TEACHERS' STRATEGIES IN TEACHING ENGLISH VOCABULARY TO YOUNG LEARNERS

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Article Info	Abstract
	Teaching English vocabulary to secondary school students requires effective strategies to support vocabulary acquisition. However, there is still a lack of a comprehensive understanding of teachers' most effective techniques. Therefore, this study aims to identify teachers' strategies for teaching English vocabulary to junior high school students in Tasikmalaya. The research used a descriptive case study design, with data collected through semi-structured interviews with a teacher who is an English education graduate. The data were analyzed using qualitative methods as described by Miles, Huberman, and Saldana (2014). The findings highlight three main areas: (1) Vocabulary learning strategies, such as games, pictures, realia, songs, translation, gestures, and memorization; (2) Classroom management strategies, including fostering enthusiasm, organizing group activities, encouraging participation, and creating a positive learning environment; (3) Vocabulary assessment, utilizing various methods to measure vocabulary proficiency. The study concludes that these strategies foster a positive learning environment and motivate students to expand their English vocabulary. The findings also suggest that enhancing teachers' creativity in developing these strategies can significantly improve students' vocabulary acquisition.

INTRODUCTION

Teaching and learning English vocabulary can be challenging for teachers and students, especially for students still in the early stages of language acquisition (Tong et al., 2024; Wu et al., 2023; Zhou et al., 2022). According to Songbatumis (2017), students often struggle to participate actively in class due to their limited vocabulary knowledge, while teachers face significant difficulties in identifying effective strategies for teaching vocabulary. These challenges are further compounded by the pressure on young learners to acquire many words, which can often lead to feelings of overwhelm. As noted by Nunan (2016), the young learners in this study are students aged 5 to 15 and require strategies appropriate to their developmental stage and learning characteristics. Students will experience difficulties in listening, speaking, reading, and writing without adequate vocabulary. Susanto (2021) highlights the importance of vocabulary as a foundational element for mastering all four skills.

Based on the preliminary study for this research, it was found that seventh-grade students, generally around 13 years old, struggle to express their ideas and articulate their viewpoints during class discussions due to limited vocabulary. When teachers ask questions about a particular topic, students often hesitate or fail to answer effectively. In addition, the difficulty in pronouncing new words correctly is another major challenge. With its irregularities and inconsistencies between spelling and sounds, English pronunciation can lead to misunderstandings and lower students' confidence. This problem further demotivates students, as learning vocabulary is sometimes perceived as monotonous and boring. In addition, teachers report struggling to manage classes with students with diverse learning characteristics and needs. These challenges highlight the need for teachers to use appropriate, engaging strategies to teach English vocabulary effectively, and for students to adopt efficient learning strategies to overcome these barriers.

Understanding learning strategies is essential. Richards (1976) defines strategies as plans, steps, or actions consciously taken by the learner to make learning easier, faster, and more effective. Strategies play an important role in vocabulary acquisition by meeting students' learning needs and fostering a more interesting and enjoyable learning experience. Previous research also emphasizes the importance of using appropriate strategies to teach vocabulary. For example, Deni and Fahriany (2020) explored teachers' perceptions of vocabulary-teaching strategies and found that engaging strategies can yield better learning outcomes for young students, who are often easily distracted or bored. Similarly, Sitompul (2020) highlighted the

challenges of teaching vocabulary to junior high school students, emphasizing the need for strategies tailored to students' characteristics to ensure effective vocabulary learning.

Several other studies have investigated English vocabulary-teaching strategies for young learners, but they often focus only on specific methods or contexts. Santosa et al. (2020) examined picture strategies as a medium for vocabulary teaching, while Wulandari et al. (2020) explored teaching strategies applied in an elementary school context. In addition, Ramadhan dan Wulandari (2021) investigated preparation and teaching strategies in a language course setting, but focused on primary-level students identified as Beginner II. Although these studies have provided valuable insights, they tend to focus on a single strategy or context, leaving a gap in understanding how various teaching strategies can be applied to junior high school students.

At its core, this study aims to address a research gap by exploring different vocabulary-teaching strategies used in a junior secondary school context, specifically for seventh-grade students. By identifying and analyzing the strategies teachers use to teach English vocabulary, this study provides a comprehensive understanding of how these methods address the unique challenges students face. The importance of this study lies in its potential to contribute to the field of English language teaching by offering practical insights and recommendations for teachers seeking to improve vocabulary instruction. By implementing effective strategies, teachers can improve students' vocabulary acquisition, foster greater confidence in their communication abilities, and support their overall language development. In addition, this study can serve as a basis for future research on vocabulary learning strategies, especially for junior high school students at a critical stage in language acquisition.

REVIEW OF LITERATURE

Teaching Strategy

The term "strategy" in teaching and learning refers to the deliberate planning and implementation of stages or activities within the instructional process. In language teaching, teachers employ strategies to convey the subject matter to students effectively. Sri (2022) defines a teaching strategy as a comprehensive lesson plan encompassing a structure, instructional objectives, and a delineation of planned tactics necessary for strategy implementation. Additionally, she explains that developing teaching strategies encompasses the teacher's classroom behavior, including providing appropriate stimuli to prompt timely student responses and employing additional activities to enhance student engagement. Hamruni (2009), as cited by Munawwarah (2021), further asserts that a teaching strategy entails a plan,

method, or series of exercises devised to attain specific educational objectives.

There are some components of a teaching strategy. It includes the teacher, student, purpose, teaching material, method, technique, media, evaluation, situation, or environment (Munawwarah, 2021). The teacher plays a crucial role in the teaching and learning process, serving as both a knowledge facilitator and a creator of a supportive and stimulating learning atmosphere (Darling-Hammond et al., 2020). Teachers adapt their teaching strategies based on the accepted curriculum and may modify their approach. Further, active participants engage with the educational program to enhance their academic and personal development. Research has highlighted the importance of involving students in co-constructing their learning experiences to boost motivation, critical thinking, and self-efficacy (Ryan & Deci, 2000). Teaching material is an essential component of the teaching process, serving as a medium for achieving instructional objectives by providing learners with resources, tools, and content that facilitate understanding and engagement. These materials can range from textbooks and handouts to digital resources, multimedia, and real-world objects, each tailored to support specific learning goals (Tomlinson, 2022). Methods refer to the general classroom requirements and approaches to achieving specific linguistic goals. They provide a structured framework for instruction, guiding lesson planning and execution. Examples include inquiry-based learning, cooperative learning, and task-based approaches, all of which aim to align teaching practices with curriculum standards and learning outcomes (Hmelo-Silver et al., 2007). Techniques are specific teaching strategies, skills, or styles teachers employ to facilitate teaching and learning. These include questioning, scaffolding, role-playing, and interactive discussions, chosen based on their ability to meet defined learning outcomes and address diverse student needs (Darling-Hammond et al., 2020). Media in education, also called media education, refers to the use of various instructional media during teaching and learning. Media use fosters active learning by making content more accessible and engaging, promoting better retention and understanding (Trust et al., 2016).

Evaluation is a crucial component in understanding the teaching and learning process. It involves assessing student progress and understanding through summative or formative assessments, which can be conducted orally or in written form (Black & Wiliam, 2018). The teaching and learning environment significantly influence instructional design and delivery. Factors such as classroom layout, available resources, weather, and the school's socio-cultural context influence how teachers choose and implement strategies. Creating a positive and inclusive environment fosters engagement and maximizes learning outcomes (Zhao & Kuh, 2004).

The components above are part of the design of the teaching strategies. In the research context, several components are highlighted as the primary focus: teaching materials, teaching techniques, media, and evaluation. This research includes several teaching materials for vocabulary learning, such as school subjects and classroom items, colors, greetings, and introductions. Some of the teaching materials mentioned are then taught using several techniques or strategies, which are the main topics discussed in this research. By choosing the right strategy, adding students' vocabulary will be more effective and more engaging. In implementing strategies, media cannot be overlooked, as it is a crucial tool for helping students build vocabulary. After the teaching process, using various strategies, the teacher assesses students' understanding of what they have learned, both in writing and verbally.

Teaching Vocabulary to Young Learners

Description of Young Learners

The concept of young learners has been explored and defined in various statements. Carmel (2022) states that young learners, also known as Very Young Learners (VYLs), are typically children under twelve who learn a second or foreign language at school. In teaching English as a foreign language, the term 'young learner' refers to age and experience. For instance, Sehan (2018) suggests that even a 15-year-old student who has never learned English before could be considered a young learner. Liyaningsih (2017) highlights the differences in teaching approaches required for children of varying ages, such as the contrast between a five-year-old and a twelve-year-old. These differences stem from developmental changes in attention span, cognitive abilities, and social-emotional needs. For instance, younger children benefit from play-based, sensory-rich activities, while older children respond well to more structured, goal-oriented tasks (Pianta et al., 2016). Moreover, teachers must recognize that young learners thrive in environments that balance challenge and support, integrating age-appropriate activities that encourage exploration, creativity, and interaction. This developmental awareness ensures that teaching practices align with students' learning stages, promoting academic and personal growth (Tomlinson, 2022; Darling-Hammond et al., 2020).

Young learners possess distinct characteristics; teachers must understand these traits (Shin & Crandall, 2014). Understanding these traits is crucial as they influence various teaching components, including selecting strategies, methods, materials, lesson planning, and building strong teacher-student relationships. Liyaningsih (2017) has identified several general characteristics of young learners. Young learners have an innate ability to grasp the context of a situation even before fully understanding the language used. They rely heavily on their

senses—such as touch, sight, and hearing—to process information, using these inputs to facilitate comprehension and exhibit a strong sense of logic (Shin & Crandall, 2014). However, their limited attention span makes it difficult to focus on tasks for extended periods, necessitating engaging and dynamic teaching strategies to maintain their interest (Pianta et al., 2016). Young learners often find it challenging to distinguish between facts and fiction, and they rely on guidance from teachers and caregivers to navigate their learning journey. They thrive in structured environments where clear direction and support are provided, as they cannot independently determine what or how to learn. Play is a crucial element of their learning process, as they learn best when the experience is enjoyable, interactive, and hands-on (Moyles, 2015). These learners are naturally enthusiastic and approach education positively, though they may rarely admit when they do not understand something. Recognizing and celebrating their perspectives and unique ways of seeing the world is vital for fostering a supportive and engaging learning environment. Tailoring instruction to their developmental needs and preferences creates optimal conditions for academic and personal growth, ensuring that learning remains effective and enjoyable (Darling-Hammond et al., 2020; Tomlinson, 2022).

Based on the previous statement, it is evident that different children require different approaches. Given these characteristics, the teaching strategies teachers employ for young learners differ from those used for adults. Teachers must be aware of and familiar with young learners' traits to choose the most effective strategies to facilitate their learning process (Lieser et al., 2018; Rahimi & Keng Wee Ong, 2023; Sobkowiak, 2022).

Strategies for Teaching English Vocabulary to Young Learners

Young learners can learn English through a variety of strategies. The teacher should consider young learners' learning styles when selecting a suitable plan. Additionally, teachers can develop effective strategies to help young learners understand the language by determining their preferred learning style. Teachers may effectively accommodate these learning styles by modifying their strategies and providing a variety of activities. Students will then have at least a few activities or exercises that fit their learning preferences and increase their chances of success. According to Elyas and Alfaki (2014), there are some strategies for teaching vocabulary to young learners. Games help to avoid the monotonous learning process and help the teacher create a context in which the language is valuable and meaningful. Pictures and mime are recommended for teachers because they are easy to practice. A teacher can use realia because she can use real objects (such as pictures or small objects that can be brought to the class) in classroom activities to teach new vocabulary items.

Songs can capture young learners' attention during language learning, helping them avoid

quickly becoming bored with classroom activities. Through translation, teachers use a simple, fast way to identify the aim or goal of English language learning. Using gestures when teaching draws focus and makes the lesson more engaging. Hand gestures, facial expressions, pantomime, body movements, and other gestures can all be used as teaching tools. In addition, memorization as a cognitive strategy focuses on committing information to memory for later recall and involves consciously learning and retaining facts, concepts, or skills (Abdullah et al., 2022; Andriani et al., 2021; Aubrey & Philpott, 2023; Elyas & Kabooha, 2015).

Teaching vocabulary should consider several factors. According to Wallace (2007), teaching vocabulary should consider aim, quantity, need, frequent exposure and repetition, meaningful presentation, and situation presentation factors. Aims involve defining clear objectives to guide teachers in selecting and organizing vocabulary materials. This clarity helps teachers introduce vocabulary in a focused and structured manner. Quantity refers to determining the appropriate number of vocabulary items to teach at a time, ensuring students can learn without becoming overwhelmed or discouraged (Nation & Coxhead, 2013). The need factor emphasizes selecting words relevant to students' communication goals and real-life contexts. Tailoring vocabulary instruction to students' immediate and practical needs enhances retention and application in authentic communication (Schmitt & Schmitt, 2020). Frequent exposure and repetition are essential for students to internalize new vocabulary and transfer their knowledge to other language skills, such as speaking and writing. Regular practice reinforces word learning through reading, listening, and interactive exercises (Webb, 2017). Meaningful presentation and context ensure that vocabulary is introduced with rich context, making the words more straightforward to understand and remember.

Additionally, incorporating vocabulary into realistic, meaningful situations helps students grasp its appropriate usage. Clear instructions and engaging contexts enable learners to use new words effectively (Thornbury, 2006). By considering these factors, teachers can create a structured, student-centered approach to vocabulary instruction, promoting better learning outcomes and practical language use.

METHOD

Research Design

This study employed a qualitative descriptive case study research design, particularly suited for in-depth exploration of specific phenomena within a bounded system. Susanti (2018) explains that a case study involves a detailed examination of an activity, event, process, or individual, relying on extensive data collection to provide a comprehensive understanding. The

primary objective of this design was to capture data as it naturally occurred, allowing for an authentic representation of the phenomenon (Zainal, 2007).

The case study approach was selected to facilitate a deep and nuanced exploration of teachers' strategies for teaching English vocabulary to young learners. This method is ideal for uncovering detailed insights into real-world practices and understanding complex educational dynamics through teachers' experiences (Yin, 2018). Such an approach enables researchers to examine the interplay between instructional strategies, contextual factors, and their impact on learning outcomes. By focusing on teachers' experiences, this study offers valuable insights into effective vocabulary instruction for young learners, contributing to the existing body of knowledge in language education.

Setting and Participants

This research was conducted at one of the public junior high schools in Tasikmalaya, West Java, Indonesia. The participant involved in this research was an English teacher. Given that descriptive case studies focus on exploring specific phenomena and are often conducted on a small scale with limited participants, as Zainal (2007) stated, selecting a single participant for this research was deemed appropriate to obtain rich, valuable insights into the research topic. The selection of this participant was based on its relevance to the research context and criteria. He is an English teacher who graduated with a degree in English Education. He is 32 years old and has ten years of experience teaching English using offline learning. He has a strong command of the English language, including vocabulary, good classroom management skills to maintain a positive and engaging learning environment, and is creative, always giving students feedback to help them improve their vocabulary skills. Lastly, he is a teacher at a junior high school, teaching first-grade students. Therefore, this research explored teachers' strategies for teaching English vocabulary to young learners.

Technique of Collecting the Data

In collecting the data, the researcher employed a semi-structured interview as the instrument to gather the required information from the participants. A semi-structured interview is one in which the interviewer clearly describes the topic to be discussed. However, the interview is possible and prepared to develop in unexpected directions, opening new, critical areas (Heigham & Croker, 2009). This data collection method was chosen for its ability to explore individuals' experiences, beliefs, perceptions, and motivations in depth, which is not possible with questionnaires (Heigham & Crocker, 2009). The interviews were conducted with the selected participant, who had previously participated in the preliminary research, to explore

the participant's experiences teaching English vocabulary to young learners. The interview questions were based on five components of the semi-structured interview guideline proposed by Gubrium and Holstein (2002): opening questions, probing questions, reflective questions, follow-up questions, and closing questions.

The interviews were conducted in person, and the entire conversation was recorded using a phone as a data source and documentation tool. Moreover, the interviews were conducted in Indonesian to minimize the possibility of miscommunication, misunderstanding, and confusion between the researcher and the participant.

The Technique of Analysing the Data

The data obtained from the semi-structured interviews were analyzed using an interactive model proposed by Miles et al. (2014). This data analysis method is used because it offers convenience and time efficiency in analyzing raw interview data. The data analysis included the following activities:

Data Condensation

The researcher selected data chunks from the interview transcripts to strengthen, focus, and organize the data.

First cycle coding

The researcher assigned starting codes to the data chunks in this section using the data analysis method outlined by (Miles et al., 2014). The researcher used the Process Coding approach to analyze the cycle of teachers' strategies and the vocabulary used in teaching. The purpose was to imply actions inextricably linked to time dynamics, such as things that emerge, change, occur in particular sequences, or become strategically implemented. Moreover, the researcher used the Process Coding approach for the entire component because it also aims to quote participants' actions and interactions, as well as their impact.

Second cycle coding: Pattern codes

The next step in the analysis process was pattern coding. The researcher grouped the result codes from the first cycle coding into smaller categories.

1. Data Display

    Data display is the process of organizing and visually representing qualitative data to facilitate analysis and interpretation.

2. Drawing and Verifying Conclusion

The third step in qualitative data analysis is drawing and verifying conclusions. Concluding refers to synthesizing and making meaning from the analyzed qualitative data to generate insights, interpretations, or explanations.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSIONS

This finding provides information on the various instructional strategies the participant used to teach vocabulary to young learners. Developing engaging and valuable learning experiences is referred to as instructional. Its goals include determining what to teach and how to help students process and retain new information. It also emphasizes offering tools, information, and learning opportunities to establish engaging, helpful, and productive learning environments for students (Hai-Jew, 2020).

Therefore, instruction and strategy are related to the learning process. Strategy is the application in a classroom (Septiana & Hanafi, 2022). Specifically, it is a plan, a set of steps, or an invention used to accomplish learning objectives (Richards & Rodgers, 2014). Based on the interview data, the participant used techniques and strategies to facilitate students' vocabulary learning. As this part emphasized strategies, the participant noted that teaching vocabulary to young learners requires multiple techniques. The participant explained several strategies during the interview. First, there are vocabulary games, as presented in Table 1 below.

Table 1. Vocabulary Games

Excerpts	Data Transcription
#1	"The name of the game is **'Color Scavenger Hunt.'** The students line up at the back. Each student must prepare a vocabulary that is related to color."
	Translated from Interview Transcript (16 March 2024)
#2	"**This game is called the 'Word-Arranging'** game. For example, students are studying verb one. I say "bring", which means *membawa*. Whoever quickly raises their hand, I will point and come forward to make a sentence related to verb one."
#3	"The name of the game is **'Word-ending'** game**.** Technically, it's like I prepared some vocabulary and wrote it on the whiteboard. For example, books. The word book ends with the letter K. Come on, what vocabulary begins with the letter K?"
	Translated from Interview Transcript (25 September 2023)

Based on the interview transcript in Table 1 above, the participant implemented various strategies to teach vocabulary, with a particular emphasis on games. As highlighted in excerpts 1, 2, and 3, games were a predominant tool for vocabulary learning. This aligns with the findings of Elyas and Alfaki (2014), who demonstrated that vocabulary games significantly enhance students' acquisition of new language knowledge by fostering engagement and motivation. Based on Table 1 above, the first game was 'Color Scavenger Hunt,' in which students formed a line and prepared vocabulary words related to colors. Students were then

tasked with finding objects of a specified color within the school environment. This hands-on, interactive approach reinforced vocabulary acquisition by connecting words to tangible items, enhancing retention and understanding. The second game, 'Word-Arranging,' was structured to align with the learning materials. For example, when studying verbs, the participant would mention a verb, and the fastest student to raise their hand would construct a sentence using that verb in front of the class. This activity combined competition with practical application, motivating students to think quickly and contextualize vocabulary. The last game was the 'Word-Ending' game, which required the participant to write several vocabulary words on the board. Students then provided words starting with the last letter of a given word. For example, if the word 'book' were provided, students would list words starting with 'k.' This activity encouraged students to recall and apply their vocabulary knowledge creatively and dynamically.

As young learners are very active and quickly bored, playing games can help avoid monotonous learning. By playing some games, students have fun and enjoy learning. The most important thing is that games effectively enhance students' vocabulary mastery (Ratminingsih et al., 2018; Ratminingsih & Budasi, 2018). Importantly, research has consistently shown that games effectively enhance vocabulary mastery by promoting active engagement, collaboration, and practical application (Nguyen, 2021). In addition to games, the participant employed a picture strategy as a secondary teaching tool. As presented in Table 2 below, the participant used visual aids to capture students' attention and facilitate memory retention. He observed that visual representations of vocabulary items helped students associate words with images, making it easier for them to recall and use the words. Visual aids are especially beneficial for young learners, as they align with their developmental stage, characterized by a preference for concrete, sensory-rich learning experiences (Shin & Crandall, 2014; Tomlinson, 2022).

Table 2. Using Picture Strategy

Excerpt	Data Transcription
#4	"Because students' learning styles are different, I **tried using the picture strategy,** and students love it. Pictures can attract students' attention and also memorize better."

Translated from Interview Transcript (25 September 2023)

From Table 2 above, the participant understood that students have different learning styles. All the differences meet students' needs, making them love it and helping them pay attention and memorize. Pictures can also be an effective strategy, as they are eye-catching and easy to implement. It is also supported by a study by Er & Ataç (2014), which found that visuals such as pictures and mimes are the most frequently used, most effective, and easiest to prepare.

The participant utilized the picture strategy to teach vocabulary related to family members, incorporating group activities to promote collaboration and active participation. This strategy began with preparing several pictures illustrating family members and assembling them into a family tree. Students then worked collaboratively to complete the family tree, filling in the blanks with the corresponding vocabulary and meanings. This interactive approach helped students build their vocabulary and encouraged them to connect words to their meanings in meaningful contexts. Using pictures to create situations and contexts, as Harmer, (2007) suggests, is a powerful way to enhance comprehension and retention. Students could better understand relationships and use the terms in relevant contexts by situating vocabulary within a family tree. Visual aids, such as pictures, serve as cognitive anchors, helping students to recall and apply vocabulary more effectively (Shin & Crandall, 2014). Moreover, integrating visuals aligns with the cognitive theory of multimedia learning, which posits that combining visual and verbal information enhances learning outcomes (Mayer, 2014). Pictures stimulate students' interest and allow them to process information through dual coding, improving understanding and retention (Dannerer, 2022; Hickling-Hudson & Hepple, 2020; Iskandar et al., 2022; Meletiadou, 2022; Ta & Filipi, 2020).

Following the picture strategy, the participant implemented realia as the third instructional technique, as outlined in Table 3. Realia refers to the use of tangible, real-world objects in the classroom to bridge the gap between abstract concepts and concrete understanding. Students can directly interact with learning materials by incorporating everyday items into lessons, making vocabulary acquisition more dynamic and relatable. Realia complements the picture strategy by providing students with hands-on experiences that reinforce their vocabulary knowledge. For instance, after learning family-related vocabulary with pictures, students could engage with real-life objects or scenarios to further contextualize their learning. This multimodal approach caters to various learning styles and promotes active engagement, which is essential for young learners (Tomlinson, 2022).

Table 3 Using Realia

Excerpt	Data Transcription
#5	"Before I used pictures, I used real objects in the class, like tables, whiteboards, books, and pens. Maybe those who use pictures are things like globes, maps, practical items like that. So, yes, you can also **use the realia strategy**."

Translated from Interview Transcript (16 Maret 2024)

Based on the participant's explanation in Table 3 above, introducing new concepts using realia, or real objects, in the classroom is an effective and practical teaching strategy. This approach involves leveraging tangible items readily available in the classroom, such as

tables, whiteboards, books, and pens, to illustrate and reinforce vocabulary lessons. Realia bridges abstract language concepts and concrete understanding, enabling students to associate words with physical objects they can see and touch. This strategy is especially beneficial for young learners, as it aligns with their preference for sensory-rich, hands-on learning experiences (Shin & Crandall, 2014). One of the key benefits of using realia is the ability to limit and focus on a specific set of vocabulary items, making the learning process manageable and targeted (Elyas & Alfaki, 2014). By presenting real objects, teachers can provide clear, immediate, and contextually relevant explanations of new vocabulary, making the meanings more memorable than when conveyed solely through verbal definitions (Deni & Fahriany, 2020). For instance, instead of merely describing the word 'pen,' showing an actual pen allows students to understand its function and context instantly. Realia also encourages active engagement and interaction, which is crucial for vocabulary retention (Dai & Wu, 2022; Howitt, 2016). Students can handle, describe, and discuss the objects, transforming passive learning into an interactive and participatory process. This aligns with the experiential learning theory, which emphasizes learning through experience and interaction with the environment (Kolb, 2014). Furthermore, using familiar classroom items helps students easily relate to the vocabulary, fostering a deeper connection to the material.

Following the implementation of realia, the participant introduced songs as the fourth teaching strategy, as detailed in Table 4. Songs are a dynamic and versatile tool in language teaching, particularly for young learners. They combine rhythm, melody, and repetition, effectively reinforcing vocabulary and language patterns (Murphey, 2013). Songs engage multiple senses, making it enjoyable for students to learn new words and phrases. The rhythm and melody of songs also aid memory retention, as they provide a natural and repetitive structure that helps embed vocabulary in students' long-term memory (Paquette & Rieg, 2008).

Table 4. Using Song

Excerpt	Data Transcription
#6	"But sometimes I also use the strategy of **using a song**. The thing is, when we looked at it, it turned out that many students liked it as long as they sang it together."

Translated from Interview Transcript (16 Maret 2024)

As explained in Table 4 above, although relatively rare, the participant has also used songs to teach vocabulary. At first, the students felt embarrassed and hesitated to sing, but over time, they came to enjoy singing together. Furthermore, the material taught through songs focuses on numbers and counting. Technically, participants start a series of activities by asking students questions to check their prior knowledge. For example, when asked how many students are in

the class, students are often confused about how to answer in English. If so, participants tell the class to count from one to the number of the last student. Finally, the application of the song will focus on the numbers material and let the students sing (Andriani et al., 2021; Bi & Marsden, 2020; Cai & Zhao, 2023; Madero, 2021). Participants used songs for this material because students are more likely to remember it when music is used. According to (Arntsen, 2016), young learners are generally enthusiastic about songs, especially if they can sing along. This is reinforced by Deni's (2020) research, which found that students find it easier to remember vocabulary through song than to memorize it intentionally. After employing songs, the participant implemented the translation strategy as the fifth instructional method, as detailed in Table 5. Translation has been a traditional yet effective technique for clarifying meanings and fostering a deeper understanding of vocabulary.

Table 5. Using Translation

Excerpt	Data Transcription
#7	"**Translation strategies** have become part of everyday life, right? For me, this strategy is suitable for all materials, including describing people and objects. At least students want to look in a dictionary or Google Translate."
	Translated from Interview Transcript (16 Maret 2024)

Table 5 explains that translation strategies have become part of everyday learning and teaching processes. According to the participant, this translation strategy is suitable for all materials, including those that describe people and objects. In short, students are asked to translate phrases according to the material. That way, students are more likely to open digital and conventional dictionaries to understand the meanings of the words they seek. Since translation is a quick, easy way to accomplish a goal, it may be incorporated into daily life. This is especially true when students provide word translations for examples given by teachers (Elyas & Alfaki, 2014).

Additionally, when students actively translate examples provided by teachers, they engage with the material in a participatory manner, reinforcing their understanding and retention of vocabulary. The use of translation also supports the development of metalinguistic awareness. Students learn to recognize the relationship between words in their native and target languages, which can enhance their comprehension of linguistic structures and idiomatic expressions (Laviosa, 2014). Furthermore, by integrating translation into daily classroom activities, teachers can create a routine that encourages consistent vocabulary practice, ultimately contributing to improved proficiency. Following the translation implementation, the participant employed gestures as the sixth strategy, as detailed in Table 6. Gestures provide non-verbal

communication that can significantly enhance vocabulary instruction, particularly for young learners.

Table 6. Using Gesture

Excerpt	Data Transcription
#8	"Sometimes we as teachers have to be attractive. All gestures have to play. Has been used in daily activities and materials. Because **it's easy to use gestures, t**his strategy is quite popular with students."

Translated from Interview Transcript (16 Maret 2024)

In Table 6, the participant explains the sixth strategy: using gestures as an active teaching strategy, emphasizing that being a teacher often involves dynamic physical engagement to support the learning process. As demonstrated by the participant, gestures served as a visual and kinesthetic means of communication, enhancing students' understanding and engagement. For example, the participant performed specific movements related to the vocabulary taught, prompting students to guess the associated words or phrases. This interactive method made learning enjoyable and catered to young learners' natural inclination toward physical activity and play.

Gestures offer multiple benefits for young learners, particularly in bridging the gap between verbal and non-verbal communication. Students can create stronger mental associations by linking physical movements to words or concepts, aiding vocabulary retention and recall (Tellier, 2008). This aligns with the multisensory teaching approach, suggesting that incorporating visual, auditory, and kinesthetic elements can significantly improve learning outcomes (Shin & Crandall, 2014). Additionally, gestures provide an effective way to clarify abstract or complex vocabulary. For example, mimicking actions or emotions can help students understand words they might otherwise find challenging. The participant noted that students enjoyed this strategy because it involved active participation and movement, which are particularly engaging for young learners. Despite feeling somewhat self-conscious during these demonstrations, the participant recognized the value of gestures in creating a lively, engaging classroom environment. After implementing gestures, the participant used memorization as the final strategy, as detailed in Table 7. Memorization, though traditional, remains a foundational technique in vocabulary acquisition, especially when combined with interactive and context-based methods.

Table 7. Using Memorization

Excerpt	Data Transcription
#9	**"I often ask about vocabulary or like through simple games.** For example, a spelling game. There is vocabulary related to colors. Then, "Who wants to spell Black?" like that. So students spell like that. **Let them remember."**

According to Table 7, participants reported using simple games to remember vocabulary. Usually, he asks for specific vocabulary and asks students to spell it. For example, participants name one color in the color material and invite students who want to spell the vocabulary. As a result, participants felt that students could remember the vocabulary they had learned. Memorizing vocabulary is a traditional method that is usually effective and is often used by most teachers. Students should be given some vocabulary before the teacher delivers it; initially, the teacher provides the stimulation. The teacher may spell, say, and repeat the words, or practice them by having students act out the phrase. The goal is for students to remember words more quickly. In simple terms, students who consistently exercise their memorization strategies will retain what they have learned in long-term memory (Meliana et al., 2018).

All the learning process needs must be considered and fulfilled by a teacher. To do that, many things can support its success. One of the most crucial aspects is teaching strategies, specifically those for teaching vocabulary to young learners. Participants have implemented seven strategies: vocabulary games, picture strategy, realia, song, translation, gesture, and memorization. In this section, it can be briefly concluded that the teaching and learning process can be supported by adopting appropriate English teaching strategies that align with students' characteristics and help them attain learning objectives (Intarapanich, 2013). This is why a teacher's role in the learning process is essential: as Arroyo (2021) says, a teacher assists students in acquiring new insights, skills, and virtues, highlighting the significance of teaching.

Classroom Management Strategies

Classroom management is an essential component of effective instruction. Facilitating students' successful learning refers to all the preparations a teacher makes to arrange students, time, space, and resources (Koutrouba et al., 2018). There is a strong correlation between classroom management and students' learning outcomes. Using different strategies and techniques to manage classrooms effectively may help reduce undesirable student behaviors and disruptions, enabling the achievement of learning objectives (Herman, 2019). Therefore, this section provides information about how participants create a language-rich learning environment to engage students in vocabulary learning. Based on the interview data, the participant made several efforts to create an effective vocabulary-learning environment that fostered positive student engagement and behavior. The participant noted that creating an enjoyable learning environment significantly enhances the vocabulary-learning experience.

Some activities indicate the classroom management strategies, as the participant comprehensively explained in Tables 8, 9, 10, and 11 below.

Table 8. Gaining Students' Enthusiasm

Excerpt	Data Transcription
#10	**"I also rewarded them. Not only points. I've ever given chocolate or candy to them**. The important thing is that the student is happy."

Translated from Interview Transcript (25 September 2023)

Based on the interview in Table 8, participants develop positive behavior patterns between students and themselves, as teachers. He always rewards students with points or snacks, such as chocolate and candy, when they achieve. This was done as a sign of appreciation and to make the students happy. Praise, recognition, and rewards increase the likelihood of exhibiting desired behaviors and performing better. Furthermore, (Ahmad et al., 2022) noted that providing students with positive feedback for appropriate behavior significantly increases their morale. Positive reinforcement, through rewards or verbal praise, has enhanced students' self-esteem and enthusiasm for learning (Yahaya, 2022). In this case, the participant's approach aligns with behaviorist principles, which hold that reinforcement strengthens desired behaviors and encourages repetition. Moreover, tangible rewards, such as snacks, serve as immediate, concrete incentives, particularly effective for young learners. These rewards boost morale and foster a joyful, engaging classroom atmosphere. However, it is crucial to balance material rewards with intrinsic motivators, such as fostering a love for learning, to ensure sustainable behavioral and academic growth (Ataş & Sağın-Şimşek, 2021; Bishop et al., 2022; Dharamshi, 2019; Wang et al., 2021).

The participant also acknowledged the role of positive classroom interactions in creating a conducive learning environment. Beyond teacher-student relationships, fostering collaborative peer interactions is equally important. Positive peer relationships are encouraged through group-based activities, which promote teamwork, mutual respect, and communication skills. Research by Wentzel (2022) emphasizes that supportive peer interactions enhance students' social and emotional development while contributing to academic success. In this research context, the participant divided students into groups using various teaching strategies, thereby facilitating a sense of community and shared responsibility among learners, as presented in Table 9 below. Group activities made lessons more interactive and provided students with opportunities to learn from one another, enriching their understanding of the material.

Table 9. Dividing Students into Groups

Excerpt	Data Transcription
#11	"So, **students in the class were divided into two groups.** I also divided the whiteboard into two parts. I wrote each part using various colors that I had taught before."

Translated from Interview Transcript (25 September 2023)

In the interview results listed in Table 9 above, participants divided their class into two groups during the vocabulary games activity. This strategy fosters collaboration and aligns with the principles of student-centered learning, emphasizing active participation. Group work encourages peer-to-peer interaction, allowing students to learn from one another and promoting critical thinking. From the teacher's perspective, group activities provide valuable insights into students' strengths, weaknesses, and interests. According to Ahmad et al. (2022), such activities serve as a diagnostic tool, helping teachers identify areas where individual students may need additional support. This approach also allows teachers to tailor their teaching methods to meet diverse learning needs, fostering inclusivity in the classroom.

Furthermore, group activities enhance students' social skills, such as communication, teamwork, and conflict resolution. Collaborative settings encourage students to express their ideas, negotiate, and develop a shared responsibility for the learning process. Research by Johnson & Johnson (2019) highlights that cooperative learning environments significantly improve academic outcomes and interpersonal relationships.

Interactive techniques, such as group work, also play a critical role in managing classroom behavior. Sieberer-Nagler (2016) emphasizes that positive teacher-student relationships, nurtured through interactive and engaging activities, reduce problematic behaviors and promote cooperation. When students feel valued and included, their motivation and engagement levels rise, leading to better academic performance. By dividing students into groups, the participant facilitated an enjoyable learning experience and created opportunities for students to develop interpersonal and academic skills. This approach aligns with the constructivist theory of learning, which posits that students construct knowledge through social interaction and active participation (Vygotsky & Cole, 1978). Further, the participant also encourages students' learning process as stated in Table 10 below.

Table 10. Encouraging Students' Learning Process

Excerpt	Data Transcription
#12	"**I gave them the freedom to ask** me if there were any vocabulary words they didn't know in English."

Translated from Interview Transcript (25 September 2023)

From Table 10, the participants invited students to ask if there was any vocabulary they did not know in English. In interactive teaching, positive interactions are highly beneficial for fostering active student participation in question-and-answer sessions. Utilizing the interaction provides students with various learning options, engages them in the learning process, and supports the use of teaching materials to keep their attention. Additionally, a study states that instructors can benefit from interactive teaching methods in several ways. Because two-way contacts (interactions) allow teachers to break through students' passivity, they ensure classroom flexibility. Moreover, it supports and extends students' learning, enabling them to progress (Hettinger et al., 2021). Interactive teaching techniques also support the effective use of teaching materials. Teachers can better utilize resources to maintain attention and foster deeper understanding by engaging students in the learning process.

The participant also highlighted the importance of creating adequate learning conditions, as shown in Table 11. Effective learning conditions involve the physical environment, such as classroom layout, resources, and emotional and psychological atmosphere. A supportive environment where students feel valued and respected is essential for fostering a positive attitude toward learning. By encouraging inquiry and providing opportunities for interaction, the teacher helps students construct meaningful, relevant understandings of new vocabulary. Next, participants also create the effective learning condition as presented in Table 11 below.

Table 11. Creating Effective Learning Conditions

Excerpt	Data Transcription
#13	**"We greet first, ask how students are doing, prepare students for their learning readiness**, and then give trigger questions tailored to the material to be taught."

Translated from Interview Transcript (16 Maret 2024)

In the interview in Table 11, the participant explains that he prepares a series of learning activities each time he enters class. First, he greeted the students. Do not forget to ask how the students are doing. After that, he prepares and ensures the lesson so that all students are ready and, in the middle of the series, gives students trigger questions based on the material being taught. It is possible to avoid classroom issues through carefully planned, well-managed instruction. Teachers also need complete control over classroom regulations (Bozkuş, 2021).

Additionally, teachers must research and analyze behavioral and instructional classroom management. It requires a lot of dedication and specialized skills, including organizing, planning, and adaptability. It requires initiative, teamwork aptitude, creative thinking, and action.

To sum up, as a teacher, to make learning more conducive and fun, the participants in this study highly recommend that other teachers create engaging, enjoyable lessons for young learners. This is because young learners have a relatively short attention span and quickly get bored (Juhana, 2014). It is similar to what (Harmer, 2007) argued: unless activities are highly engaging, people quickly get bored and lose interest after 10 minutes. Thus, teachers should consider the strategies used in teaching English to primary school students.

Vocabulary Assessment

Vocabulary assessment is primarily divided into two parts: assessing vocabulary knowledge (i.e., the type of knowledge about words) versus assessing vocabulary learning (i.e., the ability to learn new words) (Dujardin et al., 2021). The choice of dimension to be assessed will depend on the goal. This section explains how participants assess the students' vocabulary learning process. Based on the interview data, the participants did several things to evaluate and measure how well students acquire new vocabulary. The participant stated that measuring students' ability and understanding was done in various ways based on the teaching vocabulary strategies. He mentioned that measuring students' knowledge of vocabulary learning can be seen from some aspects, as presented in tables 12, 13, 14, 15, 16, and 17 below.

Table 12. Assessing Vocabulary Journal in Color Scavenger Hunt Game

Excerpt	Data Transcription
#14	Students are **given value through a compliment. Like "Good job!"** that is what it says in the book. Then make it a **vocabulary journal**."

Translated from Interview Transcript (16 Maret 2024)

In Table 12, vocabulary journals serve as an innovative assessment tool that encourages students to document every new word they encounter after participating in games. This reflective practice not only reinforces their understanding but also fosters independent learning. Students are praised for their efforts, reinforcing their motivation and engagement. Vocabulary journals are widely recognized as an effective tool in language learning. They provide students with a personal repository of words that aids retention and recall. According to Nation & Coxhead (2013), recording vocabulary in a structured format helps learners connect words and their meanings, promoting deeper cognitive processing.

Furthermore, keeping a vocabulary journal allows students to engage with new words multiple times, which is crucial for vocabulary acquisition and retention (Schmitt & Schmitt, 2020). The vocabulary journal primarily serves as a receptive assessment, focusing on students' ability to understand and process new vocabulary. Receptive knowledge, the ability to recognize and understand words in context, is an essential foundation for productive language

skills such as speaking and writing (Laufer & Goldstein, 2004). By guiding students to focus on comprehension, teachers help them build a robust vocabulary base they can use later in active communication.

Praising students for their vocabulary journals underscores the importance of positive reinforcement in learning. Research by Ahmad et al. (2022) highlights that recognition and praise significantly enhance students' morale and motivation. When students receive acknowledgment for their efforts, they are more likely to engage consistently with the learning process and strive for improvement. The combination of vocabulary games and journal-keeping is particularly effective. Games provide an interactive, enjoyable way for students to encounter new words, while journals serve as a follow-up activity that consolidates their learning. According to Ratminingsih et al. (2018), integrating active and reflective learning techniques caters to diverse learning styles and ensures a well-rounded approach to vocabulary instruction.

Table 13. Assessing Vocabulary in Picture Strategy

Excerpt	Data Transcription
#15	"It is like a **matching picture.** Students match pictures of items in class with the appropriate names."

Translated from Interview Transcript (16 Maret 2024)

Furthermore, in Table 13, participants highlighted the use of multiple matching as an assessment strategy following the picture-based vocabulary instruction. This approach involves presenting students with two lists of items (e.g., words and corresponding pictures) and asking them to pair them correctly. Multiple matching in this context aligns with an effective method for assessing receptive vocabulary knowledge, as it tests students' ability to recognize and understand vocabulary in context. Multiple matching is widely recognized as an effective and objective tool for vocabulary assessment. According to Dujardin et al. (2021), multiple matching is popular due to its objectivity, reliability, and validity. The format of this test provides clear criteria for determining correct responses, ensuring a fair and consistent assessment across students. Its reliability is enhanced because it reduces the ambiguity often associated with other assessment types, such as open-ended questions. Furthermore, multiple matching is versatile and can assess different types of vocabulary knowledge, from individual word meanings to more complex phrases or sentence structures. This flexibility makes it a valuable tool for evaluating receptive vocabulary, as it allows teachers to assess students' recognition and understanding of words in a structured, controlled manner.

Table 14. Assessing Worksheet in Song Strategy

Excerpt	Data Transcription
#16	**"The assessment uses a worksheet that has been prepared beforehand.** The questions are like questions that require students to identify, write, and order numbers. So, they write from English to Indonesian. On the contrary."

Translated from Interview Transcript (16 Maret 2024)

In Table 14 above, the participant used a worksheet-based assessment tool following the song strategy. This worksheet required students to listen to the song, identify its key parts, and then answer questions in their own words. This type of assessment moves beyond simple recognition of vocabulary (receptive vocabulary) and encourages students to engage in productive language use by expressing their thoughts and responses. The activity is designed to help students actively produce language, thus facilitating the development of their productive vocabulary skills.

Productive vocabulary refers to the words students can actively use in speaking and writing, as opposed to receptive vocabulary, which involves recognizing and understanding words when encountered. According to Laufer and Goldstein (2004), productive vocabulary is typically acquired after receptive vocabulary, but both are interrelated. Students with a strong understanding of words in context are more likely to use them productively. By prompting students to express their understanding of the song's content through writing or speaking, the participant is fostering the development of their productive vocabulary. Using a worksheet to assess productive vocabulary provides a clear, structured format for students to demonstrate their ability to generate ideas and incorporate the target vocabulary into their responses. This type of task ensures that students are not just passively acquiring vocabulary but are actively using the words they have learned in meaningful contexts. Additionally, such assessments provide teachers with insight into students' ability to apply their vocabulary knowledge in context, a crucial aspect of language proficiency.

Table 15. Assessing Multiple Choice in Translation

Excerpt	Data Transcription
#17	**"It uses multiple choice.** Students read texts about descriptive people/objects to understand the meaning for themselves and then answer questions. The text is also simple."

Translated from Interview Transcript (17 Maret 2024)

Based on Table 15 above, the participant utilized multiple-choice assessments to evaluate students' understanding of translation. This technique, often favored for its simplicity and efficiency, involves providing students with a short text that describes people or objects. Students are then asked to select the correct answer from a set of options. This approach encourages learners to comprehend the text's meaning and apply their vocabulary knowledge

to choose the appropriate translation. Multiple-choice questions (MCQs) are widely recognized for their practicality in language assessment. (Folse et al., 2007) noted that multiple-choice formats are commonly used in professionally developed language tests due to their objectivity, reliability, and scalability. They are effective at assessing recall, comprehension, and the ability to connect vocabulary to its context. The objective nature of MCQs allows for quick evaluation and consistent grading, which is particularly advantageous in large classes where individual assessments would be time-consuming. In language learning, multiple-choice questions can help assess students' understanding of vocabulary, grammar, and translation. The assessment tests students' vocabulary knowledge and their ability to interpret and understand word meaning in context by requiring them to choose the correct translation of a given text. This aligns with the cognitive processes involved in translation, in which students must recall words and understand their appropriate usage within a specific context (Ghazal, 2007).

Table 16. Assessing Vocabulary in Gesture

Excerpt	Data Transcription
#18	"Gestures are only used for teaching strategies. The assessment is in the daily activities material, so the students are tasked with carrying out daily activities, from waking up to **going to sleep again**. At most, group assignments involve **matching pictures and then giving information about the activity**."
	Translated from Interview Transcript (17 Maret 2024)

In Table 16, the participant describes how gestures were assessed through an activity in which students were asked to write a list of their daily activities, from waking up to going to bed. The students were also given group assignments to match pictures depicting different activities, followed by writing descriptions of those activities. This approach effectively integrates receptive and productive skills: students recognize and understand vocabulary through picture-matching (receptive) and apply it in their writing (productive). Using gestures in teaching is an interactive, kinesthetic strategy that reinforces learning through physical movement and visual cues. Gestures also help students connect words and actions, thus deepening their understanding of the language. This is particularly beneficial for young learners, who are often more engaged by physical activity and visual stimuli. The participant's use of gestures, where students perform actions and describe them, is a powerful tool for making vocabulary more memorable.

Table 17. Assessing Students' Memorization

Excerpt	Data Transcription
#19	"So, **it is like the students are memorizing.** However, it is rare."
	Translated from Interview Transcript (16 Maret 2024)

Finally, in Table 17, the participant discusses the occasional use of memorization tests for students, which primarily focus on receptive vocabulary. While memorization assessments can provide insight into students' ability to recall and recognize vocabulary, it is essential to note that such assessments are limited in fully capturing a student's vocabulary proficiency. As Folse et al. (2007) asserts, teachers' vocabulary assessment should align with the methods they use to teach it. This suggests that vocabulary instruction and assessment should be designed to reflect recognition and recall, as well as the active use and contextual application of vocabulary.

As mentioned in the participant's approach, memorization tests mainly assess students' receptive vocabulary—the words they can recognize and understand when encountered in reading or listening activities. Receptive vocabulary assessments often involve matching words to definitions, identifying words from pictures, or selecting the correct word in context. While these are important for gauging understanding, they do not fully capture students' ability to use vocabulary in productive language tasks, such as speaking or writing. Therefore, practical language assessments should incorporate both receptive and productive vocabulary tests. This can include tasks such as gap-filling exercises, sentence production, or interactive speaking activities that require students to apply the vocabulary they have learned actively.

The participants' use of different assessment types for various teaching strategies is a positive approach to capturing the full spectrum of students' vocabulary development. Using multiple assessment formats ensures teachers comprehensively understand a student's vocabulary knowledge. Recent studies highlight the importance of formal and informal assessments, as each provides valuable insights into different aspects of language proficiency. Andriani et al. (2021) stress the need for diverse vocabulary assessment methods to create a more detailed profile of students' language abilities. Andriani et al. (2024) also suggest that teachers must ensure meaningful vocabulary assessments reflect real-world language use. Language assessment should not be limited to artificial tests. However, it should involve tasks that mirror real-life language use, allowing students to demonstrate their ability to use vocabulary in authentic contexts.

This section presents and discusses the analysis results based on the chosen research method. The discussion also covers the research's implications for other fields and possible avenues for further development.

CONCLUSION

This study presents the various strategies teachers use to teach English vocabulary to junior secondary school students, offering insights into effective pedagogical practices. The findings

highlight the importance of integrating various instructional techniques - such as games, visual aids, songs, gestures, realia, and memorization - to foster an engaging and fun learning environment. These strategies improve students' vocabulary retention and create a positive classroom atmosphere that encourages active participation and builds students' confidence. In addition, effective classroom management practices, such as group activities and fostering open communication, also play an essential role in maintaining student motivation and ensuring a conducive learning environment.

The study emphasizes that variety in vocabulary-teaching strategies is essential to make the learning process dynamic and adaptable to the diverse needs of students. This variety prevents boredom and assesses students' progress in acquiring new vocabulary. However, the findings also revealed areas for improvement, particularly in data collection methods and the study's scope. First, the study relied solely on interviews for data collection, limiting the research's comprehensiveness. Future research could benefit from triangulation, combining interviews, observations, and documentation to yield more robust and nuanced insights. Second, this study focuses only on teachers' strategies, leaving room to explore other dimensions, such as students' perspectives on their preferred learning approaches. Investigating how students experience and understand vocabulary learning can provide valuable feedback for developing more student-centered strategies. Third, integrating technology into vocabulary instruction offers promising avenues for future research, especially by exploring digital tools and applications that complement traditional teaching methods.

In conclusion, this study reinforces the importance of strategic, diverse approaches to vocabulary instruction while identifying opportunities to advance pedagogical practices. Future research should build on these findings by incorporating diverse methodologies, exploring students' experiences, and integrating innovative technological solutions to enhance vocabulary acquisition and language-learning outcomes.

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