

## VOCABULARY TEACHING AND LEARNING STRATEGIES IN MTS SUNAN DRAJAT BANJARANYAR, LAMONGAN

Ahmad Rosyidul Majid<sup>1</sup>, Hamiddin<sup>2</sup>, Kurniasih<sup>3</sup>

University of Islam Malang<sup>1,2,3</sup>

E-mail:

**Abstract:** Vocabulary is the most important part of language learning, as it is impossible to express the intended meaning without correct vocabulary. Teaching and learning vocabulary include not just how to teach a word's meaning but also how to teach its spelling, pronunciation, collocations, and relevance. Therefore, vocabulary teaching strategies are important to teach vocabulary appropriately. In this case, the study intended to study vocabulary teaching strategies used by English teachers at MTS Sunan Drajat Banjaranyar, Lamongan. This research was implemented using a descriptive qualitative research design on five 7th grade students and one teacher at MTS Sunan Drajat Banjaranyar, Lamongan. The data for this research was collected from the results of the direct interviews with participants. The data are analyzed using qualitative analysis based on Creswell (2006), which consists of steps such as organization, which includes data reduction, coding, and grouping, and description, which includes interpretation and drawing conclusions. The study concluded that the teaching strategies implemented in 7th grade at MTS Sunan Drajat Banjaranyar, Lamongan, utilize memorization, cognitive and meta-cognitive strategies, as well as extensive vocabulary learning and independent learning. Moreover, most vocabulary teaching done by the teacher promotes students' independent learning by directing students to find difficult words at home without direct supervision from the teacher.

**Keywords:** *Reading, boredom coping strategies, performance*

### INTRODUCTION

Vocabulary is crucial for language study, and as English is a global language, mastering it can be challenging, especially for students in Indonesia who do not speak English as their mother language, as they often experience fear and struggle to master vocabulary (Albadri, Yunus, Elfianto, & Mustofa, 2022). Language learning process that heavily relies on vocabulary, as it serves as the building block of language, and without it, no language practices can occur. According to Brown (2001), vocabulary is at the heart of language and is crucial for language learners since words are the building blocks of a language, as they label objects, actions, and ideas. Without correct vocabulary, people are unable to express the intended meaning. Vocabulary is a crucial aspect of communication, as it enables the delivery of messages. It is the foundation of language structures and is essential for understanding a language (Mustofa, 2019). Vocabulary knowledge and language use are closely linked, as they complement each other. Moreover, Muryani and Yunus (2024) assert that a diverse and extensive

vocabulary is crucial for effective communication, facilitating subtle expression and intellectual growth.

Word knowledge is now considered the most crucial aspect of language competency, as it bears meaning and is essential for understanding sentences or texts. Students should comprehend and communicate effectively with a good vocabulary, with a vocabulary size of 8,000 to 9,000 words for common written content in English and 15,000 words for easy reading and communication. Without vocabulary, it is impossible to learn or master English, even to communicate in English (Nation, 2006). Richards and Renandya (2002) emphasize the importance of vocabulary in foreign language learning and competency, as it influences learners' ability to speak, listen, read, and write. Additionally, Dzulfikri (2016) stated that developing 4 skills in English, requires decent vocabulary mastery, because the vocabulary is the biggest component in English, without mastering the vocabulary properly, it will be difficult to improve student achievement in English, especially in vocabulary.

Teaching the students vocabulary is not as simple as explaining the meaning of a word. Vocabulary teaching is crucial for foreign language learning as it is a basic sub-skill. Teachers must teach not only the meaning but also how words can be used contextually. As stated by Holifah and Kurniasih (2021) stated that strategies offered in learning vocabulary includes four kinds, namely memory strategy which is a mental process of storing new information in memory and then remembering or retrieving that information if needed. A note-taking strategy related to writing new vocabulary and finding it useful someday. Strategies must be used to support the teaching and learning process. Building word awareness and vocabulary knowledge requires students to construct meaning themselves (Masrai & Milton, 2017). Vocabulary instruction includes not just how to teach a word's meaning, but also how to teach its spelling, pronunciation, collocations, and relevance (Nation, 2011). Moreover, Schmitt (2008) suggests that teaching vocabulary components first rather than simultaneously, as the process may vary among teachers. However, most school teachers face challenges in teaching vocabulary, as it may not be taught all components simultaneously.

Teaching strategy is teaching activities that must do by the teacher and the student so that the purpose of teaching reached effectively and efficiently. Teaching strategy defined as the activities required by teachers and students to effectively and efficiently

achieve educational goals (Thornbury, 2002). There are many components of teaching strategy, as stated by Hamruni (2009) that teaching strategy are consisting of teacher as an agent, student as the target where the teaching is applied, teaching purpose, material, method, media, evaluation and environment.

In order to be successful in learning vocabulary, students must have the right strategies to help them in learning vocabulary. There are three types of learning vocabulary methods, according to Nie and Zou (2017): meta-cognitive strategies, cognitive strategies, and social mediation. Furthermore, Ellise (1985) suggested strategies for teaching vocabulary in English, including preparing and monitoring vocabulary lists, contextual vocabulary learning, drills, and the ripple effect. In addition, Sholeha, Hamiddin and Karimullah (2023), EFL students mostly uses cognitive, meta-cognitive, and memory strategies to learn new words. Deliberately, Oxford (2003) identified six learning strategies for language learning: cognitive, meta cognitive, memorization, compensatory, affective, and social. Cognitive strategies involve understanding language through analysis, note-taking, summarizing, and practicing in natural settings. Metacognitive strategies manage the learning process, including planning, organizing materials, scheduling, monitoring, and evaluating. Memory-related strategies strengthen memory through pictures, sounds, or combinations. Compensatory strategies help students guess context or missing words using synonyms. Affective strategies identify moods and feelings, rewarding oneself and practicing positive self-talk. Social strategies help students develop language skills through social interactions, exploring cultural norms, and talking with native speakers.

There are several studies that discuss vocabulary learning strategies, for instance, Asyiah (2017) found that both teacher and students have positive response on vocabulary teaching and learning. Concerning strategies, it was found that teacher mostly employed Fully-contextual strategy, meanwhile Determination and Metacognitive strategy. The study also confirmed that there is a significant relationship between students' vocabulary learning strategy and their vocabulary mastery. Another one by Baskin, et al. (2017) indicated that the students' language levels were effective in determining the vocabulary strategies they used. Students used determination strategies the most while using cognitive strategies the least. Moreover, Gallagher, et al. (2019) also indicate that emergent bilingual students are less likely to benefit from incidental

instruction of academic vocabulary words, which supports previous literature on the crucial role of explicit vocabulary instruction.

The researcher identified gaps in the previous studies on vocabulary teaching strategies. The first focused on students' and teacher's perceptions, the second identified teaching strategies based on students' experiences, and the third only examined the integration of vocabulary teaching strategies in reading classes. The researcher decided to focus on teacher teaching strategies directly, addressing the gaps in previous studies. In consideration of previous studies and the research background, the researcher aims to studying vocabulary teaching and learning strategies for 7th grade students at MTs Sunan Drajat Lamongan, a Lamongan institution that participates in the Imtihan program, where students must pass five subjects, including English, to graduate.

## **RESEARCH METHOD**

This study utilized a qualitative research method, using descriptive drawings and narratives to describe real-life data. Data was collected from an online interview conducted via WhatsApp video chat with 26 students in MTs Sunan Drajat's vocabulary class. The researcher used Thahir (2018) and Kurnianti (2018) interviews to address the research question about vocabulary teaching strategies in online learning. The research technique was developed based on the study's background and literature evaluation. The data was collected through an online interview, taking three days to complete. The data was gathered using an online interview through WhatsApp video chat to obtain information from the participants for further data analysis and presentation in the findings. The researcher then evaluated the data using Creswel's (2006) qualitative data analysis approach, which involves preparing and organizing text and image data, reducing it into themes, and representing it in figures, tables, or discussions. The findings were compared to literature studies and previous research to solve the study's dilemma and reach a conclusion. The data was presented systematically in the form of excerpts and interpreted for the findings of the study. The interpretation was discussed with related literatures and background theories to find the conclusion. The conclusion is used to solve the research problems and provides suggestions based on the implications for students, teachers, and the next researcher, considering the findings and limitations of the study.

## **FINDINGS AND DISCUSSION**

### **4.2.1 Cognitive Strategy to Teach English Vocabulary**

Cognitive strategies in teaching vocabulary are crucial for effective comprehension and retention. Educators can create an enriched learning environment by utilizing various strategies, such as contextual analysis, repetition, visualization, and word association. Semantic mapping helps students visualize words related to a primary concept, enhancing their understanding and understanding of word relationships. Word associations connect unfamiliar vocabulary with well-known ideas, making recall easier (Elyas and Alhashmi, 2020). These strategies encourage active engagement and strengthen memory through association learning, such as word webs, families, or mnemonic devices. Overall, utilizing cognitive strategies can enhance the learning experience and foster meaningful associations between new vocabulary items and students' existing knowledge. Contextual analysis is a useful method for interpreting unknown words, enabling students to become independent and resourceful learners. The chunking approach simplifies the learning process and improves students' understanding of word structure. Practice and repetition are crucial for strengthening memory and vocabulary retention.

Teachers can reinforce learning by providing students with opportunities to use new words in various situations (Ahmed, 2020). Visualization, according to Takimoto (2020) helps make abstract ideas more recognizable and concrete by encouraging students to create mental images connected to new words. Adding word games and activities to vocabulary education adds interest and interaction, encouraging student participation and reinforcing learning objectives. Cognitive methods provide a comprehensive approach to teaching vocabulary, emphasizing the importance of creating connections, interpreting meaning, and actively familiarizing oneself with new terms. This is in line with the study by Baskin, et al (2017) where the strategy utilized for teaching vocabularies is dominated by cognitive strategy. Meanwhile, there is no previous study mentioned about utilizing independent learning like what is conducted by the teacher in this study. However, this result is in line with the theory of teaching by Brown (2007) that There are four kinds of instruction, those are Direct and Interactive Instruction, Experiential learning and independent learning.

### **4.2.2 Meta-Cognitive to Teach English Vocabulary**

Metacognitive tactics in vocabulary instruction emphasize the importance of learners' autonomy and self-awareness in vocabulary acquisition. These techniques help students plan, organize, and assess their own learning processes, increasing their efficacy and independence. The core of metacognitive methods is encouraging students to create clear, attainable goals for vocabulary development, providing a sense of purpose and direction in their learning process.

Goals can be related to the quantity of words needed, the types of words to focus on, or the required competence levels (Hosseini, 2020). Furthermore, Agili and Phabhasnini (2021) claim that self-evaluation is a powerful tool for students to assess their progress and identify areas for improvement in vocabulary learning. It provides students with resources like vocabulary tests, self-assessments, and reflection notebooks, enabling them to monitor their own learning and take responsibility for their progress. Developing metacognitive skills involves teaching students about various vocabulary acquisition tactics and their usage in different settings. Experimenting with various tactics helps students gain flexibility and resourcefulness. Techniques like paraphrasing, summarizing, and asking questions enhance language comprehension and meaning (Zhang & Goh, 2022). Providing problem-solving techniques fosters resilience and self-efficacy. Students with strategies for challenging vocabulary, new situations, and seeking help from peers or dictionaries are better equipped to take charge of their education. Reflecting on language learning experiences fosters metacognitive awareness and facilitates continuous progress.

Metacognitive dialogues in education foster analytical reasoning and introspection, improving students' metacognitive awareness and self-regulation abilities. Teachers guide students in independent learning, ensuring they understand and use vocabulary in sentences. They also monitor and evaluate students' progress, using metacognitive strategies such as fully-contextual, determination, and metacognitive strategies. This aligns with Asyiah's (2017) study on vocabulary learning strategies, which include fully-contextual, determination, and metacognitive strategies. Metacognitive strategies are used to manage students' learning processes, including planning, organizing materials, scheduling, monitoring, and evaluating. These teaching strategies align with Oxford (2003) theory, which suggests that metacognitive strategies are essential for managing students' learning processes, including planning, organizing materials, scheduling, monitoring, and evaluating. Overall, metacognitive strategies contribute to a more effective and effective educational environment.

The study reveals that contextual strategies are rarely used by teachers when teaching vocabulary, with most students not providing visual examples of words. This contrasts with previous studies that emphasize full-contextual learning and cooperative learning, which are social strategies. The teacher also stated that they need to provide more vocabulary to students, as books alone do not cover all vocabulary. To expand students' vocabulary knowledge beyond commonly used vocabulary, the teacher asked them to find difficult words from many texts during reading. This approach aligns with Oxford (2003)'s recommendation that language learners can experience new words in various ways, which could help resolve their language learning problems. Other than that, Asyiah (2017) suggests that teachers can implement various

strategies in vocabulary learning. Gallagher et al (2019) emphasize that vocabulary learning should be emphasized not only in memorization but also in understanding the words, as understanding allows vocabulary to be used effectively in communication. This aligns with previous studies that have not mentioned social strategies in vocabulary learning. Overall, the study highlights the importance of incorporating various strategies in vocabulary learning to enhance students' language skills.

#### 4.2.3 Memory Related Strategy to Teach English Vocabulary

The investigation into memory-related strategies in teaching vocabulary underscores the importance of employing techniques aimed at aiding the memorization and recall of vocabulary items. These strategies are instrumental in helping students encode new words into their long-term memory and retrieve them when needed.

In this study, there are several memory related strategies used by the teacher such as repetition by making the students to learn vocabulary every day as well as practicing verbs in different form repeatedly, chunking strategies by directing students to find and analyzing difficult words in the text, and contextual learning by making the students to practice vocabulary that they have learned to make a sentence so they can understand the use of those words.

In terms of memory-related strategies Wang (2023) suggests that memory-related strategies can be effectively integrated into vocabulary instruction. Repetition, association, chunking, visual aids, contextual learning, mnemonic devices, and interactive games can all help reinforce memory and retention of vocabulary. Repetition through activities like flashcards, chanting, and writing sentences solidifies understanding and recall over time. Association links new vocabulary with existing knowledge or experiences, enhancing students' ability to retain and recall vocabulary items. Chunking breaks down complex words into smaller parts, facilitating easier memorization and retrieval. Visual aids like pictures, diagrams, or illustrations make abstract concepts more concrete and memorable, enhancing vocabulary retention. Contextual learning provides meaningful contexts for students to encounter and use new words, facilitating deeper understanding and retention. Mnemonic devices, such as acronyms, rhymes, and visual imagery, provide cues for recalling word meanings, enhancing memory retention. Spaced repetition introduces new words gradually and reviews them at spaced intervals over time, strengthening memory consolidation and long-term retention. Interactive games and activities engage students in actively using and practicing vocabulary, making learning enjoyable and enhancing memory retention. There is also no previous study mentioning memorization strategy, but it is in line with the theory of Nunan (2001) that direct instruction model in vocabulary learning refers to traditional teacher centered method involving didactic teaching, drill, and memorization.

## CONCLUSION

According to the study's findings, the seventh-grade curriculum at MTS Sunan Drajat Banjaranyar, Lamongan, is taught to students using a variety of teaching techniques, such as memorization, cognitive and metacognitive strategies, and memory techniques. In addition to challenging terms they discovered, the instructor utilized a list of words from the seventh-grade curriculum that included verbs, nouns, and everyday conversational expressions. Regarding cognitive strategy, the instructor instructs the students to identify challenging words by examining the text and creating sentences using them, whereas metacognitive strategy is demonstrated by the way the instructor tracks and assesses the students' progress in acquiring new vocabulary. Other than that, the teacher also employs metacognitive strategies to ensure that the students manage, monitor and evaluate their own learning such as giving vocabulary assignments and demonstrating the use of new words in a sentence. The researcher suggests that English education students, teachers, and future researchers should adopt more contextual vocabulary teaching methods, including cooperative learning, as social strategies were not present in previous studies. They also suggest that future researchers should explore students' vocabulary learning strategies to enhance their vocabulary repertoire. This will help improve the overall vocabulary learning experience.

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Dr. Hamiddin, S.Pd., M.Pd  
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