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# A Comparison of Teachers' Strategies in Teaching English Vocabulary at Senior High School and Vocational High School

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**abstract** – Penelitian ini bertujuan untuk membandingkan strategi guru dalam mengajar kosakata bahasa Inggris di SMA dan SMA Kejuruan serta mengidentifikasi tantangan selama pembelajaran. Studi ini menggunakan pendekatan kualitatif dengan guru bahasa Inggris di SMA dan SMA Kejuruan di Sumberrejo sebagai subjek penelitian. Data dikumpulkan melalui wawancara dan dokumentasi. Hasil penelitian menunjukkan bahwa guru di SMA lebih fokus pada pembelajaran bahasa Inggris umum dan keterampilan bahasa dasar, sedangkan guru di SMA Kejuruan menyesuaikan materi dengan jurusan siswa dan kebutuhan tempat kerja. Strategi yang digunakan meliputi presentasi, diskusi, pembelajaran berbasis proyek, dan praktik berbicara. Tantangan yang dihadapi guru meliputi penguasaan kosakata siswa yang terbatas, perbedaan kemampuan siswa, dan kurangnya kepercayaan diri dalam menggunakan bahasa Inggris. Berdasarkan temu Hasilnya menunjukkan bahwa pendekatan guru untuk mengajar kosakata bahasa Inggris dipengaruhi oleh karakteristik sekolah yang berbeda-beda tersebut, dapat disimpulkan bahwa karakteristik sekolah yang berbeda memengaruhi strategi guru dalam mengajar kosakata bahasa Inggris.

**Kata kunci** – Strategi guru, Kosakata bahasa Inggris, SMA, SMA Kejuruan

**Abstract** – This study aimed to compare teachers' strategies in teaching English vocabulary at Senior High School and Vocational High School and to recognize the difficulties encountered during the teaching and learning process. This research used a qualitative method with English teachers at Senior High School and Vocational High School in Sumberrejo as the subjects of the study. The data were collected through interviews and documentation. The findings showed that teachers at Senior High School focused more on general English learning and basic language skills, while teachers at Vocational High School adjusted the materials to students' majors and workplace needs. The strategies used included presentation, discussion, project-based learning, and speaking practice. The challenges faced by the teachers included students' limited vocabulary mastery, differences in students' abilities, and lack of confidence in using English. Based on the findings, it can be concluded that different school characteristics influence teachers' strategies in teaching English vocabulary.

**Keywords** – Teachers' strategies, English vocabulary, Senior High School, Vocational High School

## INTRODUCTION

English is now the most widely used and needed language in various parts of the world. Learning and teaching it are not only important in academic activities but also in everyday life. Therefore, a new approach is needed that can attract students' interest and provide a more effective and faster learning experience (Djampulatova 2025). Grammar is crucial to learning English as a foreign language (EFL) because it provides the foundation for effective communication. (Rahmawati, Tirtanawati, and Wati 2026).

Learning vocabulary alone isn't enough to simply convey the material. Although the content is presented, students must actively participate in the process of learning English vocabulary.(Fatmasari et al. n.d.). In the development of all four language skills, vocabulary plays a crucial role (Journal and Language 2025). For those who speak English as a second language, learning vocabulary might be difficult. Learning L2 vocabulary is a prerequisite for learning English. Acquiring vocabulary is a difficult undertaking. According to other experts in this study, Faculty dan Tanjungpura (2018) found that pronunciation, spelling, word length, and meaning are the four elements that affect vocabulary acquisition difficulties. Vocabulary acquisition is a difficult endeavor. Learning vocabulary in a second language is the most difficult and complex task (As and Apoko 2023).

Several studies have reported that multimedia can be used to help learners acquire vocabulary knowledge through audio and visual channels(Kanellopoulou and Kermanidis 2019). One element that can help with learning achievement is educational media. (Munir et al. 2025). Learning media that can be used by teachers and students to improve literacy culture in the classroom are the Reading Corner and the Literacy Tree(Rozak and Parmawati 2024).

Learning strategies are needed to learn vocabulary so that learning can be maximized. Additionally, one of the key elements in learning a language is having effective learning practices. To achieve learning objectives using learning strategies, specific procedures are used. (Wijirahayu, Perdhana, and Syaepurohman 2024). Students can reflect on their learning and learn more quickly and enjoyably with the

help of learning strategies. Based on language learning methodologies, students can select the learning style that works best for them.

Based on initial findings from several secondary schools in Sumberrejo, namely SMK 2 Sumberrejo and SMAN 1 Sumberrejo both at the senior high and vocational high school levels, the English vocabulary learning process shows relatively consistent patterns and trends. The teacher also explained that online-based learning methods were almost never used, both because of time constraints and because of the belief that face-to-face learning provided greater flexibility and effectiveness in building vocabulary understanding.

## RESEARCH METHOD

A qualitative descriptive strategy was employed in this study. English teachers at SMAN 1 Sumberrejo and SMK 2 Sumberrejo served as the study's subjects. Semi-structured interviews and documentation were used to gather the data.

The researcher conducted interviews both online and face-to-face to obtain detailed information about teachers' strategies in teaching English vocabulary. Supporting documents such as lesson plans and teaching materials were also used to strengthen the data.

Qualitative descriptive analysis, which includes data reduction, data display, and conclusion drawing, was used to analyze the data. Additionally, expanding one's vocabulary is crucial both inside and outside of the classroom.

## RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

The findings showed that teachers at SMK and SMA used different strategies based on their educational contexts. The teacher at SMK 2 Sumberrejo focused on contextual vocabulary learning related to students' majors. Vocabulary materials were adjusted to vocational subjects and workplace situations. The teacher also used memorization techniques, games, and interactive activities to increase students' interest in learning English.

Meanwhile, the teacher at SMA Negeri Sumberrejo emphasized general English learning and productive vocabulary development. The strategies used included

writing activities, speaking practice, presentations, lectures, and project-based learning. The teacher also utilized instructional media such as Wordwall and smartboards to create interactive learning.

In terms of effectiveness, both teachers believed that their strategies helped students improve vocabulary mastery. Game-based learning and interactive media increased students' motivation and participation during classroom activities. However, the effectiveness depended on students' individual abilities and learning interests.

The challenges faced by both teachers were relatively similar. Students still had limited vocabulary mastery, differences in learning abilities, and low confidence in using English. In SMK, many students considered English less important because they focused more on vocational subjects. Meanwhile, in SMA, students experienced difficulties due to differences between English and their first language.

These findings support the theory proposed by Richards and Rodgers that teaching strategies should be adjusted to learning objectives and classroom contexts. Teachers at SMA and SMK selected different approaches because the students' educational needs and orientations were also different.

## CONCLUSION

The results show that teachers at Senior High School and Vocational High School use distinct approaches while teaching vocabulary in English. Teachers at Senior High School focus more on general English learning and productive language skills, while teachers at Vocational High School emphasize contextual vocabulary related to students' majors and workplace needs.

The strategies used by both teachers included presentations, project-based learning, speaking practice, games, and interactive media. Although the strategies were considered effective, teachers still faced challenges such as students' limited vocabulary mastery, differences in students' abilities, and lack of confidence in using English.

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