Strategies Deployed by Educators for Vocabulary Enrichment

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ABSTRACT
The teaching and learning of English in non-English speaking countries always sparks public discussions. Having a sufficient vocabulary is crucial for effectively using a foreign language; without a broad range of words, it becomes difficult to employ the language structures and functions learned for meaningful communication. As a result, teachers need to be creative in applying vocabulary teaching strategies during the process of teaching and learning English as a foreign language (EFL). With this background in mind, the writer conducted research to investigate the strategies employed by English teachers at SDI Zumrotus Salamah Tulungagung. This particular school encourages active use of English in day-to-day activities. The research followed a qualitative design, involving 3 teachers from SDI Zumrotus Salamah as participants. Purposive sampling was used to focus on individuals and features most relevant to the study's objectives. Data collection methods included observation and interviews. The findings revealed that the teachers effectively utilized strategies such as the Determination Strategy, Social Strategy, Memory Strategy, Cognitive Strategy, and Metacognitive Strategy to cater to the learners' vocabulary needs. The study's results are expected to provide valuable insights for teachers, educators, and future researchers on the subject of teaching English vocabulary.

Keywords: Teaching Strategies, Vocabulary Enrichment

INTRODUCTION

Several recent studies have focused on lexical problems, which involve the interpretation of particular words or phrases rather than entire classes. These studies have revealed that these lexical problems often disrupt communication, and can have a negative impact on communication (Agustín-Llach, 2017). Disruptive language evokes psychological noise in the listener, which limits their ability to stay present in the conversation and take in all of what is said. When individuals fail to use the appropriate words in their conversations, breakdowns occur (Triassanti et al., 2018). These problems can be managed by communication strategies. Vocabulary learning is a difficult and lifelong task, and lexical errors are most undesirable since they distort communication. People with lexical access difficulties often search for words when they speak and make do with imprecise words or related words.

The researcher concludes that teachers must be creative in using effective strategies to teach vocabulary during English as a Foreign Language (EFL) instruction. These strategies are essential in engaging students and fostering their interest in learning vocabulary and other English language skills. To effectively select and implement suitable strategies based on the class's specific needs, a teacher should possess an understanding of the classroom environment (Ghalebi et al., 2020). Teachers who devote time to vocabulary instruction often use strategies that fail to increase students'

vocabulary and comprehension abilities. Exploring the vocabulary learning strategies used by English language students can reveal individual differences in vocabulary learning among students and encourage EFL teachers and curriculum developers to design materials and activities that would help learners improve their vocabulary learning. As a teacher, one has an essential role in helping students expand their vocabulary knowledge through formal and informal instruction (Carter, 2016). Effective strategies for turning receptive vocabulary into productive vocabulary in EFL contexts have been researched, and proper and valuable methods and approaches have been discovered to enhance students' vocabulary.

Although English teachers strive to create an efficient teaching and learning process that aligns with the curriculum's objectives, it is a general observation that students' language proficiency often falls short of the national curriculum's expectations. This discrepancy may indicate a mismatch between the teachers' vocabulary teaching strategies in the classroom and the students' language learning strategies (Hynam, 2021). There could be challenges concerning how teachers impart vocabulary knowledge and how students receive and learn it.

Among various established systems for learning vocabulary strategies, Oxford's concept appeared to be the most effective in encompassing and structuring the diverse range of identified vocabulary learning strategies. The strategy system comprises four main groups, namely Social, Memory, Cognitive, and Metacognitive. Social strategies (SOC) involve utilizing interactions with teachers or peers to enhance language learning. Memory Strategies (MEM) encompass approaches that connect new material with existing knowledge. Cognitive Strategies (COG) emphasize the manipulation and transformation of the target language by the learner. Lastly, Metacognitive Strategies (MET) entail a conscious and reflective approach to the learning process, involving planning, monitoring, and evaluating the most effective study methods (Durán et al., 2022).

This taxonomy includes a total of 58 strategies, but it is essential to view it as a dynamic working inventory rather than an exhaustive list. Deciding on the boundaries between different strategies and their various classroom applications has proven challenging. For instance, students might seek translations, paraphrases, examples of new words used in sentences, or illustrations representing word meanings from their classmates. However, attempting to list every possible strategy and technique would render the inventory too unwieldy for practical use (Ayure et al., 2018).

While Oxford's classification system is generally valuable, it falls short in adequately categorizing vocabulary-specific strategies in some aspects. The primary concern lies in the absence of a category describing the strategies employed by individuals when trying to understand a new word's meaning without relying on someone else's expertise. Consequently, a new category named Determination Strategies (DET) was introduced to address this gap (Suliman, 2021).

Based on these observations, the writer became interested in conducting the present research titled "Strategies Deployed by Educators for Vocabulary Enrichment." The aim is to gain further insights into how teachers' teaching strategies can better align with students' learning strategies. The expected outcome of this study is to provide valuable ideas for ensuring that teachers' instructional approaches effectively accommodate students' learning needs.

METHOD

Research design is a structured plan that outlines the methods and procedures used to collect and analyze data to answer research questions (Mulyadi, 2012). In this research, the chosen approach was a qualitative research design, which was selected in response to the research questions mentioned earlier. The decision to opt for a qualitative approach stems from its capacity to delve deeply into the research topic. This type of research is particularly well-suited for addressing complex research questions that demand a thorough understanding of the context in which the phenomenon under investigation occurs. It also enables the collection of detailed and comprehensive data, offering valuable insights into the experiences and perspectives of the participants. Furthermore, qualitative research offers flexibility, allowing adjustments to be made in line with the evolving nature of the research question throughout the study.

In terms of participant selection, the researchers employed purposive sampling, a technique that involves choosing participants based on specific criteria or characteristics. Additionally, random sampling was used to ensure a representative sample. The study involved interviewing three teachers from SDI Zumrotus Salamah. Besides, data was collected through the use of observation methods.

Data Analysis

In qualitative research, data analysis plays a crucial role as it involves systematically and logically organizing and interpreting the collected data to derive concepts, identify patterns, and draw meaningful conclusions based on the research question. According to (Miles & Huberman, 1994), the data analysis process in qualitative research consists of three main steps: data reduction, data display, and conclusion drawing and verification.

During the data reduction phase, the researcher categorizes and organizes the data into themes or codes. This process allows the extraction of the most relevant and significant information from the raw data, making it more manageable for further analysis.

Next, in the data display step, the researcher presents the organized data in a clear and concise manner. This can be achieved through the use of tables, graphs, or diagrams, facilitating a comprehensive understanding of the patterns and relationships within the data.

Finally, in the conclusion drawing and verification stage, the researcher analyzes the identified themes or codes, examining their interconnections and implications in the context of the research question. This process helps in deriving meaningful insights and drawing well-founded conclusions from the data.

Overall, the data analysis in qualitative research is a systematic and rigorous process that enables researchers to make sense of their findings and provide valuable contributions to the field of study.

RESULT AND DISCUSSION

Based on the data collected in this research, it is evident that the teachers involved demonstrate an awareness of the importance of utilizing effective teaching strategies that align with the learners' vocabulary learning methods. This awareness is reflected in the diverse range of techniques they applied during their teaching processes. The data obtained from the questionnaires distributed to the teachers, along with the field notes

recorded during classroom observation sessions, support this finding. It is evident that the teachers employed various teaching techniques, tailored to the five types of vocabulary learning strategies. Although the number of techniques employed varied slightly across applications, the strategies can be summarized in the table below.

Table 4.1. Strategies and Techniques Applied by Teachers
(Adapted from Oxford Taxonomy)

APPLIED STRATEGIES AND TECHNIQUES	Teacher		
DETERMINATION STRATEGY	**T1**	**T2**	**T3**
1 Analyzing part of speech		√	
2 Analyzing affixes and roots		√	
3 Checking for L1 cognate			
4 Analyzing any available pictures or gestures	√	√	√
5 Guess from textual context	√	√	√
6 Bilingual dictionary	√	√	√
7 Words list			
8 Flash cards	√		√
SOCIAL STRATEGY			
9 Providing L1 translation	√	√	√
10 Providing paraphrase or synonym for new word	√	√	√
11 Provide a sentence including new word	√	√	√
12 Let the students ask classmate for meaning	√	√	√
13 Discovering new meaning through group work activity		√	√
14 Let the students study and practice meaning in a group		√	
15 Checking students' cards or word lists for accuracy			
16 Let the students interact with native speakers			
MEMORY STRATEGY			
17 Using a pictorial representation of its meaning			
18 Using image word's meaning	√		
19 Connecting a word to personal experience		√	
20 Associating the words with its coordinates			
21 Connecting the word to its synonyms and antonyms	√	√	√
22 Using semantic maps			
23 Using scale for gradable adjectives			
24 Grouping word together to study them	√	√	√
25 Grouping words together spatially on a page			
26 Using a new word in a sentences	√	√	√
27 Grouping word together within a storyline			
28 Teaching the spelling of a word	√	√	√
29 Teaching the sound of word			
30 Saying a new word aloud when teaching	√	√	√
31 Imaging word form			
32 Underlining initial letter of the word			
33 Teaching word configuration			

34	Using key word method			
35	Affixes and roots (remembering)			
36	Part of speech (remembering)			
37	Paraphrasing the word meaning	√		√
38	Using cognate in study			
39	Teaching the word of an idiom together	√	√	√
40	Using physical action when learning a word	√	√	√
41	Using semantic feature grids			
	COGNITIVE STRATEGY			
42	Providing verbal repetition	√	√	√
43	Written repetition	√	√	√
44	Word lists		√	√
45	Flash cards			√
46	Asking the students to take notes in class	√	√	√
47	Using the vocabulary section in the textbook	√	√	√
48	Listening to tape of word lists			
49	Putting English label on physical objects	√	√	
50	Keeping a vocabulary notebooks			
	METACOGNITIVE STRATEGY			
51	Using English language media (songs, movies, etc.)	√	√	√
52	Testing students with word test			
53	Using space word practice	√	√	√
54	Skipping or passing new word			
55	Continuing to teach word overtime	√	√	√

A. Determination Strategy

Determination Strategy employed by the teachers indicates their awareness of fostering self-determination in students' vocabulary learning. They encourage students to exert effort and discover word meanings through various methods such as guessing based on their knowledge of the language structure, using L1 cognates, inferring from context, and utilizing reference materials.

From the provided table, it becomes apparent that the teachers made efforts to empower learners with appropriate vocabulary learning strategies to aid them in acquiring new words during teaching and learning activities. Classroom observations suggest that teachers often reminded students to reinforce their learning by applying similar techniques, mirroring the teachers' own practices.

Interestingly, the teachers applied certain strategies that proved to be more effective, indicating that they naturally learn from their valuable experiences as seasoned educators. They have developed a keen understanding of effective vocabulary learning methods through their own experiences. The interviews with the teachers confirm this, as expressed by T1 and T2:

"…The most important factor for me is that I apply techniques that I have found helpful for the students' learning."

"…I consistently reuse any effective technique that has yielded positive results in previous classroom activities."

These statements clearly highlight the teachers' inclination to leverage successful strategies based on their own experiences to enhance the students' vocabulary learning outcomes.

B. Social Strategy

Based on the findings from the observation sessions, it was observed that the teachers frequently utilized this strategy throughout their teaching processes. In the majority of classroom activities, the teachers consistently offered students opportunities to implement this approach. These opportunities included group work to discover word meanings and encouraging students to ask about any challenging words encountered in the lessons.

During the observation sessions, an intriguing observation was the teachers' proactive approach in interacting with the students. On various occasions, the teachers took the initiative to engage with the students while they were working on the lesson, whether individually or in groups. In these instances, the teachers would inquire if the students encountered any challenging words and readily offered assistance by providing direct translations, sentence examples, or further explanations of the word meanings.

The teachers also emphasized the importance of sharing and encouraged students not to hesitate in seeking help from others when encountering unfamiliar words. They conveyed that asking for the meaning of a new word from someone else is a beneficial approach to learning.

When asked about the reasons for incorporating such activities, the teachers provided several justifications. They mentioned that the primary purpose was to preempt any instances where students might face difficulties with exercises and to ensure active engagement from all students throughout the lesson. The teachers expressed concerns about certain students displaying a negative attitude during group work sessions, often relying heavily on academically strong peers to handle the tasks while remaining passive participants in the activities.

C. Memory Strategy

The teachers implemented this strategy in the classroom through various activities, as mentioned in the Table above. These efforts suggest that the teachers recognized the importance of students utilizing their memory strategy to enhance vocabulary learning.

The teachers displayed creativity in employing different techniques within this strategy. Some of these techniques involved incorporating games, such as spelling games, speedy categorization of word groups, and games focused on guessing the meaning of a word. However, it appeared that the use of pictures was the most preferred approach within this strategy. The teachers often provided relevant pictures that they had prepared beforehand. Matching meanings with pictures was also a common practice during classroom activities. Additionally, the teachers assigned students to prepare specific pictures or objects related to the upcoming lesson.

The teachers also encouraged the students to explain the meaning they understood without using a dictionary. This activity was typically conducted during group work. In this context, the teachers assumed more of a consulting role, confirming whether the students had paraphrased the meanings correctly. Furthermore, all the teachers observed in this study were conscious of providing the accurate pronunciation of words, primarily by engaging the students in pronunciation drills. Most of the time, the teachers asked the

students to repeat after them. These efforts demonstrate that the teachers recognized the significance of vocabulary learning through this approach, despite a few of them acknowledging challenges with accuracy in word pronunciation during the interview sessions. For instance:

"Personally, I sometimes have trouble with pronunciation; I mean, I don't feel very confident about the correct pronunciation of a word." (T3)

Furthermore, it appeared that the teachers lacked diversity in their approach to teaching idioms. They primarily emphasized to the students that idiom should not be translated literally. Specific techniques for teaching idioms were seldom employed in the classroom. Instead, the teachers frequently relied on written exercises as their main method for working with idioms. Among the exercises used, matching exercises were favored, often followed by independent sentence-making exercises for the students. Additionally, some teachers provided the answers at the end of the activity to allow the students to check their work.

D. Cognitive Strategy

Cognitive Strategy is similar to the Memory Strategy as it involves mental processing, but it is not limited to manipulative mental techniques. It also encompasses methods like repetition and utilizing mechanical means to study vocabulary. Practices such as written and verbal repetition, where a word is repeated multiple times in writing or speech, are commonly used in various regions worldwide.

The teachers implemented various techniques to facilitate learning through this strategy. For instance, they encouraged students to label objects in the classroom, which served as a form of verbal repetition. Additionally, the teachers often assigned the students to create personalized notes for new words. These notes were required to contain the word's meaning in their native language (L1) and an example sentence, though there was no specific recommendation to maintain a separate vocabulary notebook – none of the teachers knew that it would be beneficial.

Furthermore, the teachers found it suitable to incorporate written repetition, particularly in writing activities, to aid the students in their vocabulary learning process. The straightforward method of written repetition, where key words were rewritten, likely contributed to the students' learning. This strategy's effectiveness has also been supported by other studies, including one conducted by Candry et al. (2018).

The vocabulary section within the textbook consistently played a crucial role in the vocabulary teaching sessions. All teachers consistently utilized this section as a primary activity during their lessons.

E. Metacognitive Strategy

The students naturally employ the Metacognitive Strategy to regulate and assess their own learning progress, gaining an overall understanding of the learning process. This research aimed to investigate whether the teacher utilized any techniques related to this strategy, thereby raising students' awareness of applying it in their learning activities. By demonstrating these techniques, the students could recognize the importance of using them to manage their learning effectively.

As evident from the questionnaires and observation sessions, the teachers employed this teaching strategy by incorporating various techniques, including the use of English teaching media. For instance, they integrated songs into the teaching-learning process to introduce specific words related to certain parts of speech (identifying nouns in a song,

and so on). The teachers also explained that they utilized songs as a technique to enhance students' pronunciation skills, as songs serve as authentic models to imitate.

During one of the classes, a short cartoon movie was shown as part of the teaching strategy to instruct the students about narration. However, during this process, some words posed challenges and were discussed in the class before delving into the narration itself. To address this, the teacher assigned the students to work in groups and guess the word and its meaning as intended in the movie. In situations where words were skipped during the teaching process, the teacher occasionally reminded the students not to get stuck on specific words they didn't understand. Instead, they encouraged the students to skip some words as long as they grasped the general ideas of the text being presented. Additionally, in certain sessions, the teacher directly provided translations for difficult words and then continued the discussion with the target words of the lessons.

CONCLUSION AND SUGGESTION

The study investigated strategies employed by teachers for vocabulary enrichment in English as a Foreign Language (EFL) instruction. The research highlighted the importance of teachers exhibiting creativity in teaching strategies to engage students and foster their interest in vocabulary learning and other language skills. A mismatch between teachers' vocabulary teaching strategies and students' learning strategies was observed, leading to discrepancies in language proficiency.

The research findings emphasized the significance of employing effective teaching strategies that align with students' learning needs. Teachers were observed using different strategies, such as the "Determination Strategy," "Social Strategy," "Memory Strategy," "Cognitive Strategy," and "Metacognitive Strategy," to facilitate vocabulary learning in the classroom.

Furthermore, the study recognized the teachers' efforts to implement appropriate strategies that accommodated students' learning styles. The use of qualitative research allowed for a thorough exploration of the teachers' practices, providing valuable insights into their approaches and experiences.

In conclusion, this research sheds light on the importance of teacher creativity in employing effective vocabulary teaching strategies and adapting them to suit students' learning preferences. By bridging the gap between instructional strategies and students' learning strategies, teachers can create a more conducive and enriching learning environment for vocabulary acquisition and overall language development.

Finally, the study's outcomes are anticipated to offer valuable insights for teachers, educators, and local authorities regarding the most effective approaches to teach English as a Foreign Language (EFL) vocabulary to students. Additionally, future researchers may find this study beneficial as it could contribute to similar investigations encompassing different subjects.

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