading, writing and speaking, students must first master and understand vocabulary.

Vocabulary mastery is very important because learning vocabulary is the main capital for learning sentence structure and other skills in language. Mastering a lot of vocabulary will make it easier for someone to read, write, listen and speak English. Therefore the teacher must have a strategy to improve students' vocabulary mastery. The teacher's strategy is a teacher's effort to vary the way of teaching and create a pleasant teaching atmosphere in the classroom so that students can be involved and active in participating in learning actively not passively. Djamarah (2010) said that in connection with teaching and learning, strategies can be given as a general pattern of teacher-student activities in realizing teaching and learning activities to achieve the goals outlined. In the teaching and learning process, the teacher must have a strategy so that students can learn effectively and efficiently, achieving the expected goals. Roestiyah (2008) said that, one of the steps to having this strategy is having to master presentation techniques or what is usually called the teaching method.

This research was conducted at SMP N 1 Matesih because this junior high school is the initial stage for starting and understanding the basics of learning English before continuing to a higher level. the researcher saw that there were many cases of lack of vocabulary mastery in junior high school students, so the researcher conducted a study on teacher's strategies to improve students' vocabulary mastery.

Lack of vocabulary mastery is a major problem for students in the process of learning English. Therefore, researcher conducted a study entitled "English Teachers' Strategies on Improving Students Vocabulary Mastery in SMP N 1 Matesih" to analyze teacher strategies in mastering student vocabulary.

## **2. METHOD**

In this study, researcher used qualitative research. Qualitative research is research that is descriptive in nature and tends to use analysis. Process and meaning are highlighted in qualitative research. The theoretical basis is used as a guide so that the research focus is in accordance with the facts in the field. This study uses observation and interview methods. Method design is a data collection procedure that is analyzed in one study to find problems in research.

In this study, researcher took research data at SMPN 01 Matesih. This research was conducted at SMP N 1 Matesih because junior high school is the initial stage to start and understand the basics of learning English before continuing to a higher level. The subjects of this study were English teachers because researcher wanted to explore the strategies used by English teachers to improve students' vocabulary mastery. The object of this study is the teacher's strategy in enchancing student's vocabulary on English learning for students of SMP N O1 Matesih.

In this study the data were obtained from observations, interviews and test. Participants of this research are people who can provide information about research subjects. Observations took place at SMP N1 Matesih with 7a class students on February 8, 2023 in the form of class condition data. In this study there was only one participants on interview namely Mrs. In an English teacher at SMP N 1 Matesih. The test was conducted twice, namely the pre test and also the post test.

The type of data needed in this research is qualitative data. The data used are taken from observation, interview, and test. Then the data will be collected, reduced and concluded in detail. To obtain observation data, researcher made observations during the preparation of learning until the learning activities ended. Researcher observed the teacher's teaching process

and how students responded during learning. Researcher took notes on how the observations occurred in the classroom. The researcher conducted interviews with teachers to find out the problems faced by students when learning English and the strategies that will be used by teachers to overcome the problems faced by students. After conducting observations and interviews, the researcher collected data in the form of pre-test and post-test scores to find out whether students' vocabulary mastery ability could improve after the teacher implemented the strategy.

The data analysis technique in this study used the results of observations, interviews and tests. Observation data obtained from the results of field observation notes. After that, data reduction was carried out, namely information that is not related to the problem to be analyzed. After the data were reduced, the data is classified according to the formulation of the problem. Then the data was concluded and validated by triangulation of sources. The data was summarized into a description. Interview data obtained from interviews with class teachers to find out student problems and also the strategies used by teachers were then made into transcript data and data reduction was carried out related to information that is not related to the problem to be analyzed, then the data is classified according to the formulation of the problem then concluded and validated by triangulating sources and concluded in the form of a description. Test data obtained from the results of students' pretest and post test scores which are classified into 3, namely scores below kkm, scores according to kkm, and scores above kkm. From these 3 classifications, the value data is analyzed to determine whether the strategy used by the teacher has succeeded in achieving student learning objectives.

Triangulation of information sources is the method used to conduct this research. By searching for data using various sources of information such as interviews, documents, and observations. Interviewing more than one subject to see some comments or thoughts in order to gain a breadth of knowledge that will become accurate information.

### **3. RESULT AND DISCUSSION**

This section contains research findings and discussion. The research data has been collected by the researcher using interview and observation data collection techniques. The researcher presents the research findings and discussion regarding the strategies used by English teachers to improve vocabulary mastery of seventh grade students at SMP N 1 Matesih. the researcher divides the research findings into three parts, namely; 1) Problems faced by students when learning English from the teacher's perspective, 2) teachers strategies employed to enhance vocabulary mastery and 3) How these strategies helped students achieve student learning goals.

### 3.1 Problems faced by students when learning English from the teacher's perspective

Based on data analyzed, there are several problems faced by students according to the English teachers. The problems faced by students in learning English are the lack on vocabulary mastery, incorrect pronunciation, and there are no books to support the material.

#### 3.1.1 Lack on vocabulary mastery

The problem of grade 7 students at SMP N 1 Matesih is the lack of skills in mastering vocabulary because during elementary school they did not get English lessons, therefore affecting vocabulary mastery skills. This is evidenced by the teacher's statement :

*“siswa smp kelas 7 sama sekali belum mengenali mata pelajaran bahasa Inggris karena di sekolah dasar mereka tidak mendapatkan pelajaran bahasa Inggris lagi. Yang ke dua masalah penguasaan kosa kata mereka sama sekali belum menguasai, jadi untuk memulai pelajaran bahasa Inggris pun mereka masih bingung karena belum memahami kosa kata bahasa Inggris.”*

[“7th grade high school students do not recognize English subjects at all because in elementary school they do not get English lessons anymore. The second problem is the mastery of vocabulary they have not mastered at all, so to start English lessons they are still confused because they do not understand English vocabulary.”]

#### 3.1.2 Incorrect pronunciation

During English language learning, the teacher directs students to read a passage but the students have not been precise in their pronunciation. An example of improper word pronunciation is the word one which should be read 'wən' by students read one in language. This is evidenced by the teacher's statement as follows:

*“...kurang tepatnya saat melafalkan kata bahasa Inggris”*

[“...inaccurate pronunciation of English words”]

#### 3.1.3 No books to support the material

Due to the change of curriculum, handbooks that are in accordance with the curriculum are not yet appropriate. Teachers must prepare the material used by looking for various sources that are suitable for delivery to students. This is evidenced by the teacher's statement as follows:

*“...karena guru dan siswa belum memiliki buku penunjang dan dari dinas pendidikan belum menyiapkan buku yang sesuai dengan kurikulum merdeka maka materi yang akan disampaikan belum lengkap”*

[“...because teachers and students do not have supporting books and the education office has not prepared books that are in accordance with the independent curriculum, the material to be delivered is not complete”]

It can be concluded that there are 3 problems faced by students, namely, lack on vocabulary mastery, incorrect pronunciation, and no book to support the material. Of the 3 problems faced by students, there is a main problem that must be overcome by the teacher, that is lack of vocabulary mastery, because vocabulary mastery is very important for the basics of English learning.

### **3.2 Teachers strategies employed to enhance vocabulary mastery**

In this section the researcher discussed the strategies used by teachers to improve students' vocabulary. Teachers used 3 kinds of strategies to improve students' vocabulary. These strategies are vocabulary memorization deposit, imitate teacher's reading, and reading the meaning of difficult words in the dictionary.

#### **3.2.1 Vocabulary memorization deposit**

Every time there is an English lesson, students are required to deposit the vocabulary of 2 verbs and 2 nouns.

#### **3.2.2 Imitate teacher's reading**

Every time there is an English reading, the teacher gives an example of reading it first then the students are ordered to repeat it, one child per sentence.

#### **3.2.3 Read the meaning of difficult words in the dictionary.**

Students were instructed to open the dictionary to find the meaning of unknown vocabulary then write it in a notebook.

The strategies above are strategies used by teachers to overcome the problems faced by students, which is about vocabulary mastery. This is evidenced by an interview conducted by the 7th grade English teacher :

Teacher said :

*“untuk meningkatkan penguasaan kosakata siswa saya akan menerapkan beberapa strategi untuk siswa, yang pertama saya menggunakan strategi setiap ada pelajaran bahasa Inggris siswa wajib setoran hafalan kosakata 2 kata kerja dan 2 kata benda, kemudian setiap ada bacaan bahasa inggris saya memberikan contoh membacanya dulu kemudian siswa saya suruh untuk mengulang setiap anak satu kalimat. Selain itu anak anak saya suruh membuka kamus untuk mencari arti kosa kata yang belum diketahui kemudian ditulis di dalam buku catatan.”*

[“To improve students' vocabulary mastery, I will implement several strategies for students, the first is that I use a strategy that every time there is an English lesson, students are required to deposit vocabulary memorization of 2 verbs and 2 nouns, then every time there is an English



reading, I give an example of reading it first then I tell the students to repeat each child one sentence. In addition, I tell children to open the dictionary to find the meaning of vocabulary that is not yet known and then write it in a notebook.”]

### **3.3 How these strategy were used to help students achieve student learning goals**

In this section the researcher discussed whether the strategies used by teachers are successful in helping students achieve learning objectives. The problem faced by students in learning English are the lack on vocabulary mastery, incorrect pronunciation, and there are no books to support the material. Knowing these problems, the teacher then applied 3 learning strategies to students. These strategies are : vocabulary memorization deposit, imitating teacher's reading, and reading the meaning of difficult words in the dictionary.

With vocabulary memorization strategy students become easier to memorize English vocabulary. Because every English lesson students are required to deposit vocabulary memorization of 2 verbs and 2 nouns. So every lesson students can already memorize English vocabulary. The evidence is : “*...saya menggunakan strategi setiap ada pelajaran bahasa Inggris siswa wajib setoran hafalan kosakata 2 kata kerja dan 2 kata benda*”

[“...I use the strategy that every time there is an English lesson, students are required to memorize the vocabulary of 2 verbs and 2 nouns”]

By imitating the teacher's way of reading, then students repeat it back makes students understand how to read English vocabulary correctly. The strategy is used by the teacher so that students understand how to read English reading correctly. The evidence is: “*...kemudian setiap ada bacaan bahasa inggris saya memberikan contoh membacanya dulu kemudian siswa saya suruh untuk mengulang setiap anak satu kalimat*”

[“...then every time there is an English reading, I give an example of reading it first then I tell the students to repeat each child one sentence”]

Reading the meaning of difficult words in the dictionary. With this strategy, students look up the meaning of difficult words in the dictionary and then record it in a notebook, making it easier for students to memorize the meaning of difficult vocabulary.

The evidenced is: “*...Selain itu anak anak saya suruh membuka kamus untuk mencari arti kosa kata yang belum diketahui kemudian ditulis di dalam buku catatan.*”

[“...In addition, I tell children to open the dictionary to find the meaning of vocabulary that is not yet known and then write it in a notebook.”]

It can be concluded that the 3 strategies above have succeeded in increasing student scores and helping students to achieve learning objectives. because after the application of these strategies, students seem to be able to understand, enjoy, and be active in English learning activities. This

can be proven by the increase in students' grades after the teacher applies the 3 strategies.

### **3.4 Discussion**

Based on the research findings presented by the researcher above, two findings will be discussed in this section: The problems students face when learning English, and the strategies teachers use to improve vocabulary mastery.

#### **3.4.1 The problems students face when learning English**

Based on the research findings, the researcher found 3 problems faced by students. namely lack of vocabulary mastery, incorrect pronunciation, and no books that support the material. of these 3 problems, lack of vocabulary mastery is the main problem. lack of vocabulary mastery is a problem they face during English learning. In learning English, students must be able to produce and understand oral and written texts in empathic skills, namely listening, reading, writing, and speaking. Each of these skills has been discussed individually to build students' ability to learn English. In learning English, these skills reinforce and support each other. In the early stages of learning English, in order for students to understand the four skills of listening, reading, writing and speaking, students must first understand and comprehend vocabulary. This is in line with the study by Nunan (1983), Tarigan (1984), and Hatch, Brown (1995) they are states that vocabulary for students is very important because without vocabulary, students will not be able to use the structures and functions they may have learned for comprehensible communication.

The researcher compared the results of this study with Nunan's (1983) statement that the acquisition of adequate vocabulary is essential for the successful use of language because, without extensive vocabulary, people will not be able to use the structures and functions they may have learned for comprehensible communication. This is an important element in learning a second language.. This finding is in line with Nunan's (1983) that due to weak vocabulary, students will not be able to use the structures and functions they may have learned for comprehensible communication. because vocabulary mastery is an important element in learning a second language.

According to Tarigan (1984) vocabulary is very important in language learning. He stated that language skills largely depended on vocabulary mastery. Thus, the more vocabulary mastered, the more likely someone is to be skilled at using that language. This finding is in accordance with Tarigan's (1984) because during the observation, the researcher saw that students were not yet skilled in using English. This means that students have not mastered vocabulary mastery, because language skills are very dependent on vocabulary mastery.

In accordance with Hatch and Brown (1995) Without vocabulary, English learners cannot



develop other language elements, be it pronunciation, grammar or spelling. This finding is in accordance with the theory of Hatch and Brown, (1995) because researchers see that students cannot develop other language elements, be it pronunciation, grammar or spelling.

#### 3.4.2 The strategies teachers employed to enhance vocabulary mastery

Based on the research findings, teachers implement 3 strategies for students, the first is vocabulary memorization deposit. Every time there is an English lesson, students are required to deposit vocabulary of 2 verbs and 2 nouns. Second, imitating the teacher's reading. Every time there is an English reading, the teacher gives an example of reading it first then the students are instructed to imitate, one child one sentence. Third, reading the meaning of difficult words in the dictionary. Students are instructed to open the dictionary to find the meaning of unknown vocabulary then write it down in a notebook. The strategies provided by the teacher encourage students to memorize more vocabulary that they do not know. The researcher found that students were able to understand well about vocabulary mastery. Teachers who have a good delivery strategy are able to implement a more cooperative and interactive way of teaching. And after the implementation of the strategy, students are more excited, active, and pay more attention when the teacher applies the learning strategy. The researcher sees that after the implementation of the strategy, students enjoy learning English more and in the end students can achieve their learning goals. This is in line with the study by Djamarah (2010), Roesiyah (2008), and Baron cited by Asrori (2008) that teachers who have a good delivery strategy and are able to apply a more cooperative and interactive way of teaching will make students more excited, active, and pay more attention when the teacher applies the strategy.

In Djamarah's findings (2010) he said that in relation to teaching and learning, a strategy can be given as a general pattern of teacher-student activities in realizing teaching and learning activities to achieve the goals outlined. Therefore, the findings of this study are in accordance with the findings of Djamarah (2010).

The findings of Roesiyah (2008) explain that one of the steps to have this strategy is to master presentation techniques or what is commonly called teaching methods. Teachers who have a good delivery strategy are able to apply a more cooperative and interactive way of teaching. So that students actively follow the learning atmosphere. Therefore, the findings of this study are more or less in accordance with the findings of Roesiyah (2008).

On the other hand, research conducted by Baron (2008) defines strategy as the ability to anticipate something here does not mean it has to be completely new, but it can also be a combination of pre-existing elements. In this case, there is an interpretation that the teacher's

strategy is the teacher's effort to vary teaching methods and create a pleasant teaching atmosphere in the classroom so that students can actively participate in exploring education actively and not passively. So, it can be concluded that learning strategy is the teacher's expertise to create better teaching methods in the classroom and create a pleasant classroom atmosphere for students. Therefore, the findings of this study are more or less in line with Baron's findings cited by Asrori (2008).

Meanwhile, the findings of Mufarrokah (2009) say that Strategies means general or state official, this general is responsible for planning strategies to direct troops to achieve victory. In general, strategy has the meaning of an outline of direction in working to achieve something that has been determined. Thus the findings of this study are not in accordance with the findings of Mufarrokah (2009) because in her findings there is no mention of strategies in the context of learning for students.

#### **4. CLOSING**

Based on the findings of this study, the researcher can concluded that the main problem faced by students is the weak mastery of vocabulary. students have not mastered English at all because indeed during elementary school students have never attended English lessons. Because students have never attended English lessons, it makes students also do not understand the vocabulary mastery at all.

Second, the teacher applies 3 strategies to improve vocabulary mastery. These strategies are vocabulary memorization deposit, imitate teacher's reading, and read the meaning of difficult words in the dictionary.

Students' responses to the strategies used are that students become more active, and students become independent. In addition to students becoming more active and independent, the strategies used by teachers can improve students' vocabulary mastery and can be used to help students achieve learning goals.

#### **REFERENCES**

- Devi, I. (2012). Animation Video to Improve Students' Vocabulary Mastery. *English Education, 1*(1).
- Hatch, E., & Brown, C. (1995). *Vocabulary, semantics, and language education*. Cambridge University Press, 40 West 20th Street, New York, NY 10011-4211 (hardback: ISBN-0-521-47409-4; paperback: ISBN-0-521-47942-8)..
- Marcela, E. D. (2016, May). The Use of Card Trick to Build Students' Vocabulary. In *4th International Conference on Education and Language 2016*. Bandar Lampung University.
- Mustika, U., & Wardah, W. (2021). An analysis of teacher's strategies in teaching

- english. *Journal of English Education Program*, 2(1).
- Nugroho, E. W., Rahayu, P., & Kasyulita, E. (2015). *Improving Students' Vocabulary Mastery by Using Flash Cards at Sixth Graders of SD Negeri 007 Bangun Purba* (Doctoral dissertation, Universitas Pasir Pengaraian).
- Nurman, M. (2018). Improving The Students' Vocabulary By Using "GO FISH" Game. *Jo-ELT (Journal of English Language Teaching) Fakultas Pendidikan Bahasa & Seni Prodi Pendidikan Bahasa Inggris IKIP*, 5(2), 121-124.
- PRATAMA, T. A. (2015). The Effectiveness of Using Vocabulary Video to Improve the Vocabulary Mastery of the Four Grade Students of Sdn Sugiwaras in Academic Year 2014. *Jurnal Ilmiah Mahasiswa FIB*, 2(1).
- Samad, F., & Tidore, N. (2015). Strategi pembelajaran Bahasa Inggris yang menyenangkan untuk anak usia dini. *Jurnal Ilmiah Cahaya PAUD*, 1(2), 47-57.
- Saniyah, D., & Baehaki, I. (2021). The Strategies Used by English Teacher to Teach Vocabulary at Genta English Course Pare-kediri. *Jurnal Pendidikan Bahasa Inggris Proficiency*, 3(1), 20-24.
- Silalahi, F. N., Sunarko, V., Haro, N., & Tarigan, S. N. (2019). Effect Of Crossword Puzzle Teaching Strategy Towards Students' Vocabulary Mastery. *Language Literacy: Journal of Linguistics, Literature, and Language Teaching*, 3(2), 241-248.
- Sitompul, E. Y. (2013). Teaching vocabulary using flashcards and word list. *Journal of English and Education*, 1(1), 52-58.
- Teng, F. (2014). Strategies for teaching and learning vocabulary. *Beyond Words*, 2(2), 40-56.

