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Teachers' Strategies in Teaching English Vocabulary: A Case Study At SMPN 1 Pringgabaya

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Abstract

This study aims to identify the strategies used by an English teacher to teach vocabulary to trilingual students, the reasons for selecting those strategies, and how the teacher implements them at SMPN 1 Pringgabaya. A descriptive qualitative approach with a single-case study design was employed. Data were collected through four classroom observations in two seventh-grade classes (VII.1 and VII.3), semi-structured interviews with one English teacher and purposively selected seventh-grade students and document analysis of the teacher's teaching module. The observation sheet was developed from Thornbury's (2002) four vocabulary-teaching strategies—visuals and gestures, verbal explanation, translation, and elicitation—which were further operationalised into eleven sub-indicators. Data were analysed using Miles et al.'s (2014) interactive model. The findings show that: (1) visuals and gestures and translation were the most consistently used strategies, appearing in all four observed sessions, while verbal explanation was used selectively and elicitation was the least frequently used; (2) the teacher cited three main reasons for strategy selection: limited school facilities and infrastructure, alignment with students' comprehension levels, and students' learning motivation; and (3) there was a discrepancy between the teaching module and classroom practice: the module included only seven of the eleven sub-indicators, whereas all eleven were observed in practice. The novelty of this study lies in its focus on trilingual students who use Sasak, Indonesian, and English, extending previous vocabulary-strategy research conducted mainly in bilingual contexts.

Keywords: *Case Study; Teacher Strategies; Teaching English Vocabulary.*

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INTRODUCTION

The Indonesian education curriculum positions English as the primary foreign language taught from elementary school through university. In EFL contexts, vocabulary mastery is foundational because it bridges and shapes students' success in listening, speaking, reading, and writing. Wilkins (1972) states that "without grammar very little can be conveyed, without vocabulary nothing can be conveyed." Without adequate vocabulary and deep understanding of meaning, students continue to face obstacles in comprehending text structure, expressing ideas, and building confidence in interaction.

Previous studies indicate that poor English achievement among junior high school students is often rooted in limited vocabulary mastery. Ramadani et al. (2025)

found that students at SMP Negeri 4 Palu had limited vocabulary and struggled to recall word meanings and identify word types. Somantri et al. (2020) demonstrated a strong positive correlation between vocabulary mastery and writing skills among second-year students at SMP Tunas Baru Ciparay. These studies confirm that students' English achievement depends heavily on vocabulary.

In practice, many Indonesian students still face obstacles in enriching vocabulary. The main factors are limited exposure to English outside the classroom and reliance on mechanical memorisation, which makes learning boring. Nation (2003) emphasises that teachers must use a variety of strategies because foreign-language learners cannot acquire a large vocabulary solely through incidental exposure. Teachers therefore need to implement interactive strategies appropriate to students' characteristics. Zamzam et al. (2024) also indicate that EFL learners in Lombok require a more planned and structured instructional approach to develop expected literacy and language competencies.

A preliminary study at SMPN 1 Pringgabaya, East Lombok, West Nusa Tenggara, revealed that students generally perceived their English proficiency as low. Most students admitted feeling hesitant and lacking confidence and struggling to keep up because of limited vocabulary. The school has a large student population: 484 seventh-grade students, 418 eighth-grade students, and 385 ninth-grade students. This large population presents a challenge for English teachers in introducing English formally in classroom learning.

One specific challenge at SMPN 1 Pringgabaya is students' use of three languages. Students have a strong attachment to Sasak and frequently use it at school; most tend to communicate in Sasak rather than Indonesian. Generally, vocabulary teaching involves translating meanings between Indonesian and English. Consequently, teachers must adopt an effective approach so that students' habit of using Sasak does not hinder their mastery of English vocabulary. Cameron (2001) notes that such a situation requires a higher-level cognitive approach because a third language slows vocabulary processing compared with a standard bilingual context. Arafiq et al. (2020) found that most English learners in West Nusa Tenggara who speak Sasak, Bima, and Sumbawa experienced obstacles in pronouncing certain sounds, especially /f/ and /v/, so teaching strategies need to consider students' regional language backgrounds. Faradila et al. (2024) also indicate that students from Sasak, Sumbawa, and Bima backgrounds experience mother-tongue interference, where the use of multiple languages creates limitations during classroom practice.

Sasak is the language family and surrounding community that students are introduced to from an early age. English teachers must therefore carefully select instructional strategies that do not sideline Sasak or strip away the cultural identity deeply ingrained in students. Ideally, the interplay of these three languages can become a unique asset, offering a fresh perspective on English vocabulary learning. The presence of three languages in students' lives presents a new challenge for this study and distinguishes it from previous research.

The presence of three different languages in the lives of students at SMPN 1 Pringgabaya presents a new challenge for this study, and distinguishes it from previous research. English teachers must employ strategies to address these challenges. Therefore, this study aims to identify and describe the teaching strategies

teachers use to teach vocabulary to students at SMPN 1 Pringgabaya, as well as the reasons for selecting those strategies.

METHODS

Research Design

The research was conducted from September 4–12, 2026, at SMPN 1 Pringgabaya, East Lombok, West Nusa Tenggara. A descriptive qualitative approach with a single-case study design was employed to gain an in-depth understanding of vocabulary teaching strategies within a specific classroom context (Yin, 2018; Creswell & Poth, 2018). To ensure data validity, the researcher utilized source triangulation (involving teachers, students, and documents), technique triangulation (comprising observation, interviews, and documentation), and time triangulation (through four observation sessions across two classes). Furthermore, the researcher performed member checking and maintained an audit trail to ensure the analysis process remained traceable. The research instruments included an observation sheet—developed based on the eleven sub-indicators of Thornbury's (2002) strategies—semi-structured interview guides for teachers and students, and a checklist for analyzing teaching module documents. Data were analyzed using the interactive model proposed by Miles et al. (2013), which involves data reduction, data display, and conclusion drawing and verification.

Data Source

This study used qualitative data on strategies and their implementation in teaching vocabulary concepts to trilingual students. These data were obtained through direct observation of teaching practices and by reviewing relevant instructional documents, such as lesson plans and syllabuses, used before and during the learning process. It should be emphasized that this study focuses on a single English teacher at SMPN 1 Pringgabaya. The purpose of focusing on this specific teacher is to identify and describe the strategies employed, the reasons for their selection, and how they are implemented. This approach also enables the researcher to observe how the same teacher applies vocabulary teaching strategies across different classroom settings.

Primary data in this study consisted of the specific data collected directly from the field. The researcher obtained these data through interviews with an English teacher and seventh-grade students, as well as direct observations of classroom teaching and learning activities at SMPN 1 Pringgabaya. Additionally, the researcher maintained detailed field notes to record classroom situations and instructional events. This component was essential for qualitative research that focused on investigating teacher strategies, their reasons for selection, and their implementation in teaching English vocabulary at SMPN 1 Pringgabaya.

The study gathered secondary data from various official documents and institutional records to support and validate the primary findings. Specifically, these secondary sources comprised (a) instructional materials used by the teacher, such as English teaching modules and lesson plans, (b) institutional documents from the school, including school profiles and curriculum policies, and (c) relevant literature, such as academic journals and previous studies related to vocabulary teaching strategies. This secondary data supported and strengthened the analysis of primary data obtained in the field.

Data Analysis

This study used an interactive qualitative data analysis model developed by Miles *et al.* (2013). This interactive analysis model was chosen because it was cyclical, meaning its three components could be carried out simultaneously and repeatedly throughout the research process. Therefore, it suited the characteristics of descriptive qualitative research, which is dynamic and responsive to emerging data in the field. The analysis process consists of several stages: data reduction, data presentation, drawing conclusions and verification.

RESULT AND DISCUSSION

Observation Results Regarding Teacher Strategies in Vocabulary Teaching

Observations of English teacher strategies at SMPN 1 Pringgabaya were conducted in classes VII.1 and VII.3, with two sessions per class. The observations took place over four consecutive sessions, starting with class VII.1 on Tuesday, September 8, 2026 (08:40–09:50 WITA); followed by class VII.3 on Wednesday, September 9, 2026 (07:30–08:40 WITA); class VII.1 on Thursday, September 10, 2026 (07:30–08:40 WITA); and finally class VII.3 on Thursday, September 10, 2026 (08:40–09:50 WITA). The observations in this study were conducted to examine aspects of vocabulary teaching strategies adapted from Thornbury (2002), comprising four aspects: Visuals & Gestures, Verbal Explanation (Definitions and Context), Translation, and Elicitation (Word Guessing). These four aspects were subsequently developed into eleven sub-indicators, namely: 1). Real Objects (Realia), 2). Visual Aids/Imagess, 3) Gestures&Mime, 4). Explanation/Simple Definitions, 5). Use of Synonyms / Antonyms, 6). Full Sentence Context, 7). Leading Questions (*Prior Knowledge*), 8). Use of the Native Language, 9). Meaning Verification Activities, 10). Providing Clues (Prompt), and 11). Word Guessing Activity.

Observations across four sessions revealed that all strategy indicators used in this study, based on Thornbury (2002), appeared during the classroom vocabulary learning process. The strategy indicators the teacher used included Visuals & Gestures, Verbal Explanation (Definitions and Context), Translation, and Elicitation (Word Guessing). However, during implementation, the English teacher did not consistently employ all of these indicators throughout the learning process. A detailed account of the observations for each indicator is presented below.

Visual & Gestures

The first strategy, used and consistently implemented across four sessions in two classes, was visuals and gestures. This strategy comprised three sub-indicators: realia (real objects), pictures/visual aids (such as textbook images and posters), and physical demonstrations (including gestures and mime). Observations revealed that the English teacher consistently utilized all these sub-indicators. Examples of this strategy in practice included the use of the realia sub-indicator, where the teacher brought real objects into the classroom (e.g., a pencil, a cup of coffee, a bottled drink) and asked students to name them in English; the use of the pictures/visual aids sub-indicator, where the teacher pointed to images in textbooks or on posters and asked students to provide the corresponding English terms; and the use of gestures and mime sub-indicator, where the teacher acted out specific scenarios such as eating, holding their stomach to indicate hungry, or using facial expressions to convey the taste of sour or spicy food to communicate meaning.

Verbal Explanation (Definitions and Context)

The teacher used the second strategy, Verbal Explanation (Definitions and Context), which comprised four sub-indicators: simple definitions, synonyms/antonyms, full sentence context, and leading questions (prior knowledge). Of these four, two sub-indicators, synonyms/antonyms and leading questions (prior knowledge), consistently appeared during the lesson implementation. The application of this strategy was evident across the sub-indicators: for the simple definitions sub-indicator, the teacher explained that spicy food contains chili, allowing students to infer the meaning of "*spicy*"; for the synonyms/antonyms sub-indicator, the teacher linked words to their synonyms or antonyms (e.g., "*delicious*" = "*yummy/tasty*" or contrasting "*sweet*" with its opposite); for sentence context sub-indicator, the teacher modeled complete sentences (e.g., "*My favorite food is fried rice because it is very yummy*"); and finally, for the leading questions (prior knowledge) sub-indicator, the teacher asked questions such as "*What did you have for breakfast?*" before introducing the core material.

Translation

The third strategy the teacher employed, and consistently used during vocabulary teaching, was translation. This strategy comprised two sub-indicators: first, use of the native language, evident when the teacher directly translated terms such as "*very delicious*" to the local Sasak phrase "*maik meres*"; followed by the word *"poteng ambon"* which in Indonesian means *"tape singkong"* and was translated into English as *"fermented cassava"*; and second, meaning verification, observed when the teacher asked a student to translate a short textbook passage to assess comprehension rapidly and confirmed understanding through brief follow-up questions (e.g., "*Is all tea sweet?*") rather than requiring a full translation.

Elicitation (Word Guessing)

The final strategy employed was Elicitation (Word Guessing), comprising the sub-indicators providing clues or prompts and word guessing. Compared with the other three strategies, the teacher rarely used this strategy. Only the providing clues or prompt sub-indicator was consistently observed, specifically when the teacher provided riddle-style clues (e.g., "*It is cold, sweet, and all children love it. What is it?*" followed by students answering "*ice cream*"), and when the teacher used a role-play clue (e.g., "*I am a food that makes a train sound tuuuuutt when ready. Who am I?*" and then students answered "*Kue Putu*"), which generated lively student participation. Next, the teacher used a Crossword puzzle on the whiteboard, drawing several squares horizontally and vertically and filling one square with a letter as a clue. This sub-indicator was observed only once, namely during the second session.

Interview Results Regarding Teacher Strategies in Vocabulary Teaching

After observing the implementation of English vocabulary teaching strategies, the researcher interviewed the teacher and students to corroborate the findings using the previously developed semi-structured interview guide. The findings are described below according to each indicator of vocabulary teaching strategies.

Visual & Gestures

Interviews with the teacher showed that the Visuals & Gestures strategy used various images from the student textbook to facilitate learning. Additionally, the teacher supported material delivery through physical gestures, such as acting out the word "*fry*" or holding their stomach to represent "*hungry.*" This combination of

images and gestures helped overcome limitations in available school equipment, such as the lack of LCD projectors. This clearly showed a lack of usable visual media due to the large number of classes; furthermore, when using video sources, advertisements sometimes appeared and disrupted students' concentration.

According to students' perceptions, this strategy was delightful, and they found it helpful for grasping the meaning the teacher conveyed without first consulting a dictionary. They felt this approach fit their English teacher's amusing personality perfectly.

Verbal Explanation (Definitions and Context)

According to the teacher, the use of the Verbal Explanation (Definitions and Context) strategy in learning English was done when the teacher provided a brief explanation using basic vocabulary that was known or familiar to the students, specifically words frequently used in daily life, such as "*My favorite food is fried rice because it is very yummy.*" The success of this strategy depended heavily on the length of the teacher's sentences. If the teacher frequently used long sentences, students tended to become very passive during the learning process.

Interview results showed that most students found the teacher's explanations easy to understand. However, when the teacher used longer sentences, students tended to consult the dictionaries they had with them, ask the teacher directly, or simply follow their classmates' answers.

Translation

According to the teacher, when teaching vocabulary, the teacher used direct translation of words or sentences several times. This is also consistent with the observation findings, in which the teacher was observed using this strategy in the classroom on several occasions. However, according to the teacher, this was not the main strategy; the teacher used it only for words that were truly difficult or when students did not understand the meaning. However, when implementing this strategy, the teacher believed it was necessary to be more careful when connecting to the local language used by students (Sasak language) without shifting the focus away from English language learning.

Meanwhile, during the interview, the students said the teacher often translated the words they were learning directly. However, the teacher usually gave students more time and opportunities to find out or guess the word in question first.

Elicitation (Word Guessing)

Elicitation is a strategy teachers use to stimulate student responses during the learning process. The aim is to prompt or draw out active responses from students without directly providing the information being sought during the lesson.

During the interview for this strategy, the researcher asked about the games the teacher used at the second meeting. The teacher said that, in his learning process, he used a word-guessing quiz based on the characteristics of the objects studied in the lesson. The teacher provided several clues to help students interpret the meaning. This strategy needed reconsideration for shy, less active students; consequently, the teacher needed to adopt alternative approaches to better support them.

Interviews with students also yielded positive feedback; they showed great enthusiasm when participating in games, as these eliminated boredom and anxiety during the learning process. They also felt happy when their answers were correct.

Checklist of Observation Results on the Completeness of Teacher Strategy Teaching Modules in Vocabulary Teaching

In addition to the results of observations and interviews with the teacher, this study also analysed the teaching modules the teacher developed at the beginning of the semester. This document analysis was carried out using a checklist. An analysis of the instructional materials developed by the teacher revealed that, out of the 11 sub-indicators associated with the four vocabulary teaching strategies, only seven were actually planned for use in classroom instruction (imagess/visual aids, gestures & mime, simple definitions, full sentence context, leading questions (prior knowledge), providing clues (prompt), and word guessing). The teaching module documents did not include four sub-indicators: realia (real objects), synonyms/antonyms, use of the native language, and meaning verification activities.

In addition to those four sub-indicators, the teaching module still covered the seven sub-indicators in all four classroom observation sessions, although some did not appear in every session. Based on the document analysis, the teacher implemented most sub-indicators related to teaching strategies when teaching vocabulary to students, particularly in classes VII.1 and VII.3.

This study was conducted from September 4 to 12, 2026, and included submitting the research authorization letter, observing the teaching process to identify vocabulary-teaching strategies, interviewing the teacher and seventh-grade students at SMPN 1 Pringgabaya, and analyzing instructional planning documents. This section presents findings addressing the research questions about the strategies the teacher uses, the reasons for using them, and the process of implementing them in vocabulary teaching. Detailed descriptions of these findings are presented below.

Strategies Used by Teacher in Teaching Vocabulary

The findings indicate that the English teacher at SMPN 1 Pringgabaya, specifically the teacher who taught classes VII.1 and VII.3, did not rely on a single teaching strategy. The teacher appeared to combine multiple strategies during the learning process to help students grasp the meanings of the words under discussion. This study focuses on four vocabulary teaching strategies based on Thornbury (2002): visuals and gestures, verbal explanation, translation, and elicitation. Using more than one vocabulary-teaching strategy contributes to student comprehension. Nurislam *et al.* (2023) note that teachers at junior high schools in Central Lombok use at least four strategies to support the learning process, namely realia, images, translation, and games, with images emerging as the most dominant strategy across the lessons conducted. However, beyond teaching strategies, students' approaches to comprehension and the strategies they use to process instruction also influence vocabulary comprehension. This is supported by research conducted by Aisyah *et al.* (2025), which indicates that while the choice of teaching strategy significantly impacts student comprehension during learning, vocabulary mastery is shaped not only by the teacher's strategies but also by the students themselves.

Across four classroom observations, visual and gesture and translation strategies had the highest implementation rates compared with the other two strategies, verbal explanation and elicitation. Visual and gesture strategies, as well as translation strategies, achieved an implementation rate of 100%, as they were observed in every meeting throughout the observation period, indicating that the teacher consistently used these strategies when teaching new vocabulary.

Visual & Gestures

The consistent use of realia strategies, evident in the incorporation of objects (such as pencils, coffee cups, and drinks), images in student textbooks, and gestures across all observed sessions, aligns with dual-coding theory. This theory posits that presenting information in both verbal and visual forms creates a more enduring impression in students' memory (Mayer, 2009). Other research indicates that children learning new English vocabulary are more likely to grasp meaning when using gestures, particularly imitative ones, than when relying solely on visual aids (Seftika *et al.,* 2026). Furthermore, Mahmuda *et al.* (2024) highlight that gestures reinforce the meaning of verbal communication delivered by teachers; in specific contexts or for particular words, gestures can be more effective in facilitating student comprehension. Thus, illustrations such as holding their stomach to depict hunger or making facial expressions to convey sourness and spiciness are not merely intended to entertain students, but to provide multiple codes by combining verbal and visual elements.

Verbal Explanation (Definitions and Context)

In the "verbal explanation" category, which comprises four sub-indicators, the use of synonyms and antonyms, as well as leading questions (prior knowledge), achieved a perfect percentage compared with the other two sub-indicators. The teacher appeared to prefer connecting the new words students were learning to meanings they already understood. For instance, during the observation, the teacher used the sentence "*My favorite food is fried rice because it's very yummy*" to introduce new terms such as "*delicious*" and "*tasty,*" thereby avoiding formal definitions of "*delicious*" during the lesson.

Furthermore, the teacher used illustrations of spicy food made with chilli peppers, which naturally produce a spicy sensation, allowing students to recall the spiciness they had experienced previously; this makes the material more contextual. Contextual illustrations that are relatable to students have been shown to create a more lasting impression and support retention far better than text-based, formal definitions. According to Idris & Luluatul (2026), contextual learning connects the topics students study to relevant backgrounds, linking the general nature of human learning to students' own learning processes. The teacher consistently strove to connect the learning situation with the students' personal experiences. This is evident when the teacher asked, "*What did you have for breakfast?*" at the beginning of the lesson as an initial step taken to introduce new vocabulary. As Cameron (2001) notes, students grasp the meaning of a foreign language better when the learning context is linked to personally meaningful experiences.

Translation

Based on the observations, translation emerged as one of the two primary strategies the teacher consistently used across the four observed sessions. This is particularly interesting because, according to interview findings, the teacher did not regard translation as a primary strategy; rather, it was reserved for words that were difficult or abstract for the students. For example, when studying *"ingredients"* that came in various types and flavors—such as sweet foodstuffs, which tasted delicious—the teacher did not immediately explain the meaning in Indonesian, but instead used local Sasak terms commonly used by the local community, such as the word *"Maik Meres"*, as a bridge to facilitate the transition between meanings in the two languages.

According to Nation (2003), using the first language is a pedagogical approach that can yield positive results in specific contexts, without compromising the ultimate

objective: enabling students to grasp the meaning of the word being studied. Another study conducted by Safitri *et al*. (2024), whose authors are English teachers at MTsN 1 Mataram, also yielded similar findings: the occasional use of the mother tongue and regional languages serves not merely as a shortcut to finding answers, but rather as a means to bridge the meaning of the vocabulary being studied. This practice is intentionally employed in classes where students understand and use more than two languages, specifically Indonesian and English.

Elicitation

The teacher's final vocabulary strategy was elicitation, specifically using clues (prompts) and word guessing. However, unlike clues, which appeared in every session, the teacher used guessing games only once, accounting for just 25% of instances. This disparity raises the question of why the teacher did not use guessing games in every session, given the students' highly positive response whenever such games were introduced. Interviews revealed that one reason guessing games were not used consistently was that the teacher typically devised them spontaneously in response to the classroom atmosphere; an object-guessing game would only be initiated if the English lesson seemed to be becoming passive. The teacher adopted this strategy because spontaneous games are flexible and serve as an incidental technique rather than a planned core activity.

A common feature of this strategy is the teacher's consistent use of contextual illustrations. During the observation, the teacher presented riddles by offering clues about specific objects, such as: "*It's cold, sweet, and all the children love it. What is it?"* and another example: *"I am a food that makes a sound like a train, 'tuuuuuuutt, ' when I am cooked. Who am I?*" After providing these clues, the teacher prompted students to deduce the meaning behind the questions and share their answers based on their reasoning. In addition, the teacher used a crossword puzzle game and called some students to the front of the class to fill in the blank boxes created on the whiteboard. Using games in vocabulary teaching fosters a positive classroom atmosphere. Students demonstrate clear enthusiasm for participating in vocabulary lessons when teachers employ this strategy. This aligns with research by Arafiq *et al.* (2024), which indicates that implementing gamification significantly improves vocabulary mastery among secondary school students. Consequently, these findings reinforce the conclusion that game-based strategies used during vocabulary teaching yield positive results, particularly in sustaining student motivation and engagement throughout the learning process.

Teacher Reasons for Choosing Vocabulary Teaching Strategies

Semi-structured interviews were conducted to identify the reasons behind teachers' choices of vocabulary teaching strategies. The interview results revealed at least three primary factors influencing teacher decisions: limited school facilities and infrastructure, alignment with students' level of understanding, and the students' learning motivation.

Limitations of School Facilities and Infrastructure

A primary consideration for teachers in selecting teaching strategies at SMPN 1 Pringgabaya is the limited availability of supporting educational facilities and infrastructure. This limitation does not imply a complete lack of equipment, such as projectors, but rather that the large number of classrooms requires sharing these resources across subjects. Beyond projector limitations, irrelevant advertisements

sometimes appear when teachers display videos. Teachers reported that this often disrupts students' concentration during lessons, adding another challenge when using technology-based instructional media. Disparities in facilities and infrastructure across schools are a primary reason teachers use diverse teaching strategies, particularly in English lessons focused on vocabulary.

Multimedia tools, such as projectors and sound systems, are essential in English language learning. These learning aids can develop vocabulary skills through both visual and auditory means. Multimedia can represent visual and auditory elements, as well as real-world objects, allowing students to connect with real-world or imaginary contexts (Brewster *et al.,* 2003). Furthermore, research by Jauhara & Iskhak (2025) shows that multimedia, specifically projectors, fosters positive student perceptions of learning animal-focused vocabulary. Naturally, teachers must still consider the role of media in their instruction, even when limited by the amount of available equipment. To address these constraints, teachers at SMPN 1 Pringgabaya use alternative resources such as textbooks and gestures to engage and motivate students, cultivating a learning habit that does not rely solely on the school's facilities.

Alignment with Students' Level of Understanding

The second reason the teacher cited relates to the proficiency level of the seventh-grade students at SMPN 1 Pringgabaya. To address these limitations, the teacher typically began the learning process with brief explanations using basic vocabulary familiar from students' daily lives. This approach served as a foundation before introducing more difficult vocabulary, thereby allowing the students to adjust as they learned.

This situation is corroborated by students' feedback indicating that the teacher's brief explanations facilitate understanding; however, students also noted that the teacher guided them to use English dictionaries, ask questions directly, and follow their peers' answers. This approach aligns with principles of student development, as forcing the direct delivery of complex information can hinder students from easily analyzing and internalizing it as a positive new experience. During the classroom learning process, the teacher carefully selected the topics and vocabulary to be taught. Whenever possible, the teacher used words familiar to the students, such as the food and drink vocabulary used during the observation, thereby aligning the material with the characteristics of students at the beginner level of foreign language learning. Cameron (2001) emphasizes the importance of a learning context that is concrete, contextual, and directly linked to the learners' real-life activities.

Considerations Regarding Student Motivation in Learning

The final factor teachers often consider when choosing a teaching strategy is students' learning motivation. This aspect is highly dynamic and may not always be accounted for in the modules or instructional materials developed beforehand. Since students' motivation for learning English can fluctuate during the learning process, teachers need to be prepared to employ various strategies.

This is also evident when the teacher explained new words or meanings to students in class, employing a variety of strategies, specifically those corresponding to the indicators outlined by Thornbury (2002). Furthermore, the teacher continued using the images and gestures strategy because students responded positively, finding it helpful for understanding meanings without needing to consult a dictionary; this strategy also complemented the teacher's own humorous and entertaining personality. The teacher sometimes incorporated word-guessing quizzes

into lessons, which kept students enthusiastic and engaged, preventing boredom and anxiety while also providing a sense of enjoyment when they answered correctly. According to Dörnyei (2001), a fun and humorous learning environment is an effective strategy for boosting learning motivation; additionally, games have been shown to foster a fun, competitive atmosphere among students. The teacher tended to select these strategies because students found them easy to remember and well received, helping create a positive learning environment and motivating students, particularly during vocabulary learning.

Another study by Sakinah *et al*. (2024) highlights the importance of teachers employing diverse strategies when teaching vocabulary; students tend to adopt the strategies modelled by their teacher during instruction when subsequently learning new vocabulary independently, thereby fostering a culture of independent vocabulary learning outside the formal school setting.

Implementation of Teacher Strategies in Vocabulary Teaching

Data on the implementation of teacher vocabulary teaching strategies are based on observation results. A detailed analysis revealed discrepancies between the teacher-planned strategies and the actual implementation in the classroom. Of the eleven sub-indicators used in this research, only seven appeared in the teacher's teaching modules; specifically, realia, synonyms/antonyms, translation, and meaning-verification were absent. This is interesting. After all, these four sub-indicators were always present in teacher meetings when teaching in class.

Discrepancies between developed teaching modules and actual classroom instruction typically arise from situational differences encountered during the learning process, prompting teachers to adapt their strategies. In this study, unplanned strategies that frequently emerged during the learning process included using realia, synonyms/antonyms, translation, and meaning verification. Teachers viewed these as responsive strategies, suitable for using objects present in the learning environment and for connecting concepts to meanings familiar to students, and they appeared to require less preparation and time. Devi *et al.* (2025) note that time constraints often influence teachers' decisions about which teaching models or strategies to use. The analysis indicates that while teachers implement teaching strategies grounded in the previously developed modules, they improvise in real-world classroom settings by using additional strategies deemed relevant and appropriate to prevailing classroom conditions.

According to Crismeilani *et al.* (2025), a study found that an English teacher at SMP Dwijendra Mataram used a combination of teaching strategies to address students' low motivation and difficulty memorising new vocabulary. A more varied implementation of strategies gives the teacher a greater opportunity to create meaningful vocabulary-learning conditions for students. However, it must be emphasized that, fundamentally, all types of teaching strategies have their own respective limitations during implementation. While simple verbal explanations can be effective in practice, they can make students passive if the teacher uses overly long sentences. The word-guessing strategy arouses student enthusiasm but is less accommodating for shy or less active students. Using the Sasak language facilitates student understanding given that most students come from the local area, yet care must be taken to ensure it does not divert focus away from learning English.

CONCLUSION

Based on the results and discussion, it can be concluded that English teachers at SMPN 1 Pringgabaya primarily employ visual strategies, gestures, and translation when teaching vocabulary, while verbal explanations and elicitation are used to a more limited extent. The choice of these strategies is driven by factors such as the school's limited facilities and infrastructure, the need to align with students' levels of comprehension, and the desire to maintain student motivation. The discrepancy between the teaching modules and actual classroom practice reveals that teachers adapt their strategies based on the situation; while the teaching modules include only seven of the eleven sub-indicators, teachers incorporate all eleven in practice. This finding suggests that lesson planning should be viewed as an initial framework that allows for responsive adjustments, rather than as a rigid set of procedures. Consequently, the development of teaching modules and teacher training programs should accommodate adaptive strategies—particularly in contexts involving trilingual students—to ensure that vocabulary instruction remains contextual and meaningful, without losing focus on the mastery of the English language.

RECOMMENDATION

Future researchers studying this topic should consider factors such as the number of classes and the teacher to be observed. Because every teacher has unique teaching strategies and characteristics, this approach would provide a broader overview of the strategies teachers can use when teaching vocabulary in schools**.**

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