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Strategies for learning English vocabulary among middle basic education students, school year 2024-2025

Estrategias para el aprendizaje de vocabulario en Inglés en estudiante de educación básica media, año lectivo 2024-2025

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Dedication

First, I would like to begin by dedicating this research work to God for granting me life, health, and wisdom throughout my educational journey. Likewise, I dedicate this thesis to my beloved husband, whose unwavering support and encouragement have been my guiding light throughout this process. I reserve a special place in this dedication for my wonderful son, who inspires me every day with laughter and curiosity, thank you for being my motivation. I would also dedicate to my mother, father and siblings, who have always stood by me with love and strength, your belief in me means the world. Lastly, I dedicate this work to my dear friends, who have shared in my joys and challenges, your friendship has been a source of comfort and inspiration. Thank you all for being an integral part of my life and for your endless support.

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1. Title.

Strategies for learning English vocabulary among middle basic education students, school year 2024-2025

2. Resumen

El vocabulario es un aspecto fundamental para lograr la competencia en inglés, ya que influye significativamente en las habilidades lingüísticas generales. A pesar de su papel crítico, las observaciones realizadas durante las clases y las prácticas revelaron que los estudiantes enfrentan deficiencias significativas en su vocabulario. Esto resalta la necesidad de comprender las estrategias que utilizan para aprender vocabulario. En consecuencia, el propósito de este estudio es investigar las estrategias utilizadas por los estudiantes de educación básica media en Loja durante el año escolar 2024-2025. Se desarrollaron dos preguntas de investigación: una centrada en identificar las estrategias más comúnmente usadas para aprender vocabulario en inglés, y la otra en describir los obstáculos que enfrentan los estudiantes de educación básica media en Loja durante el mismo período. Para abordar esto, se empleó un enfoque de métodos mixtos, combinando datos cuantitativos de un cuestionario con observaciones cualitativas en el aula. Específicamente, el estudio involucró a 18 estudiantes y 2 docentes de una institución privada, con la recolección de datos realizada durante un período de tres semanas. Estos participantes fueron seleccionados mediante muestreo por conveniencia. Los resultados revelaron que las estrategias cognitivas y de memoria, que incluyen juegos de palabras (Scrabble, Hangman), aprender reglas de ortografía, tarjetas didácticas, escribir oraciones con nuevas palabras, escuchar pódcast o videos y practicar el estrés y la entonación, fueron las estrategias más utilizadas. Los obstáculos identificados fueron la falta de oportunidades para practicar vocabulario en contextos auténticos, el uso limitado de la tecnología y la adaptación de la enseñanza del vocabulario a las necesidades de los estudiantes. En conclusión, el estudio resalta la importancia de integrar herramientas interactivas, aplicaciones de la vida real y enfoques personalizados para mejorar el aprendizaje del vocabulario. Consecuentemente, se recomienda que los educadores y responsables de políticas incorporen estas estrategias en el currículo de inglés para mejorar la adquisición de vocabulario y la competencia lingüística general en contextos educativos similares.

***Palabras clave:** aprendizaje de vocabulario, estrategias cognitivas, estrategias de memoria, contextos auténticos, necesidades de los alumnos.*

2.1 Abstract

Vocabulary is a fundamental aspect of achieving English proficiency, as it significantly influences overall language skills. Despite its critical role, observations during classes and practicum revealed that students face significant vocabulary deficiencies. This highlights the need to understand the strategies they use to learn vocabulary. Consequently, the purpose of this curricular integration work is to investigate the strategies used by middle basic education students at a private institution in Loja during the 2024-2025 school year. Two sub-research questions were developed: one focusing on identifying the most commonly used strategies for learning English vocabulary, and the second one on describing the obstacles faced by middle basic education students. To address this research, a mixed-method approach was employed, combining quantitative data from a questionnaire with qualitative insights from classroom observations. Specifically, the study involved 18 students and 2 teachers from a private institution, with data collection conducted over a three-week period. These participants were selected through convenience sampling. The findings revealed that cognitive and memory strategies, which include playing word games (Scrabble, Hangman), learning spelling rules, flashcards, writing sentences with new words, listening to podcasts or videos, and practicing stress and intonation were the most frequently employed strategies. The obstacles identified were the opportunity to practice vocabulary in authentic contexts, the limited use of technology, and adaptation of vocabulary instruction to learners' needs. In conclusion, this study highlights the importance of integrating interactive tools, real-life applications, and personalized approaches to enhance vocabulary learning. Consequently, it is recommended that educators and policymakers incorporate these strategies into the English language curriculum to improve vocabulary acquisition and overall language proficiency in similar educational settings.

Keywords: *learning vocabulary, cognitive strategies, memory strategies, authentic contexts, learners needs.*

3. Introduction

Globally, learning English is crucial as it opens numerous professional and personal opportunities and improves job prospects. Additionally, it facilitates global communication, provides access to quality education, and plays a vital role in technological development as well as access to scientific and cultural information. In order to achieve proficiency in English, mastering vocabulary is fundamental, as it plays a key role in improving overall language skills.

Despite the critical role of vocabulary in language proficiency, Susanto (2017) highlights the ongoing neglect of its importance in educational settings. Therefore, observations during classes and practicum revealed that students face significant vocabulary deficiencies. This highlights the need to understand the strategies they use to learn vocabulary. Additionally, students face obstacles such as limited exposure to English, lack of sources, among others.

Based on these observations, this study aims to explore the strategies used by middle basic education students to learn English vocabulary. This led to the main research question: What are the strategies for learning English vocabulary among middle basic education students, school year 2024-2025? To address the main research question, two sub-questions were also formulated, which were: What are the strategies most commonly used for learning English vocabulary among middle basic education, school year 2024-2025? and what are the obstacles and difficulties faced by middle basic education students in learning English vocabulary, school year 2024-2025?

Aligned with these questions, the general objective of this research is to investigate the strategies for learning English vocabulary among middle basic education students, school year 2024-2025. From this aim, the researcher included two specific objectives which were: to identify the strategies most commonly used for learning English vocabulary among middle basic education students, school year 2024-2025; and to describe students' obstacles and difficulties when learning English vocabulary among middle basic education. This study is significant as it offers insights for teachers and policymakers to improve instructional practices and create supportive learning environments. By identifying common vocabulary learning strategies and describing students' obstacles, it fills a gap in research and inspires innovative approaches to language proficiency. Additionally, this study contributes to the professional development of the researcher by refining her teaching and research skills.

Several studies, such as those by Ghalebi et al. (2021), Gorgoz & Tican (2019) and Yaacob et al. (2019), they have explored vocabulary learning strategies in various contexts. However, there

is a significant gap in research focusing on middle basic education students in regions like Loja, Ecuador, particularly regarding the efficacy, challenges, and preferences of students concerning vocabulary learning strategies in educational settings. By filling this gap, the current study offers a targeted analysis of vocabulary learning strategies and its impact, providing valuable contributions to the fields of education and linguistics.

Finally, this study focused on investigating the most common vocabulary learning strategies and the obstacles faced by 5th, 6th, and 7th middle basic education students at a private school in Loja, Ecuador. The participants aged between nine and eleven years, are expected to have English proficiency levels ranging from A1.2 to A2.2. Despite potential limitations such as the reliance on self-reported data, the researcher being a pre-service teacher rather than an experienced investigator, and the short duration of the study, the findings will guide educators in identifying effective vocabulary learning strategies and addressing the obstacles students face in acquiring English vocabulary.

4. Theoretical Framework

The aim of this literature review is to examine the most relevant content related to English learning strategies. This theoretical framework is grounded in the Language Learning Strategy theory developed by Rebecca L. Oxford. According to Oxford (1990), language learners employ a variety of strategies that can be categorized into two main groups: Direct and Indirect strategies. Recent studies and empirical research papers, sourced from reputable databases such as ERIC, Google Scholar, and ResearchGate, provide the foundation for this review. The framework includes sections on the definition and importance of vocabulary, learning approaches, types of vocabulary, and various learning strategies. Additionally, it incorporates previous studies that reinforce the findings, thereby offering a comprehensive view of effective practices and approaches to vocabulary instruction, where students are transitioning from basic word recognition to more complex word usage and nuanced understanding.

4.1 Vocabulary

4.1.1 Vocabulary Definition

Vocabulary refers to words and expressions used by a particular person or group. It is supported by Habib (2023), he describes vocabulary as the collection of words known by someone who speaks a specific language. Similarly, Tobar et al. (2024) suggest that vocabulary can be generally understood as the entire set of words present in a language. Furthermore, Schmitt & Schmitt (2020) provide a more comprehensive definition, noting that vocabulary includes not only individual words (lexicons) but also fixed expressions, idioms, and collocations that contribute to the natural use of language. In short, vocabulary includes all words, expressions, and phrases that form a core part of language use and understanding. Once the vocabulary has been defined, it is important to know its importance, its types, its dimensions, its aspects and more.

4.1.2 Vocabulary Significance

Wilkins (1972) states that “without grammar, very little can be conveyed, but without vocabulary, nothing can be conveyed” (p. 111). This phrase demonstrates the essential role of vocabulary in communication, highlighting that while grammar provides structure, vocabulary is necessary for conveying meaning. Without vocabulary, effective communication cannot occur. Similarly, Pezoa et al. (2019) emphasize that developing vocabulary is crucial for enhancing students' language abilities. Expanding vocabulary directly contributes to students' overall language proficiency, making it easier for them to understand, communicate, and express ideas

across reading, writing, speaking, and listening. Likewise, Ningrum & Pusparini (2020) affirm that “vocabulary is the most important component of language because it affects the four language skills: listening, speaking, reading, and writing” (p. 67). Therefore, vocabulary is a key determinant of success in developing English language skills.

4.1.3 Types of vocabulary

According with Hatch, E. and Brown, C (1995) as cited in Nasser (2022) vocabulary is classified into two types: Receptive and Productive.

4.1.3.1 Receptive Vocabulary: It refers to words that learners understand when they encounter them in listening or reading. This vocabulary represents the words that learners have come across through listening or reading activities.

4.1.3.2 Productive Vocabulary: It involves words that learners can actively use in speaking and writing. To utilize this vocabulary effectively, students must not only grasp the meaning of the words but also be proficient in their pronunciation and spelling

4.1.4 Vocabulary Learning Approaches

Chamot (2005) as cited in (Mugheri et al. 2022) defines approaches as techniques that accelerate the learning process, providing valuable and purpose-driven methods. Therefore, approaches to learning vocabulary vary according to context and learner needs. For example, Mugheri et al. (2022) classify vocabulary learning approaches into five main categories.

- **Determination Approach:** These approaches assist learners in understanding new vocabulary by analyzing word parts, such as roots and affixes, using dictionaries, or finding context clues. Learners use their own resources to deduce meanings without external help.
- **Social Approaches:** These involve learning vocabulary through social interactions, where learners may ask teachers or peers for explanations, translations, or synonyms, and practice vocabulary in group settings.
- **Memory Approaches:** These approaches focus on connecting new words with previously learned concepts through techniques like visualization, linking words with personal experiences, using semantic maps, or associating words with antonyms or synonyms.

- **Cognitive Approaches:** These structured approaches help learners reach specific language goals, such as taking notes, analyzing information, summarizing, or organizing vocabulary through lists and charts.
- **Metacognitive Approaches:** In these approaches, learners plan, monitor, and evaluate their progress. They actively manage their study habits by regularly reviewing vocabulary, testing themselves, and using resources like news, films, or music to reinforce learning.

On the other hand, Schmitt & Schmitt (2020) propose three primary approaches to vocabulary learning:

- **Incidental Learning:** Acquiring vocabulary through exposure to language in context, such as reading or listening.
- **Explicit Instruction:** Direct teaching of vocabulary through methods like word lists, flashcards, and focused activities.
- **Independent Learning Strategies:** Encouraging learners to develop their own strategies for discovering and consolidating new vocabulary.

In conclusion, vocabulary learning approaches provide diverse pathways for learners to acquire and retain new words effectively. By combining incidental exposure, explicit instruction, and independent learning practices, educators can address different learning needs and contexts. These approaches support not only vocabulary acquisition but also long-term retention and language proficiency, enabling learners to build a more robust and adaptable vocabulary over time.

4.1.5 Taxonomy of vocabulary learning strategies.

Taxonomies of vocabulary learning strategies are organized systems that classify these strategies into specific categories. Schmitt & Schmitt (2020) present a classification that includes discovery and consolidation strategies. Discovery strategies are those that learners use to discover the meaning of new words, such as using dictionaries or inferring meaning from context. On the other hand, consolidation strategies, which include techniques such as mnemonics and temporal repetition, are used to reinforce and retain the meanings of new words.

On the other hand, Nation (2013) as cited in Gholaminejad (2020) proposes a taxonomy based on word use and frequency, which distinguishes between high-frequency and low-frequency words. According to Nation, high-frequency words require less intensive learning strategies because they appear frequently in different texts, while low-frequency words require more

conscious and focused learning strategies. This taxonomy helps teachers prioritize vocabulary according to the usefulness and practicality of the words in real-world communication

Oxford (1990) as cited in Jaikrishnan & Ismail (2021) offers another perspective by classifying vocabulary learning strategies into direct and indirect strategies. Direct strategies include explicit actions to learn words, such as practicing pronunciation or using flashcards. Indirect strategies, on the other hand, support learning in more subtle ways, such as through metacognitive strategies like planning and self-monitoring, or affective strategies like reducing anxiety and increasing motivation. This comprehensive classification helps learners identify and use different methods to improve vocabulary.

4.1.6 Strategies for learning vocabulary

Vocabulary learning strategies can be regarded as techniques, actions, thoughts, approaches, steps or attempts to facilitate language learners' vocabulary learning (Yan, 2023). Maldonado-Mera et al. (2018) also defines strategies as the art of directing operations or affairs, and in regulatable contexts, it is considered as a set of rules that ensure the optimal outcome of a decision at all times. Therefore, it can be concluded that vocabulary learning strategies are methods or techniques or activities used to facilitate the acquisition, retention, and use of new words.

Vocabulary learning strategies can be classified into many types depending on the perspective of the author. This research focuses on Oxford's (1990) classification, as cited in Yan (2023), which categorizes language learning strategies into two main types: direct and indirect. Direct strategies include memory, cognitive, and compensation strategies, while indirect strategies encompass metacognitive, social, and affective strategies. Each of these strategies will be explored in detail below.

- **Memory Strategy:** these are techniques for remembering and retaining vocabulary effectively. It includes methods such as spaced repetition, mnemonic associations, use of flash cards, among others.
- **Metacognitive Strategies:** involve the awareness and control that students have over their own learning process. They include study planning, self-assessment, reflection on progress, and adaptation of strategies according to individual needs.
- **Cognitive Strategies:** These strategies focus on active processing of vocabulary-related information. They include techniques such as grouping words by categories, identifying common roots and prefixes, concept mapping, among others.

- **Social Strategies:** These strategies involve the use of social interactions to enhance vocabulary learning. They include activities such as discussing the meaning of words with classmates, participating in study groups, practicing conversations in the target language, among others.
- **Affective Strategies:** These strategies refer to the attitudes, emotions, and motivations related to vocabulary learning. They include techniques for maintaining motivation, managing anxiety, setting learning goals, rewarding oneself for accomplishments, among others.

4.1.7 Vocabulary dimensions

Vocabulary dimensions refer to the various aspects or categories of vocabulary knowledge. These dimensions can vary depending on the perspective of the author. For example, Webb (2020) states that vocabulary dimensions are categorized into breadth, which refers to the number of words known, and depth, which refers to the level of understanding of each word. On the other hand, Zhang (2021) emphasizes that the fundamental dimensions of vocabulary are comprehension and phonological accuracy. In this study, the researcher will focus on the dimensions suggested by Zang.

- **Vocabulary Comprehension**

Vocabulary learning encompasses several skills such as spelling, word meaning, and the use of synonyms and antonyms. Research by authors such as Lawrence et al. (2022), expose that the connection of these subskills helps in the development of a good lexicon.

- **Phonological Accuracy**

As mentioned by Mason (2018), phonological accuracy is an essential part of fluency and comprehension of a foreign language. This skill not only improves communication, but also helps in its correct pronunciation.

From the aspects describe ahead, this research will focus on the most suitable for middle students, which are spelling, meaning, and pronunciation.

4.1.7.1 Spelling

Lawrence et al. (2022) highlights that good spelling is closely related to the ability to remember and understand new words. They argue that accurate spelling aids in creating stronger mental representations of words, which in turn enhances both comprehension and retention.

- **Strategies to learn spelling:** According to Palomino (2021), four key strategies can help students improve their spelling:

1. **Sounding Words Out:** Students use phonetic strategies by breaking down words into individual sounds and spelling them out. This starts with simple words and progresses to more complex ones, teaching double vowels and silent letters.
2. **Word Study:** This strategy involves recognizing spelling patterns in groups of words, identifying exceptions, and applying these patterns to spell new words.
3. **Spelling Games and technology:** Interactive games such as spelling bees, word scrambles, and word searches engage students, making spelling practice enjoyable and reinforcing learning through play. Moreover, technology provides interactive platforms for spelling practice.
4. **Personalized Learning:** Tailored strategies based on each student's needs, such as creating personalized word lists and providing extra support for those with learning difficulties, help target specific spelling challenges.

Example: When students play “Scrabble” in class, they must form words correctly using the available letters, which forces them to think about accurate spelling. By playing these games frequently, students not only have fun, but they also retain the spelling of words better and are more motivated to learn new vocabulary

4.1.7.2 Meaning

According to Cambridge Dictionary (n.d.), “the meaning of something is what it expresses or represents”. This definition highlights that meaning is not only about direct interpretation but also encompasses the ideas and emotions conveyed through language, allowing for a deeper understanding of both words and concepts in communication.

- **Strategies to learn meaning**

In order to learn meaning of words effectively, there are several strategies that authors such as McKeown (2019), Mustaeva et al. (2022), Nation (2019), and Schmitt & Schmitt (2020) suggested. These strategies include:

1. **Contextual Guessing:** One of the most effective strategies for learning vocabulary is to guess the meaning of words based on the context in which they are used. This involves paying attention to the surrounding words and the overall message of the text to infer meaning.

2. **Keyword Method:** The keyword method involves associating new words with familiar concepts or sounds, is another powerful way to remember meanings. By creating mental images or linking the new word to something already known, learners can strengthen memory retention.
3. **Repetition and Review:** It emphasize the importance of repetition and reviewing vocabulary in various contexts. They argue that revisiting words in different sentences, conversations, or reading materials helps solidify their meaning and usage over time.
4. **Use of Visual Aids:** It highlights the effectiveness of using visual aids, such as images, charts, or diagrams, semantic maps, flashcard, posters to help students grasp the meanings of new words. These visual representations provide a concrete way for learners to connect words to their meanings.
5. **Direct Teaching of Meaning:** It support the idea that directly teaching word meanings, especially for complex or abstract terms, is crucial in helping students fully understand and use vocabulary. Teachers can provide clear definitions, examples, and explanations to ensure comprehension.

Practical example: To create a focused semantic map we will use the word “ecosystem” and include related words and concepts such as “habitat”, “species”, “food chain”, “biodiversity” and “environment”, with their respective concepts and examples of each word looking for the correlation of each term. This visual structure facilitates the understanding of the connections between different words and concepts, improving vocabulary retention and its practical application.

4.1.7.3 Pronunciation

Derwing & Munro (2019) state that pronunciation is the production of sounds, stress patterns, and intonation in a way that allows clear communication. As Zargar et al. (2020) affirm, accurate pronunciation is crucial for effective oral communication. They emphasize that clear pronunciation not only improves listening comprehension among speakers of different proficiency levels, but also facilitates more fluent and successful interaction in varied communicative contexts.

- **Strategies to learn pronunciation**

Various strategies can help learners improve their pronunciation skills, making their speech clearer and more comprehensible. These strategies include active listening to native speakers,

practicing repetition and drilling, utilizing minimal pairs, and incorporating technology. (Brown, 2021; Derwing & Munro, 2019; Metruk, 2024; Nation, 2019)

- **Minimal Pairs Practice:** Using minimal pairs—words that differ by only one sound (e.g., "ship" vs. "sheep")—helps students distinguish between similar sounds. By focusing on these subtle differences, learners become more aware of their pronunciation and can improve both accuracy and listening skills.
- **Phonetic Training:** It highlights the importance of using the International Phonetic Alphabet (IPA) to teach students how to recognize and produce sounds correctly. Phonetic training gives learners a visual guide to the sounds of English, making it easier for them to practice pronunciation in a structured manner.
- **Drilling and repetition:** This suggests that repetition and drilling of key sounds, words, and phrases is crucial in developing muscle memory for correct pronunciation. Through repeated practice, learners can internalize the correct articulation of difficult sounds, leading to more fluent speech.
- **Listening activities:** Exposure to authentic spoken English through listening activities, such as songs, podcasts, or conversations, is crucial for developing pronunciation skills. By listening to native speakers, learners can internalize correct pronunciation patterns, rhythms, and intonation, which they can then emulate in their speech.
- **Intonation and Stress Awareness:** It stresses the importance of teaching intonation and word stress. They argue that mastering the rhythm and melody of English is as important as learning individual sounds, as it greatly affects how comprehensible a speaker is. Activities like shadowing native speakers or marking stress in sentences can improve students' awareness of these features.

Practical example: imagine learning the new word "yacht" (a large, luxurious boat). You see it written down and understand its definition. However, if you mispronounce it as "yackt," you might struggle to connect the spoken word to its meaning when you hear it in conversation. Conversely, by focusing on the correct pronunciation (yawt), you create a stronger mental link between the sound, spelling, and meaning of "yacht." This reinforces your memory of the word and makes it easier to recognize and use it in different contexts.

4.1.8 Factors that affect vocabulary learning.

Vocabulary learning is influenced by a variety of factors that can be categorized into individual, contextual, and strategic elements. Understanding these factors is essential for educators and learners alike to enhance vocabulary acquisition effectively.

- **Motivation and attitudes:** an important factor influencing students' ability to learn vocabulary, affecting both their persistence in study and the depth with which they process new words Barcroft (2018).
- **Educational context:** according to Kim & Elder (2019) the educational context, including the resources available and pedagogical strategies used, plays a crucial role in how students acquire vocabulary in second language learning environments.
- **Cognitive development:** plays a critical role in the ability to process and retain new vocabulary, being essential for successful word learning in different educational contexts (Kaushanskaya & Marian, 2017).

4.2 Previous Studies

Gorgoz & Tican (2019) in his research shows that the level of vocabulary learning strategies use in high school students is higher than the average value. Vocabulary learning strategies in a foreign language vary significantly by gender in the subdimensions of "memory strategies", "cognitive strategies", "metacognitive strategies", and "affective strategies", as well as in the total scale. Significant variation by grade level was also found in the same subdimensions and in the total scale. In general, as grade level increases, the use of vocabulary learning strategies decreases.

In another significant study, Yaacob et al. (2019) found that students predominantly used vocabulary learning strategies (VLS) at an intermediate level, with averages very close to each other. The most commonly used strategies are "Use learned material" and "Create new words to overcome communicative limitations", while the least used are "Create English sentences with learned words" and "Use media and technologies". Vocabulary retrieval and metacognitive strategies are also used sparingly. In general, students show low use of memory storage strategies, with the exception of "Essay" and "Create".

On the other hand, Ghalebi et al. (2021) focused on the differences in vocabulary learning strategies between high and low proficiency Iranian English learners. Their research indicated that high proficiency learners utilized determination, memory, cognitive, and metacognitive strategies

more frequently than their low proficiency counterparts. Determination strategies, for instance, involve guessing the meaning of words using contextual clues or using dictionaries.

As well as Özeroğlu & Doğruöz (2023) found that English vocabulary learning (VLS) strategies vary significantly depending on the gender and educational level of the parents. Female college students use "Note-taking" and "Repetition" strategies more than male students, which is consistent with previous research that highlights greater competence and positive attitudes toward language learning among women. That is, both gender and parents' educational level play a crucial role in the adoption and effectiveness of vocabulary learning strategies.

According to the results of Muminova (2022), both Korean and Uzbek participants showed widespread approval towards all vocabulary learning strategies investigated in the study. It was observed that in both the Korean and Uzbek contexts, students expressed a strong interest in using strategies related to memory and metacognition to improve their vocabulary learning. These findings suggest a convergence in vocabulary learning preferences and approaches among English as a foreign language learner in Korea and Uzbekistan.

Goundar (2019) investigated the vocabulary learning strategies employed by learners of English as a foreign language (EFL). The study found that common strategies, including repetition, dictionary use, and contextual learning, were beneficial across various languages. Additionally, it highlighted the importance of incorporating diverse reading materials in English classes to expand students' vocabulary and expose them to different contexts. Furthermore, the research underscores the need for innovative approaches, such as vocabulary journals for regular review and creative writing exercises to promote active vocabulary use. The study also emphasized explicit vocabulary instruction, where teachers directly teach new words and their meanings, along with continuous review practices to reinforce retention.

This theoretical framework provides a comprehensive analysis of vocabulary acquisition in middle basic education, integrating key concepts, definitions, and strategies from leading authors and recent studies. It underscores the critical role of vocabulary in comprehension and communication and highlights effective learning approaches, including explicit instruction, vocabulary journals, and creative writing exercises. The framework identifies significant gaps in current vocabulary pedagogy, such as the need for context-specific research and a deeper understanding of students' vocabulary acquisition challenges. By addressing these gaps and

emphasizing innovative and practical strategies, this framework not only enhances current educational practices but also lays a strong foundation for future research in vocabulary learning.

5. Methodology

This section presents the methodology used to conduct the study, describing the overall approach and procedures implemented to address the research questions. It outlines the design chosen to gather and analyze data effectively, as well as the key methods applied to ensure the reliability and validity of the findings. Through this methodological framework, the study seeks to provide a clear and systematic understanding of the research process.

5.1 Setting and Participants

The research was conducted in the city of Loja, located in southern Ecuador, within a private school that offered basic general education. The geographical coordinates of the institution are: latitude -4.013654, and longitude -79.199811. The focus was on middle basic education, which, according to MinEduc (2019), includes fifth, sixth, and seventh grade students. The research included 18 children and 2 English teachers. The student group consisted of eight males and twelve females, with ages ranging from nine to eleven years. They were expected to have an A1.2, A2.1 and A2.2 English proficiency level, as outlined by the Ministry of Education.

Participants were selected through purposive sampling, a non-random technique involving deliberate selection based on specific participant qualities (Creswell, 2012). This approach did not require underlying theories or a predetermined number of participants. Additionally, homogeneous purposive sampling was employed to select candidates with similar traits or specific characteristics. This approach was chosen because the questionnaire was administered to eighteen middle basic education students studying English. Once participants were selected, the researcher requested and received permission from the institution's principal to observe. To maintain privacy, each participant was assigned an individual code.

5.2 Procedure

The procedure for this research began with an initial introduction to the participants, in which the researcher explained the purpose and scope of the study. Following this, the researcher sought and received permission from the institution (See Annex 4), allowing the observations over a period of three weeks. The observations included a set schedule of two 40-minute English classes per week, focusing on middle basic education students. During this period, the researcher used two data collection instruments to ensure a comprehensive understanding of the vocabulary learning strategies employed by students and teachers. First, observation guides (See Annex 2) were conducted during live instruction to capture real-time interactions and learning strategies. These

observations included specific attention to vocabulary instruction strategies, and challenges faced by students. Each class observation lasted 40 minutes, ensuring consistent and detailed insights into the classroom dynamics and instructional approaches in use. Additionally, at the end of the application of the observation guides, a structured questionnaire (See Annex 1), containing 12 statements, was administered individually to each student, taking approximately 30 minutes.

5.3 Method

The present investigation adopts a mixed-methods approach, integrating both quantitative and qualitative methodologies to provide a comprehensive view of vocabulary learning strategies. Mixed methods allow for a more complete understanding of research questions by combining numerical data with contextual insights (Creswell & Plano Clark, 2017). This approach is particularly well-suited to the study as it captures measurable trends through quantitative data while simultaneously exploring in-depth perspectives through qualitative analysis. Given the complexity of language learning, the mixed approach enables a nuanced analysis of vocabulary learning practices, considering both frequency and contextual challenges.

5.3.1 Research Design

The research work employed a Descriptive Research Design to systematically explore vocabulary learning strategies and the challenges students face in middle basic education. Descriptive research is particularly effective for gathering information on current practices, behaviors, and opinions without manipulating the environment or variables (Siedlecki, 2020). Moreover, according to Siedlecki (2020), this design does not seek to establish cause-and-effect relationships but instead focuses on "what" exists within the current conditions of the subject being studied. This approach allowed the researcher to observe and describe vocabulary learning strategies among students, providing a comprehensive overview of their natural behaviors and interactions in the classroom context.

According to Creswell (2012), the steps in the process of research are:

5.3.1.1 Identifying a Research Problem and Objectives

Through direct observations and experiences as both a practicum instructor and English learner, the researcher noted that vocabulary acquisition plays a crucial role in English language learning. Mastering vocabulary is essential for achieving proficiency and improving communication skills. However, many students face difficulties in learning and retaining new vocabulary due to a lack of effective strategies, limiting their progress toward necessary proficiency

levels. Susanto (2017) highlights that vocabulary is often overlooked in educational contexts, impacting students' success across all language domains. Research by Yaacob et al., (2019) underscores a gap in studies focused on vocabulary learning strategies that effectively support students in achieving proficiency goals. Moreover, Özeroğlu & Doğruöz (2024) identify other obstacles, such as insufficient resources and limited teacher training, which restrict the learning tools available to students.

Therefore, this study aims to address these gaps by investigating vocabulary learning strategies for middle basic education students. After defining the research problem, the research questions were set, and based on that, the objectives were established which are: to identify the strategies most commonly used for learning English vocabulary among middle basic education students, school year 2024-2025; and to describe students' obstacles and difficulties when learning English vocabulary among middle basic education students, school year 2024-2025.

5.3.1.2 Literature Review

Once the research problem was identified, a comprehensive literature review was conducted to gain a better understanding of the variables involved in the study. This review included examining existing research, theories, and best practices related to vocabulary learning strategies, with a particular focus on identifying gaps and trends in current educational approaches. Additionally, the review explored various frameworks and classifications of vocabulary learning strategies, such as Oxford's (1990) taxonomy, to identify relevant strategies that could support middle basic education students. The literature review not only provided theoretical insights but also guided the development of the research objectives.

5.3.1.3 Selecting the Participants

Selecting a representative sample is essential to ensure that findings are applicable to a broader student population. In this study, purposive sampling was employed to select 18 middle basic education students actively engaged in learning English vocabulary. The researcher sought permission from the institution, submitting a formal request for the observation and received approval from the principal to proceed with the planned observations. This approach allowed the research work to focus on a specific group with relevant characteristics, ensuring the data collected would provide valuable insights into vocabulary learning strategies among this population.

5.3.1.4 Collecting Data

Considering the literature and participant profiles, appropriate instruments were developed for data collection. To gather quantitative data, a questionnaire was implemented to identify the vocabulary learning strategies most frequently used by students and teachers. To collect qualitative data, an observation guide was employed, focusing on the obstacle's students encounter when learning English vocabulary. Classroom observations were conducted over three weeks, with six hours of observation per week, divided into 40-minute sessions. The observation guide was used during these classroom sessions, and the questionnaire was administered after completing all observations. This approach provided comprehensive insights into the strategies and challenges students encounter in vocabulary learning.

5.3.1.5 Analyzing and Interpreting the data

After the data was collected, it was analyzed using descriptive and thematic analysis. The data from the questionnaires were coded and entered into Excel, where descriptive statistics, including means and frequencies, were calculated. This analysis allowed for the identification of the most commonly used vocabulary learning strategies among students. The results were presented using tables, which provided a clear visualization of students' preferences and tendencies, making it easier to recognize prevalent strategies and trends in vocabulary learning. For the qualitative data collected through the observation guide, thematic analysis was used. This method facilitated the identification of recurring patterns and themes related to the challenge's students encounter when learning English vocabulary.

5.3.1.6 Reporting and Evaluating Research.

After interpreting and analyzing the data, the overall findings were compiled and presented through conclusions derived from the responses gathered from the questionnaire and observation guide. These findings were directly aligned with the research questions, providing clear insights into the vocabulary learning strategies employed by students and the obstacles they faced. The conclusions were drawn based on a thorough analysis of the collected data, allowing for a comprehensive understanding of the research objectives. Additionally, in this section, limitations encountered during the research process were discussed, such as short period of time, schools' festivals and unexperienced researchers. Suggestions for future research were also proposed, emphasizing areas that require further investigation, such as an extended period of time, and the

integration of experienced researchers. This final step not only summarized the study's key findings but also highlighted opportunities for continued research in the field.

5.3.2 Data Collection and Techniques

Data collection involved the use of survey and observation techniques. A survey technique collects data from subjects who respond to a series of questions about behaviors and opinions, often in the form of a questionnaire or an interview (Robinson & Leonard, 2018). On the other hand, observation technique involves systematically selecting, watching, listening, reading, touching, and recording behavior and characteristics of living beings, objects, or phenomena (Calista et al., 2022). For quantitative data, an individual vocabulary learning strategies questionnaire was administered to investigate the most commonly employed vocabulary learning strategy in English among middle school students during the 2024-2025 school year (see Annex 1). This questionnaire comprised 12 statements on vocabulary learning strategies, each rated on a 3-point scale from "never" to "always,". The 12 statements were categorized into aspects of spelling, meaning, and pronunciation. The questionnaire was based on Oxford (1990) framework, covering memory, metacognitive, cognitive, compensation, and social strategies. Moreover, a Likert scale was used to quantify the responses. According to Taherdoost (2019) respondent indicates degree of agreement and disagreement with a variety of statements about some attitude, object, person or event.

For qualitative data, an observation guide (see Annex 2) was employed to systematically record observations relevant to the research objectives. Based on the theoretical framework, the observation guide included 10 statements related to obstacles in learning vocabulary. Observations were marked "yes" or "no" based on whether the activities met the criteria. These observation guides were applied in selected classrooms within participating institutions, and the data obtained were compared against the guide to analyze patterns and align findings with the research objectives.

5.4 Data Analysis

For data analysis, both descriptive statistic and thematic analysis were employed. Descriptive statistics provide a summary of the data being studied, using tools such as frequency distribution tables, percentages, and measures of central tendency like the mean (Kaliyadan & Kulkarni, 2019). On the other hand, thematic analysis is a qualitative research method used to identify, analyze, and interpret recurring patterns or themes within a data set (Christou, 2023).

Data from the questionnaires were coded and entered into Excel to generate descriptive statistics, including means and frequencies. Additionally, the data from the questionnaire were presented in tables, which allowed the researcher to identify the students' selection tendencies. This comprehensive analysis and graphical representation provided valuable information about the vocabulary learning strategies. This analysis aimed to identify common strategies employed by students and overall trends in vocabulary acquisition. Qualitative data collected from the observation guide was analyzed thematically to categorize patterns and recurring themes related to vocabulary learning obstacles. The thematic approach allowed for the identification of qualitative insights that complemented the quantitative findings.

The combined use of descriptive statistics, frequency tables, graphs, and thematic analysis allowed for effective exploration and interpretation of both quantitative and qualitative data, enabling the researcher to address the study's research questions efficiently.

6. Results

The results obtained from the study are presented in this section, incorporating data collected through a questionnaire and an observation guide. The findings are organized and displayed in tables for clear and concise analysis. Each table summarizes key trends, patterns, and insights from the responses and observations, providing a comprehensive overview of the data. This structure aims to highlight the most significant outcomes relevant to the research objectives.

6.1 Objective 1: To identify the strategies most commonly used for learning English vocabulary among middle basic education students, school year 2024-2025.

Sub-question 1: What are the strategies most commonly used for learning English vocabulary among middle basic education, school year 2024-2025?

Table 1

Strategies used for learning spelling

Questions	Always	Sometimes	Never
1. How often do you play words games, (Scramble, Hangman, or Word search), to practice the spelling of words?	33%	61%	6%
2. Breaking words into letters is a strategy that you commonly use to learn the correct spelling of words.	17%	11%	72%
3. Learning spelling rules is another strategy that we use to understand how words are spelled.	61%	28%	11%
4. Repeating misspelled words is a strategy we use in class to improve the spelling of words.	45%	22%	33%

The following section presents the results obtained from the questionnaire, which aimed to identify the strategies students use to improve their vocabulary skills. The data provides insight into the most commonly used strategies.

As shown in Table 1, children utilize diverse strategies to enhance their spelling abilities with different degrees of frequency. For instance, concerning playing word games like Scramble, Hangman, or Word Search to practice spelling, the findings revealed that approximately one-third

of students 33% always engage in these games. Moreover, more than half 61% sometimes utilize them. In contrast, only a tiny fraction of 6% of students mentioned that they never employ this strategy. Therefore, playing word games is a popular strategy among children, with almost all students incorporating them either always or occasionally.

Regarding the strategy of breaking words into letters to learn correct spelling, the data demonstrates that only a small percentage of students 17% always use this strategy. Furthermore, a slightly percentage 11% sometimes apply this strategy. In contrast, the majority of students 72% responded that they never employ the strategy. Overall, the data reveals that breaking words into letters is a strategy that is minimally used.

In addition, concerning learning spelling rules as a strategy to understand how words are spelled, the findings reveal that a significant percentage 61% of students always use this approach. Additionally, over one-quarter of students 28% sometimes use this strategy. Conversely, a small percentage of students 11% commented that they never rely on spelling rules. In summary, learning spelling rules is a widely adopted strategy since a vast majority of students incorporated them either always or sometimes.

Finally, about repeating misspelled words as a strategy to improve spelling, the data shows that nearly half of students 45% always use this strategy. Furthermore, less than a quarter of students 22% sometimes employ this strategy in their learning process. On the other hand, over one-third 33% of students mentioned that they never rely on this strategy. Thus, repeating misspelled words is a moderately used strategy for students, with over half consistently applying it either always or sometimes.

In summary, the most used strategies are playing word games and learning spelling rules as most students engage in these activities. In contrast, repeating misspelled words and breaking words into letters are fewer common strategies.

Table 2

Strategies used for learning meaning

Questions	Always	Sometimes	Never
6. When you do not know the meaning of a word, you are encouraged to guess the meaning from the context?	50%	6%	44%

7. Using a dictionary or getting the word meanings from the teacher helps you to understand new words better.	39%	39%	22%
8. Flashcards are used in class to enable you to learn the meanings of new words.	67%	27%	6%
9. Writing sentences with new words allows you to understand what they mean.	50%	29%	21%

Based on the results shown in Table 2, it can be observed that in relation to guessing the meaning from the context, half of the students 50% reported that they always apply this strategy. In contrast, a very small percentage 6% use it sometimes, and nearly half 44% stated that they never guess the meaning from the context. Therefore, guessing the meaning from context is a moderately used strategy since over half employ it either always or sometimes.

Regarding using a dictionary or getting the word meanings from the teacher, the data reveals that slightly more than one-third of the students 39% reported that they always rely on this strategy. Similarly, another 39% use it sometimes. However, slightly over one-fifth 22% of the students indicated that they never use a dictionary or ask the teacher for help. In summary, using a dictionary or getting the word meanings from the teacher is a moderately adopted strategy, with more than a half of students applying it either always or sometimes.

Moreover, two-thirds of the students 67% always use flashcards in class to learn the meanings of new words. Meanwhile, just over one-quarter 27% use flashcards sometimes, and a minimal percentage 6% reported that they never use this strategy. Thus, flashcards are a popular strategy since almost all students use them either always or sometimes,

Lastly, when writing sentences with new words to understand their meanings, half of the students 50% reported consistently using this strategy. Moreover, over one-quarter 29% sometimes rely on it, while just over one-fifth 21% stated that they never use this strategy. Overall, writing sentences with new words is a frequently used strategy, with the majority applying it either always or sometimes.

The most used strategies for learning the meanings of words are flashcards, and writing sentences with new words as the majority of students rely on these strategies. In contrast, using a dictionary or getting the meaning from the teacher and guessing the meaning from context are less commonly applied.

Table 3*Strategies used for learning pronunciation*

Questions	Always	Sometimes	Never
11. Repetition (saying words many times) is used in class to help you to pronounce words correctly.	28%	40%	32%
12. How often do you listen to podcasts, music, and videos in class to learn the correct pronunciation of words?	39%	61%	0%
13. How often do you practice word stress and intonation to improve the pronunciation of words?	50%	44%	6%
14. How often do you practice pronunciation with your classmates and give each other feedback?	22%	45%	33%

According to Table 3, the results indicate that slightly more than a quarter of the students 28% reported that repetition is always used in class as a strategy to help improve their pronunciation. Additionally, nearly two-fifths 40% of the students stated that repetition is sometimes employed, while one-third 32% mentioned that this strategy is never applied. Therefore, repetition is a widely adopted strategy since over half use it either always or sometimes.

Moreover, the data reveals that close to two-fifths 39% of the students indicated that listening to podcasts, music, and videos is always used in class to improve pronunciation. Furthermore, over half of the students 61% reported that these tools are sometimes utilized, while no students 0% stated that these resources are never employed. Overall, listening to podcasts, music, and videos is the most popular strategy, as all students always or sometimes use it.

Regarding practicing word stress and intonation, half of the students 50% expressed that they always use this strategy to improve their pronunciation. Additionally, almost half of the participants, 44% indicated that they sometimes engage in such practice, whereas only a small proportion 6% mentioned that they never carry out these activities. Thus, practicing word stress and intonation is a commonly used strategy, with the majority of students applying it either always or sometimes.

Finally, about practicing pronunciation with their classmates and provide each other feedback. The data shows that less than one-quarter of the students 22% stated that they always practice pronunciation with their classmates and give each other feedback. Meanwhile, almost half 45% reported doing this activity sometimes, and one-third 33% mentioned never they engaged in this practice. Overall, practicing pronunciation with their classmates and giving each other feedback is a moderately used strategy, with over half applying it either always or sometimes.

In summary, the most common strategies for improving pronunciation are listening to podcasts, music, and videos using and practicing word stress and intonation. Repetition, and practicing pronunciation with classmates and giving feedback are less common with fewer students practicing it consistently.

The findings demonstrated that the strategies used for learning English vocabulary among middle basic education students include cognitive and memory strategies, which encompass playing word games, learning spelling rules, flashcards, writing sentences with new words, listening to podcasts, music, and videos using and practicing word stress and intonation.

6.2 Objective 2: To describe students' obstacles and difficulties when learning English vocabulary among middle basic education students, school year 2024-2025.

Sub-question 2: What are the obstacles and difficulties faced by middle basic education students in learning English vocabulary, school year 2024-2025?

Table 4

Strategies used in classroom.

Statements	Yes	No
1. Strategies for teaching vocabulary are appropriate for the age of the students.	100 %	0%
2. Timely feedback is provided when students make mistakes.	82%	18%
3. Students receive too many new concepts at once, making it difficult for them to understand the material.	9%	91%
10.Vocabulary instruction is adapted based on the diverse needs and abilities of students	55%	45%

In this section, the results obtained from the observation guide are presented, highlighting the obstacles faced by students during the study. A total of eleven observations were conducted, providing valuable insights and significant information about the challenges encountered.

As shown in Table 4, the results indicate that in all the observations 100% of the teaching strategies used are well-suited to the student's age group. It reflects careful consideration in selecting age-appropriate activities for vocabulary instruction. This indicates that the strategies implemented in class do not hinder the student's ability to learn English.

Regarding timely feedback, the data shows that in 82% of observations, the students received prompt responses when they made mistakes. However, in the remaining 18% of the observations, the students did not receive feedback because they understood the activity. This highlights that timely feedback is not considered an obstacle.

Concerning receiving too many concepts at once, Table 4 shows that in the remaining 91%, it was observed that the concepts were introduced gradually, without overwhelming the students. However, in 9% of the observations, students received too many new concepts at once. Therefore, receiving too many concepts at once does not appear to be an obstacle to student understanding.

About the adaptation of vocabulary instruction to learners' needs, the data shows that in 55% of the observations, the instruction was adapted to the diverse needs and abilities of students. During these classes, the teacher employed various activities such as reading, posters, videos, music, flashcards, fill-in-the-blank exercises, and drawings to engage students. However, in the remaining 45% of the vocabulary instruction was not adapted to meet all students' needs. For example, in these classes, only one activity, such as reading was used. This demonstrates that the adaptation of vocabulary instruction to learners' needs is an obstacle that students face.

In summary, the results show that age-appropriate strategies for the students, timely feedback, and receiving too many concepts at once were identified as no obstacles. However, adaptation of vocabulary instruction to learners' needs emerged as an obstacle, as half of the observations revealed repetitive use of strategies like reading.

Table 5

Resources

Statements	Yes	No
6. The limited use of technology, such as apps and interactive tools, hinders effective vocabulary teaching.	82 %	18%

7. Students have opportunities to practice vocabulary in authentic contexts.	0%	100%
8. There are sufficient resources available to support vocabulary learning, including books, flashcards, and visual aids.	91%	9%

With regard to the limited use of technology, Table 5 shows that in 82% of the observations, the limited use of technology was seen as a hindrance to effective vocabulary teaching. This is primarily due to the ongoing energy crisis in the country, which prevents educators from effectively utilizing technology in the classroom. Nevertheless, in the remaining 18% of observations, technology was used. This suggests that the limited use of technology in the classroom may be a barrier to enhancing vocabulary instruction for students.

About the opportunity to practice vocabulary in authentic contexts, the data shows that 100% of the observations revealed that students did not have the chance to practice vocabulary in real-life contexts. This suggests that the instruction did not include sufficient opportunities for students to apply vocabulary in meaningful, authentic situations. Therefore, the opportunity to practice vocabulary in authentic contexts is considered as an obstacle.

Regarding the resources available to support vocabulary learning, Table 5 shows that in 91% of the observations, there were sufficient resources such as books, flashcards, and visual aids. However, in the remaining 9% of observations, resources were lacking. The school has all these resources available, but sometimes teachers do not incorporate them into their lesson planning. This suggests that the majority of classrooms are well-equipped to support vocabulary learning, although there is still a small percentage of cases where resources are not used. This demonstrates that the resources available do not appear to be an obstacle.

In summary, the main obstacles to vocabulary learning are the limited use of technology, and the opportunity to practice vocabulary in authentic contexts. On the other hand, the institution has all the necessary teaching resources, so this is not considered an obstacle.

Table 6

Emotional attitudes

Statements	Yes	No
4. The fear of being judged by classmates stops students from using the vocabulary in class.	64 %	36%

9. The themes presented in the lessons engage students' interest and curiosity.	64%	36%
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Pertaining to the fear of being judged by classmates, Table 6 shows that in 64% of the observations, students were hesitant to use vocabulary in class due to this fear. However, in 36% of the observations, students did not exhibit this fear and felt comfortable using the vocabulary. This suggests that the fear of being judged is not considered an obstacle.

Concerning the lessons that engage students' interest and curiosity, the data demonstrates that in 64% of the observations, the themes successfully engaged students' interest and curiosity. However, in 36% of the observations, the themes did not capture students' attention as effectively. Therefore, the lessons engage students' interest and curiosity is not an obstacle.

In summary, the fear of being judged and the lessons engage students' interest and curiosity are not considered obstacles to learn English.

Table 7

Classroom management

Statements	Yes	No
5. Large class sizes create classroom dynamics that restrict the individual attention and support.	0%	100%

In relation to the class sizes, Table 7 shows that in all the observations 100%, classroom dynamics were not affected, and individual attention and support were not restricted. This can be attributed to the small class size, with 6 to 10 students per class, allowing for more personalized interaction and support. Therefore, large class sizes are not an obstacle in this context, as the small group size facilitates effective teaching and learning.

Therefore, the results of the observation highlight the obstacles and difficulties faced by middle basic education students in learning English vocabulary, which were mainly related to the educational context and motivation/attitude factors such as the opportunity to practice vocabulary in authentic contexts, the limited use of technology, and adaptation of vocabulary instruction to learners' needs.

7. Discussion

In this section, the findings are analyzed to provide insights into the most common strategies and obstacles students faced in learning English vocabulary during the 2024-2025 school year. The discussion addresses the sub-questions and compares the results with previous empirical studies conducted in similar contexts. This analysis offers a deeper understanding of the findings and places them within the existing literature. Additionally, this section highlights the limitations encountered during the investigation.

The first research sub-question was identified: what are the strategies most commonly used for learning English vocabulary among middle basic education, school year 2024-2025? Based on the results obtained from the questionnaire, the most commonly strategies used for learning aspects of English vocabulary include cognitive and memory strategies, which encompass playing word games, learning spelling rules, flashcards, and writing sentences with new word, listening to podcast, music, and videos using and practicing word stress and intonation.

Specifically, in order to learn the spelling of words, the most commonly used strategies were playing word games and learning spelling rules, as shown in Table 1, with 94% and 89% of students reporting these as the most frequently employed strategies. To understand word meanings, students primarily relied on flashcards and writing sentences using new words, table 2 reveals that 94% and 79% of students most frequently used these strategies. Moreover, for pronunciation, the most frequently employed strategies included engaging with listening to music, podcasts and videos, as well as practicing word stress and intonation as shown in Table 3. The data reveals that 100% and 94% of students most frequently used these strategies.

These findings align with Palomino (2021) who emphasize spelling games and word study as key strategies for learning spelling. Moreover, McKeown (2019); Schmitt & Schmitt (2020) highlight the use of visual aids, such as flashcards, as well as review strategies, among others, as valuable tools for understanding word meanings. Finally, listening activities and practicing stress and intonation are identified as key strategies for improving pronunciation. (Derwing & Munro, 2019; Nation, 2019)

The second research sub-question was to describe what are the obstacles and difficulties faced by middle basic education students in learning English vocabulary, school year 2024-2025? The findings revealed that the obstacles and difficulties faced included educational context and motivation/attitude factors such the opportunity to practice vocabulary in authentic contexts, the

limited use of technology, and adaptation of vocabulary instruction to learners' needs. These obstacles were identified in the majority of observations, as shown in Tables 4, and 5.

These findings are consistent with Barcroft (2018); Kim & Elder (2019), they state that factors that affect vocabulary learning are educational context and motivation/attitudes. Additionally, Bhandari (2023) concluded that both external and internal factors, such as learning style, motivation, and access to native speakers, impact vocabulary learning. Similarly, other studies highlight that limited resources, insufficient exposure to English and anxiety stemming from the fear of making mistakes hinder English vocabulary acquisition. (Andari, 2023; Banditvilai & Cullen, 2018)

The methodology of this study employed a descriptive design that combined qualitative and quantitative techniques to effectively explore vocabulary learning strategies and the obstacles faced by middle basic education students. However, during evaluating the methodology, some limitations were evidenced, such as the reliance on self-reported data may have introduced response bias, as students might have given socially desirable answers or lacked self-awareness about the obstacles they faced. Additionally, the short duration of the study limited the researcher's ability to analyze obstacles and strategies over a longer period, which could have provided deeper insights.

Although this study has provided valuable information about the most commonly used strategies and obstacles faced by high school students in vocabulary learning, it is important to acknowledge certain study's limitations. First, factors such as school events, national holidays, and local festivals led to missed classes, which affected the number of observations conducted. Finally, the researcher was a preservice teacher, not experienced researcher, which may have influenced aspects of the study, such as its design, implementation, and the techniques used for data collection and analysis.

8. Conclusions

This section presents the main conclusions drawn from the findings of this study, highlighting the key insights and their relevance to the research questions.

The strategies for learning English vocabulary among middle basic education students include a combination of cognitive and memory strategies. Strategies like playing word games, using flashcards, and writing sentences with new words help make learning more interactive and enjoyable, which enhances motivation and engagement. Additionally, activities such as listening to podcasts, music, and videos, along with practicing pronunciation, allow students to reinforce vocabulary in different contexts. This approach not only aids in vocabulary retention but also supports students in applying new words more effectively in their daily language use.

The most commonly used strategies for learning different aspects of vocabulary include playing word games (such as Scrabble and Hangman) and learning spelling rules for the spelling aspect. To understand word meanings, students primarily relied on flashcards and writing sentences using new words. For pronunciation, the most frequently employed strategies were listening to music, podcasts, and videos, as well as practicing word stress and intonation. These strategies, favored by the majority of students, underscore the importance of incorporating interactive and visual tools to enhance vocabulary acquisition in the classroom.

The obstacles students faced included contextual and motivational factors such as the opportunity to practice vocabulary in authentic contexts, the limited use of technology, and adaptation of vocabulary instruction to learners' needs. This highlights the need to provide more opportunities for students to engage with vocabulary in real-world situations, as well as to utilize technology more effectively in the classroom. Additionally, it is essential for teachers to adapt their instructional methods to meet the diverse needs and skill levels of their students.

9. Recommendations

- It is recommended that teachers incorporate more of these engaging strategies into their vocabulary instruction. Teachers should explore a variety of tools, including digital platforms and hands-on activities, to promote active learning and reinforce vocabulary acquisition. This can help meet diverse learning preferences and enhance student engagement.
- Schools should create more opportunities for students to engage with English outside the classroom. This could include organizing language immersion experiences, using multimedia tools for learning, and encouraging real-world applications of vocabulary. Additionally, policymakers should invest in providing teachers with adequate technological resources and training to ensure more efficient use of available tools. Teachers should adapt their vocabulary instruction to meet the varying skill levels of students, ensuring that each student receives the appropriate support to maximize their learning potential.
- For future studies, it is recommended to plan to additional observation sessions to account for external factors like school events and holidays. Additionally, collaboration with experienced researchers and further training for preservice teachers in research methods would enhance the study design, implementation, and data analysis.

10. Bibliography

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11. Annexes

Annex 1: Questionnaire



Universidad Nacional de Loja

Facultad de la Educación, el Arte y la Comunicación

Carrera de Pedagogía de los Idiomas Nacionales y Extranjeros

Dear student, answer the following questionnaire about your vocabulary learning strategies. Please, check (✓) the option that best describes how often you use each strategy. For multiple-choice questions, please circle the correct answer. **Please answer honestly.**

Student's code:

Date:

Spelling

1. How often do you play words games, (Scramble, Hangman, or Word search), to practice the spelling of words?

Always	Sometimes	Never

2. Breaking words into letters is a strategy that you commonly use to learn the correct spelling of words.

Always	Sometimes	Never

3. Learning to spell rules is another strategy that we use to help to understand how words are spelled.

Always	Sometimes	Never

4. Repeating misspelled words is a strategy we use in class to improve the spelling of words.

Always	Sometimes	Never

Meaning

5. When you do not know the meaning of a word, you are encouraged to guess the meaning from the context?

Always	Sometimes	Never

6. Using a dictionary or getting the word meanings from the teacher helps you to understand new words better.

Always	Sometimes	Never

7. Flashcards are used in class to enable you to learn the meanings of new words.

Always	Sometimes	Never

8. Writing sentences with new words allows you to understand what they mean.

Always	Sometimes	Never

Pronunciation

9. Repetition (saying words many times) is used in class to help you to pronounce words correctly.

Always	Sometimes	Never

10. How often do you listen to podcasts, music, and videos in class to learn the correct pronunciation of words?

Always	Sometimes	Never

11. How often do you practice word stress and intonation to improve the pronunciation of words?

Always	Sometimes	Never

12. How often do you practice pronunciation with your classmates and give each other feedback?

Always	Sometimes	Never

Annex 2: Observation Guide



Universidad Nacional de Loja

Facultad de la Educación, el Arte y la Comunicación

Carrera de Pedagogía de los Idiomas Nacionales y Extranjeros

Observation Guide N° _____

I. General Information

Code of Teacher Observed: _____ **Grade/Course:** _____

Number of Students: _____ **Class Topic:** _____

Date: _____

II. Observation Guide

Aspects to observe	Yes	No	Remarks
1. Strategies for teaching vocabulary are appropriate for the age of the students.			
2. Timely feedback is provided when students make mistakes.			
3. Students receive too many new concepts at once, making it difficult for them to understand the material.			
4. The fear of being judged by classmates stops students from using the vocabulary in class.			
5. Large class sizes create classroom dynamics that restrict the individual attention and support.			
6. The limited use of technology, such as apps and interactive tools, hinders effective vocabulary teaching.			

7. Students have opportunities to practice vocabulary in authentic contexts.			
8. There are sufficient resources available to support vocabulary learning, including books, flashcards, and visual aids.			
9. The themes presented in the lessons engage students' interest and curiosity.			
10. Vocabulary instruction is adapted based on the diverse needs and abilities of students.			

Annex 3: Research Matrix

Theme: Strategies for learning English vocabulary among middle basic education students, school year 2024-2025					
Problem Statement	Objectives	Indicators	Theoretical Framework	Methodology	Techniques/ Instruments
<p>General Question What are the strategies for learning English vocabulary among middle basic Education Students, school year 2024-2025?</p> <p>Specific Questions 1. What are the strategies most commonly used for learning English vocabulary among middle basic education, school year 2024-2025? 2. What are the obstacles and difficulties faced by middle basic education students in learning English</p>	<p>General Objective To investigate the strategies for learning English vocabulary among middle basic education students, school year 2024-2025.</p> <p>Specific Objectives 1.To identify the strategies most commonly used for learning English vocabulary among middle basic education students, school year 2024-2025. 2.To describe students' obstacles and difficulties when learning English vocabulary among middle basic education</p>	<p>Dependent Variable <i>Learning Strategies for vocabulary aspects:</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <i>Spelling</i> • <i>Meaning</i> • <i>Pronunciation</i> 	<p>5.1. Independent Variable 5.1. Vocabulary 5.1.1. Vocabulary Definition 5.1.2. Vocabulary Significance 5.1.3. Types of vocabulary 5.1.3.1 Receptive Vocabulary 5.1.3.2 Productive Vocabulary 5.1.4 Vocabulary Learning Approaches 5.1.5 Taxonomy of vocabulary learning strategies. 5.1.6 Strategies for learning vocabulary 5.1.7 Vocabulary dimensions 5.1.7.1 Spelling 5.1.7.2 Meaning 5.1.7.3 Pronunciation 5.1.8 Factors that affect vocabulary learning</p>	<p>Research design • Descriptive Research Design Approach • Mix Methods Approach (Quantitative & Qualitative)</p>	<p>Techniques: • Survey • Observation</p> <p>Instruments: • Questionnaire • Observation Guide</p> <p>Data Analysis: • Descriptive analysis • Thematic Analysis</p>

vocabulary, school year 2024-2025?	students, school year 2024-2025.		<p>5.3. Previous studies</p> <p>1.Gorgoz and Tican (2019) - "Investigation of Middle School Students' Self-Regulation Skills and Vocabulary Learning Strategies in Foreign Language."</p> <p>2.Yaacob et al (2019) "Vocabulary Learning Strategies Through Secondary Students at Saudi School in Malaysia."</p> <p>3.Ghalebi and Sadighi (2021) "A study of vocabulary learning strategies among high and low Iranian English vocabulary learners."</p> <p>4.Özeroğlu and Doğruöz (2024) "A Study on English Vocabulary Learning Strategies of Çankırı Karatekin University Students"</p> <p>5.Muminova (2019) "An Investigation into Vocabulary Learning Strategies of Korean and Uzbek Learners of English."</p>		
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Nacionales y Extranjeros

Ofc.408-DC-II/PINE-NG-FEAC-UNL
Loja, 21 octubre del 2024

Ing.

Gabriela Mora Costa,

DIRECTORA DE LA ESCUELA DE EDUCACIÓN BÁSICA PARTICULAR "MONTESSORI",
Ciudad

De mis consideraciones:

Me dirijo a usted, muy comedidamente, para comunicarle que, conforme consta en la Malla Curricular de la **Carrera de Pedagogía de los Idiomas Nacionales y Extranjeros** de la Facultad de la Educación, el Arte y la Comunicación de la Universidad Nacional de Loja, las/los estudiantes del CICLO 8 deben aprobar la asignatura de Integrative Curriculum Research, en la que desarrollan el **TRABAJO DE INTEGRACIÓN CURRICULAR**. Debo manifestar que el cumplimiento del mismo, es uno de los requisitos para aprobar el presente ciclo, para egresar y posteriormente para la graduación.

Conocedora de su alto espíritu de colaboración, con todo lo que significa adelanto y progreso de la juventud lojana, me permito solicitarle, se digne autorizar a quien corresponde, se brinde la apertura necesaria a **CARLA JIMENA SALAS SOLANO**, para que realice las observaciones necesarias en la prestigiosa institución de su acertada regencia, con la finalidad de que pueda desarrollar y culminar eficientemente con la aplicación de los instrumentos del Trabajo Integración Curricular.

Por la atención favorable que se digne dar al presente, le anticipo mis agradecimientos, a la vez que aprovecho la oportunidad para expresarle los sentimientos de mi especial consideración y estima.

Atentamente,

**EN LOS TESOROS DE LA SABIDURÍA
ESTÁ LA GLORIFICACIÓN DE LA VIDA**



Carrera de
Pedagogía de los Idiomas
Nacionales y Extranjeros

Lcda.M.Sc. Rosa Paola Moreno Ordóñez,
DIRECTORA ACADÉMICA



Elaborado por:

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