

Teachers' Strategies in Teaching English Vocabulary to Young Learners: A Case Study in an Elementary School in South Sumatera, Indonesia

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Abstract

One of the essential components in education are teachers' strategies. Thus, the aim of this study was to investigate strategies utilized by teachers of SD YKPP Pendopo, PALI, South Sumatera in teaching English vocabulary. Case study, one of the qualitative research designs, was applied for this study. Purposeful sampling was applied in determining the participants. Thus, two teachers with degrees on English Education and acquire more than five years of experience in teaching English to young learners were selected. Open-ended questions in a semi-structured interview and observation were applied to obtain the data. Then, thematic analysis was employed to analyze the data. This study resulted that the teachers applied Realia Strategy, Visual Scaffolding Strategy, Modeled Talk Strategy, Collecting Word Strategy, Vocabulary Role-Play Strategy, and Leveled Question Strategy, and Sing a Song Strategy. This study implies that teachers are suggested to apply appropriate strategies in teaching to embrace the students' distinctiveness.

Keywords: *Teachers' strategies, Teaching English vocabulary, Young learners*

1. Introduction

English as foreign language plays an important role in the world, because almost all people around the world communicate in English. According to Arango (2015), the importance of English in the globalization era cannot be underestimated. In addition, Rohmah (2009) stated that English is used not only by English speakers, but also by people who have different first language and use English as a second language to communicate. As a result, English is not only an international language, but also a global language. In short, English plays a significant function in communication on a worldwide scale and is broken down into a variety of parts that can help with language proficiency.

In learning English, vocabulary is one of the elements that must be mastered. Stahl (2005) stated that vocabulary is word knowledge that includes relationships between words and sentences in addition to meanings. In addition, Hedge (2000) argued that vocabulary is crucial when learning a foreign language. It is impossible to learn a foreign language such as

English without first knowing the vocabulary. Therefore, young learners need to acquire vocabulary as a beginner in learning English as a foreign language since, in the opinion of the experts mentioned above. People cannot speak with one another if they do not learn vocabulary..

Vocabulary is a crucial part of English that needs to be taught from a young age. Therefore, the right thing to do is to teach English vocabulary to elementary school students because this is known as their "golden era" of learning. Besides, Lenneberg (1967) as cited in Najafi and Hadi (2012) stated that a interval of time with a specified beginning and offset during which language acquisition is more straightforward is known as a key period. Their minds are still malleable at this time, allowing them to learn everything, including new terminology.

Children's vocabulary lessons are different from adult vocabulary lessons, and their teachers must use particular ways to teach vocabulary to elementary school students. Richards (1986) stated that strategy means plans, steps, or actions taken by teachers to make learning easier, faster, more enjoyable, more independent, more effective, and more transferable to new situations. According to Stone and Morris (1972)

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cited in Isaac (2010), teachers' strategy is a broad lesson plan that comprises the framework, the instructional goals, and a description of the planned methods that will be used to carry out the strategies. Teacher must be able to select and apply appropriate strategy to teach vocabulary on elementary school students. In order to create a more effective learning environment and increase student interest, teacher strategies are crucial.

Previously, the researcher had conducted a preliminary study at SD YKPP Pendopo, PALI. Based on the interview, English is one of the subjects taught in this school as a local contain. Start from the third to the sixth-grade students. In addition, English is learned 2 times, in 45 minutes in a week. Moreover, the teacher admitted that the students of SD YKPP Pendopo acquired vocabulary from the basic, their English skills continue to improve and they begin to know a lot of English vocabulary Thus, the teacher admitted that she used a lot of strategies in teaching vocabulary (I.R., Personal Communication, 5th November 2021). Thus, the researchers are interested to conduct a study on teachers strategies at SD YKPP Pendopo PALI.

Some researchers conducted studies on teacher's strategies in teaching English vocabulary to young learners. First, a study conducted by Munawwarah (2021) concluded that Young learners are typically taught English vocabulary using games, pictures, memorization, translation, realia, action/mime/gesture, and songs. Second, a study conducted by Nazaruddin et al. (2019) revealed that the teacher applied three strategies in teaching vocabulary, they are: (1). Modeling and demonstration, (2). Question and answer, (3). Singing song. Third, a study conducted by to Fetria (2016) revealed that, the teachers applied nine strategies in teaching vocabulary, they are: (1). Use of picture, (2). Body movement (gesture), (3). Video, (4). Translation, (5). Exemplification, (6). Classroom test, (7). Games, (8). Guessing from context, and (9). Looking up dictionary.

Based on the background information provided above, the researcher is motivated to carry out a study on vocabulary instruction which entitled: "Teacher's Strategies in Teaching English Vocabulary: A Case Study at SD YKPP Pendopo".

2. Method

This study was categorized as qualitative research which focus on the teachers' strategies in teaching English vocabulary at SD YKPP Pendopo, PALI. According to Creswell (2012), qualitative research is a means for exploring and understanding the meaning individuals or groups ascribe to a social human problem. The process of research involves emerging

questions and procedures; collecting data in the participants setting; analyzing the data inductively, building from particulars to general themes; and making interpretations of the meaning of data. The final written report has a flexible writing structure.

One of the qualitative research approach, case study design will be applied. Craswell (2014) argue that case studies are a research strategy to investigate something carefully by gathering complete information using various data collection procedures. In addition, case studies are also carried out to gain a deep understanding and more intensive analysis of something against individuals, groups or situations.

The participants of this study were teachers of English at SD YKPP Pendopo, PALI, that were chosen by using purposeful sampling. Creswell (2003) stated that purposeful sampling is a selection of sites or participants that will best help the researcher understand the problem and the research.

The participant chosen based on the following characteristics, such as: (1). Teachers of English who graduated from English Department and, (2). More than five years of teaching experience. (3). Teach in 3rd grade through 6th grade. There are three teachers of English at SD YKPP Pendopo, PALI. Therefore, two teachers of English at SD YKPP Pendopo, PALI was chosen since they fulfil the requirements.

In this study, in order to find out the teachers' strategies in teaching English vocabulary, the researcher conducted observation and interview as the research instrument.

Observation was carried out to two teachers of English of SD YKPP Pendopo, PALI. In this study, observation was carried out by using observational checklist to observe the teacher in the classroom in teaching English vocabulary. Narbuko and Achmadi (2010) stated that observation is a data collection tool that is carried out by systematically observing and observing the phenomenon under investigation. This means that observation is used to systematically collect data to understand and interpret the actions, interactions or significance of an event.

Creswell (2012) affirms that a qualitative interview occurs when researchers ask one or more participants general, open-ended questions and record their answers. In addition, semi-structured interview applied. According to Edward and Holland (2013), semi-structured is the interviewer used a set of question which are developed to gain the specific information. To collect data, the researchers ask the teacher on the strategies in teaching vocabulary to young learner proposed by Herrel and Jordan (2016) and the

researcher use a voice recorder from a smartphone to store the interview data.

In the data analysis, the researcher used thematic analysis to analyze the data. According to Kiger and Varpio (2020), thematic analysis is a simple, versatile, and increasingly popular way of qualitative data analysis that gives qualitative researchers a foundation in the fundamental abilities needed to interact with other approaches.

In the process of data collection and analysis, the accuracy of findings and interpretation must be ensured. The researcher used triangulation to strengthen the study's accuracy. According to Creswell (2012), triangulation is the process of corroborating evidence from different individuals or methods of data collection. The function of this method was to test credibility of the data and to help researcher making conclusion to be more accurate. Therefore, the researcher compared the data collected during the observations and interviews in this analysis to ensure data validity.

3. Results and Discussion

After analyzing the data from observations and interviews, the researcher found that there were several strategies used by the teacher in teaching English vocabulary at SD YKPP Pendopo, such as: (1). Realia Strategy, (2). Visual Scaffolding, (3). Collecting Word, (4). Vocabulary Role-Play, (5). Leveled Question, and (6). Sing a Song. The data was obtained from observing the teacher in the class, and the interview was conducted by using Bahasa to avoid inconveniencies. The themes and the codes obtained from the analysis of qualitative data that is thematic analysis gained from observation, and interview, were listed in the following:

Themes	Codes
1. Realia strategy	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> a. The teacher used objects that were provided in the classroom to teach English vocabulary. b. First, the teacher introduced the students with the objects in the classroom in English, then the teacher repeated several times so that the students remember them. After making the students remembered the names of objects in the classroom in English, then the teacher asked questions and the students answered these questions together. c. This strategy was used to build background knowledge of English vocabulary of

Themes	Codes
	students.
2. Visual scaffolding	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> a. For the 3rd and 4th graders, the teacher used picture books to teach English vocabulary. In the book, there are several chapters that have certain themes such as letters, numbers, vegetables, part of body and others. b. For the 5th and 6th graders, the teacher used pictures that have been printed and then brought into class. The teacher asked the students to describe the picture. c. This strategy was used to make the students easier to understand vocabulary.
3. Modeled talk	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> a. The teacher gave one student random word based on material they have learned and the student gave body gesture to other students, then other students guess. b. This strategy was used to reduce learners' anxiety and make it easier for them to understand what they have done.
4. Collecting words	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> a. For the 3rd and 4th graders, the teacher taught them how to spell and pronounce the word correctly. After that, the teacher asked the students to ask the meaning of the word they did not know. If no students asked, the teacher will ask one of the students to read a sentence and then interpret the sentence together. b. For the 5th and 6th graders, at the previous meeting, the teacher told the students to bring a dictionary. Then the teacher gave them a short text. If there are words the students don't understand, they can look up the dictionary first, but if they can't find the word in the dictionary, they can asked their teacher. c. In this way, besides adding new English vocabulary for students, they also learn how to use the dictionary and know how to pronounce

Themes	Codes
	English words.
5. Vocabulary Play	<p>a. First the teacher explained the expressions that students learn, to play role based on the book. After that, the teacher asked the students to write a short conversation between two or more people by using the expressions in the book. At the next meeting, the teacher asked them to act out the conversations they had made.</p> <p>b. This strategy was used to help students recognize new vocabulary and recalling the vocabulary they already know.</p>
6. Leveled Question	<p>a. For the 3rd and 4th graders, before proceeding to the next material, the teacher reminded about the previous material by asking students directly about the previous material.</p> <p>b. For the 5th and 6th graders, before ending the class, the teacher gave questions to students who are randomly selected, the questions given are in accordance with the material that has been taught before the students answer these questions.</p> <p>c. This strategy was used to make students more motivated to always be prepared when it comes to English lessons.</p>
7. Sing a Song	<p>a. The teacher invited the students to sing a song in English. After the students were familiar with the lyrics of the song, then the teacher told the students the meaning of the lyrics of the song.</p> <p>b. This strategy was used to make students easy to remember new vocabulary and enjoy the lesson.</p>

After analyzing the results of data analysis using thematic analysis, the researcher found that there was some information about teachers' strategies in teaching English vocabulary at SD YKPP Pendopo, PALI. The following strategies are:

The first strategy that the teacher use is Realia strategy. Realia strategy was used by the teacher that teach 3rd and 4th grades because this strategy is able to build background knowledge vocabulary of students. Moreover, Realia strategy also can make students enjoy the lessons and quickly remember new vocabulary. According to Platt (1992) as cited in Sukrina (2010), Realia (in language teaching) are actual objects and items which are brought into a classroom as example or as aids to be talked written about and used in teaching or concrete objects and the paraphernalia of everyday life.

The second strategy is Visual Scaffolding strategy. Visual Scaffolding was used by both teacher of English at SD YKPP Pendopo, PALI because this strategy is good to make the students easier to understand English vocabulary and interested with the lessons. According to Herrel and Jordan (2016), Visual Scaffolding is a technique that enables students to relate spoken English words to displayed visuals, making it easier for them to understand the language used in instruction.

The third strategy is Modeled Talk. Modeled Talk was used by the teacher that teach English to the 5th and 6th graders. This strategy is used by the teacher because this strategy is easy for teachers to use and can reduce students' anxiety. According to Pehoy and Boyle, (2011) Modeled Talk uses gesture and modeling to teach English, it can reduce learners' anxiety because they know exactly what to do because they have seen the instruction or information modeled.

The fourth strategy that the teacher use is Collecting Words in teaching English vocabulary to young learners. Collecting Words was used by both teachers at SD YKPP Pendopo, PALI. Teachers use this strategy because this strategy helps students know how to pronounce the words and how to use the dictionary. According to Herrel and Jordan, (2001) cited in Herrel and Jordan (2016), Collecting Word helps students grasp the subtleties of words with the same meaning and know how to pronoun the words.

The fifth strategy is Vocabulary Role-Play which is used to teach English vocabulary to young learners. Vocabulary Role-Play was used by the teachers that teach the 5th and 6th graders. The teacher of 5th and 6th graders used this strategy because this strategy can help students recognize new vocabulary and recalling the vocabulary they already know and this strategy also can make student practice their speaking ability. According to Herrel (1998) cite in Herrel and Jordan (2016), Vocabulary Role-Play is a strategy that encourages learners to make connections among their past experiences, the content currently being study, and

vocabulary that is new or being used in an unfamiliar way.

The sixth strategy is Leveled Question. According to Nazruddin et al. (2019), Question and Answer technique is usually used by teachers to make students more active and check their readiness before the lesson was started. The result was supported by a study by Nazruddin et al. (2019), which showed there are three the effective strategy and often used by the teacher at Saka District and one of the is Leveled Question. In addition, a study by Suryani (2012) revealed that using Question and Answer is one of the strategies for teaching vocabulary to young learners.

And the last strategy is Sing a Song Strategy. The teachers use Sing a Song strategy because this strategy can make students memorize English vocabulary faster and also this strategy can make students enjoy the class more. The teacher uses an Indonesian song that is translated into English and sings it with the students. The result was supported by previous study by Munawwarah (2021) which revealed that Sing a Song is a common strategy in teaching vocabulary to young learners. In addition, a study by Suryani (2012) revealed that Sing a Song is one of the strategies for teaching vocabulary to young learners.

4. Conclusion

Based on the research result and discussion in the previous chapter, the researcher concluded that the strategies used by the teachers at SD YKPP Pendopo, PALI in teaching English vocabulary to young learners are Realia, Visual Scaffolding, Modeled Talk, Collecting Word, Vocabulary Role-Play, Leveled Question, and Sing a Song. In addition, different teacher has different strategy in teaching English vocabulary at SD YKPP Pendopo, PALI. The strategies used by the teacher are adjusted to the learning materials and students' abilities, because each student who have a various grade levels also have different abilities.

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