

## **English Teacher's Strategies in Teaching Vocabulary to Young Learners at Elementary Level An-Nahl Jambi**

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**Abstract:** The purpose of this study was investigating English teachers' strategies and also the dominant strategies used by English teachers in teaching vocabulary to young learners at Elementary Level An-Nahl Jambi. The subject of this study was an English teacher at Elementary Level An-Nahl Jambi. The investigation of this study was done through qualitative method with observation and interviews. The observation checklist, interview protocol, and video recorder were used as instruments for this study. The observation was done once in grade two which consists of three classes and the interview was done approximately 30-60 minutes two times. The findings of this study showed that there were five strategies used by teachers in teaching English vocabulary to young learners at Elementary Level An-Nahl Jambi. They were games, small groups, role-play, brainstorming, and demonstration. There were also the dominant strategies used by the teacher in teaching vocabulary to young learners are games and small groups.

**Keywords:** Teaching Strategy, Teaching Vocabulary to Young Learners, Vocabulary, Young Learners.

### **A. Introduction**

Teaching English to young learners, especially Elementary school students are not as easy as we think. They have different characteristics with adult or teenager, young learners more enthusiastic and active rather than older learners. In teaching young learners, teacher should be careful because young learners still in developing their mind, cognitive and linguistic. As stated by Cameron (2001) Young learners of English as foreign language have unique characteristics, we will find the differences that arise from the linguistics, physiological, and social development of the learners.

In teaching English, teacher has to be aware that young learners need more attention. Furthermore, teacher should find an interesting activity to attract them in order to acquire their English lesson easily. It means that teacher should has some strategies to make them interest in English. In learning a foreign language, vocabulary plays an important role. It is one of the most important aspects of the foreign language learning. Teacher has to create useful strategies because teaching

English vocabulary to young learners is different from adult and teenager. It was supported by Harmer (2007) teaching vocabulary to children is different from teaching vocabulary to teenagers and adults. It is because different age has different needs, competencies, and cognitive skill.

In teaching vocabulary, teacher's strategies are an important thing to achieve success in English teaching process. The strategies that provided by the teacher will help the young learners to acquire the new words easily. Zheng (2012) stated that teachers should facilitate vocabulary learning by teaching useful words and strategies to help them figure out the meaning by their own. Nunan (1991) stated that vocabulary is the collection of words that an individual knows. Furthermore, Setiawan (2010) stated that vocabulary is about the total number of words in a language. The development of a rich vocabulary is an important element in the acquisition of a second language. Furthermore, teaching vocabulary is such as an important task in teaching English because vocabulary achievement relates to all language learning and it is of concern to all four language skills.

Researcher involved one teacher at An-Nahl Elementary school as the participant in this research, because this school only has one English teacher. This research was conducted in grade two because the teacher in grade two more emphasize vocabulary in their English lesson rather than grade four and five. This study will focus on what are the strategies used by English teacher in teaching vocabulary to young learners at An-Nahl Elementary school Jambi and What are the dominant strategies used by English teacher in teaching vocabulary to young learners at An-Nahl Elementary school Jambi.

In language teaching, strategy is one of the ways that teacher uses in teaching the material. Commonly, the teacher uses strategy to help the learners understand the material well. According to Anil (2011) teaching strategy is generalized about plan in lesson which has structure, desire learner behavior, with the goals of instructions, and outline of tactics as an implement action of the strategy. Furthermore, Uno (2008) stated that teaching strategy is the ways that teacher choose and use in order to convey the teaching material. The strategy that used by the teacher can help the learners to achieve their learning goals.

Vocabulary is the collection of words that an individual knows. Linse and Nunan (2005) stated that teacher should facilitate vocabulary learning by teaching the learners with useful words. Useful words mean the words which are interest and intrigue the learners. Other statement about vocabulary came from Kamil and Hiebert (2005) they stated that vocabulary is generally defined as knowledge of words and also words meanings. Setiawan (2010) said that vocabulary is a total number of words which cover up the language with a translation and definition.

According to Regalla (2012) Vocabulary is one of components of a language. It has to be mastered by someone in order to help him or her to be able in communicate. Furthermore, Ivone (2005) stated that vocabulary is not only about list of words. It is a system embedded in language. It defines that vocabulary has important role in language proficiency.

According to Setiawan (2010) classifies vocabulary into two kinds. They are receptive and expressive vocabulary (productive vocabulary). Shepherd defines the receptive vocabulary as the words known when the learner listens and reads. Receptive vocabulary is called a passive process because the learner only receives thought from others. In term of language application, the receptive vocabulary is as the basic of vocabulary. Meanwhile, expressive vocabulary (productive vocabulary) is defined about the words when the learner speaks and writes.

According to Nunan (1991) the acquisition of an adequate vocabulary is essential for successful foreign language use, because without an extensive vocabulary people will be unable to use the structures and functions words that we have learned for comprehensible communication. Furthermore, Kamil & Hiebert (2005) Students who have larger vocabularies can understand text better, so they read more. When they read more, they learn additional words, it makes their vocabularies larger. Similarly, according to Wibowowati (2012) learning vocabulary is so important and we can introduce them about vocabulary because it is basic for all of activities in English such as listening, reading, speaking and writing.

Furthermore, according to Linse and Nunan (2005) vocabulary should be integrated into teaching four skills, listening, speaking, reading, and writing. For example, include the vocabulary as part a TPR (Total physical response) listening activity. Cameron (2001) listed the basic techniques that teacher can explain the meanings of new words, there are seven techniques that will be discussed here: First is teacher can teach learners by using an object. Second is teacher can teach learners by using figure. The next technique is using gesture. The fourth point of the technique that teacher can use is performing an action. The teacher also can use photographs. Teacher can attract them by using drawing or diagram on the board. The last technique is picture from book. Additionally, Linse and Nunan (2005) stated that students can benefit from learning how to use context clues and guessing the meaning from the context. Other theory come from Larsen-Freeman (2000) proposed teaching techniques, there are: dialog memorization, repetition drills, question and answer drills and complete the dialogue. As stated by Linse and Nunan (2005) young learners are children between the ages 5-12 years old. According to Pustika (2021) young learners are children who involved around 7-12 years old.

According to Harmer (2007) young children, especially them who ages between nine or ten, learn with differently from teenager and adults. These are show in the following ways: The first, they respond the meaning even if they do not understand about the individual words, and they often learn indirectly rather than directly. They tend take the information from all sides, learning from around them rather than focusing only with some topics that they have been taught. The third characteristic is their understanding is not just come from the explanation, but from what they have seen and heard. The fourth characteristic of young learners is in generally, they show about their enthusiast for learning and curiosity about the world around them. The next characteristic, they need individual attention and they tend to talk about themselves and they respond well to learn that using them as the topic in the classroom. They also have limited attention; they also getting bored easily and losing interest after ten minutes above. From this case, the teacher can make the learning process be more interesting and changing the way of teacher's teaching when the young learners are getting bored.

In teaching vocabulary in early stage is very important. Teacher should more attention to the young learners. In this primary level, young learners easier to imitate what people around them do. They have high curiosity, it because they want to know what others people do. Linse and Nunan (2005) stated that learners need to acquire vocabulary learning strategies in order to discover the meaning of new words that they learn. The strategies should be useful for with the classroom as well as when the learners are in situation meet new words and unfamiliar words. Furthermore, other theory comes from Wibowowati (2012) teaching English vocabulary at the primary school is basic aimed to build the learner's interest in learning a foreign language, therefore it is better taught vocabulary to young learners from the early ages. It is imperative to give the material that teacher uses should be familiar to the child in his everyday life, family, nouns, colors, toys, animals, time, month, season and so on.

## **B. Methods**

This research was concerned to investigate the strategies that used by the teacher in teaching vocabulary to young learners. From this investigation, the researcher knew the strategies that used by the teacher in teaching English vocabulary to young learners. Furthermore, the researcher was also concerned to investigate about the dominant strategies used by English teacher in teaching vocabulary to young learners. The data were provided by one English teacher who teaches English at An-Nahl Elementary school. In order to collect the data, the researcher used qualitative method with case study approach. It means that the research focused on gaining in depth understanding of a particular entity or event at a specific time.

In this study, the researcher used classroom observation with video recorder and observation checklist, furthermore instrument was an interview protocol. Observation in this study can gather the information based on the classroom condition, means that the researcher was observed the strategies that teacher used in teaching English vocabulary. During the observation, the researcher does not forget to use observation checklist as an instrument to check about the strategies that used by the teacher in the classroom. This research was involved one English teacher to ask some questions based on the questions list that provided by the researcher. The questions list was guided the researcher to ask the participant. This research was conducted face to face with the participant. This research was used voice recorder to record the participant's voice as evidence to collecting the data. This interview will hold around 20- 45minutes, it depends with the condition or situation.

## **C. Results and Discussion**

### **Results**

This section showed the findings which are obtained from classroom observation and interview. Based on the data analysis from classroom observation and interview, there were five strategies used by the teacher in teaching English vocabulary to young learners at Elementary School An-Nahl Jambi. From the classroom observation, the researcher found there were five strategies used by the teacher in teaching English vocabulary to young learners. They were game, small group discussion, role play, brainstorming and demonstration. Based on the classroom observation, game was used by the teacher as one of teaching strategy. It was used by the teacher to make students enjoy the learning. Beside of that, playing a game make the students practice their speaking in front of the class. Game was implemented in three classes; they were Usman bin Affan, Abu Bakar as Siddiq and Umar bin Khattab. The teacher was used the same game for three classes and the game was called "family members". From the observation, in Usman bin Affan class, the game was effective in order to make the students more active and enthusiast. The second was small group discussion, is actively involves participants and stimulates peer group learning, develops leadership, teamwork, communication, and also collaboration skills. The teacher made the classroom with fun activities and the students more active while playing the game. The next strategy was role play. From the observation, researcher found that the teacher implemented role play in teaching English. This strategy involves participants with add the variety, reality and specificity to the learning experience. This strategy provides the teacher immediate feedback about the learner's understanding and ability to apply the concepts. Role play was implemented in two classes. In Usman bin Affan class, the game used role play.

The students pretend to be someone else and practiced in front of their classmate. At the time, teacher asked the student to introduced their friends as “this is grandfather”, “this is grandmother”, “this is father”, “this is mother”, and others family member. Each of the students acted as family members and one of them introduced their friends. The fourth strategy was brainstorming. Brainstorming is process for generating multiple ideas/options. Brainstorming is strategy for creative productivity. It is an effective way to thing of the idea individually or within a group. Based on the classroom observation and interview with the teacher, it has found that the teacher gives some questions to the students at the beginning of the lesson by using some media in the classroom. The purpose of the questions and answer were to make the students being active and participating in delivering their ideas or their opinion. The last strategy was demonstration. Demonstration is performing an activity so the learners can observe how it is done. This strategy helps the learner to transfer theory to the practical application. In order to make the students understand about the material, the teacher should give the learners an opportunity to practice what the teacher has been demonstrated and it is augment the visual aids. Based on the observation that conducted by the researcher in three classes. This strategy used in Umar bin Khattab class, in order to demonstrated the picture that drew by the teacher.

## **Discussions**

Based on the findings of this research, there were five teaching strategies used by the teacher. They were game, small group discussion, role play, brainstorming and demonstration. Game was implemented in three classes. Furthermore, in brainstorming strategy, the teacher involved question and answer drills technique, repetition drills, and used object in teaching English vocabulary to young learners at elementary level An-Nahl Jambi. This strategy was implemented by the teacher in three classes by using different method. Then, the researcher was implemented small group discussion in three classes. Next strategy was role play, this strategy was implemented in two classes. The last strategy was demonstration. The teacher was implemented this strategy in Umar bin Khattab class. The technique that used by the teacher in demonstration is context clues and guessing the meaning and teaching vocabulary through draw something.

Based on the classroom observation showed the dominant strategies used by the teacher, were game and small group discussion. The teacher used game by involving the group discussion to play the game. The teacher implemented game in three classes. Game is an effective strategy, because this strategy got positive response from the students. The students look so enthusiast during the game played. It was also supported by the teacher’s statement in the second interview. She said that

children like playing, especially the children in grade 1 until 3, because of that the teacher uses game frequently in teaching English vocabulary to young learners.

#### **D. Conclusion**

This study aims to investigate strategies in teaching vocabulary to young learners. In obtaining the purposes of this research, this investigation was guided by two pre-research questions that are able to help the investigator in doing this research about the English teacher's strategies in teaching vocabulary to young learners at elementary level An-Nahl Jambi. The research questions were included: What are the strategies used by English teacher in teaching vocabulary to young learners at An-Nahl Elementary School Jambi? What are the dominant strategies used by English teacher in teaching vocabulary to young learners at An-Nahl Elementary School Jambi?

In the interview section, the teacher shared the experiences in teaching English young learners. She shared about her experience, feeling, and difficulty in teaching young learners and how to manage the classroom with the difficulty that she has. The teacher also shared the strategies that she used in teaching English vocabulary to young learners.

Using qualitative method with case study approach, this research was used classroom observation and interview as the instruments. The researcher used observation checklist to check the strategies that used by the teacher in the teaching English vocabulary to young learners at An-Nahl Elementary School Jambi. This observation was conducted once in grade two which consists of three classes and it was used video recording. Based on the classroom observation and interview, the result showed there were five strategies used by the teacher in teaching English vocabulary to young learners at Elementary School An-Nahl Jambi. They were game, small group discussion, role play, brainstorming and demonstration. The teacher also said that the dominant strategies that teacher used in teaching English vocabulary to young learners are game and group discussion. She stated that young learners, especially learners in grade 2, prefer in game. Group discussion was useful strategy, because it can make the students enthusiast when they are learning English lesson in the class.

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