

ADDRESSING THE CHALLENGES OF VOCABULARY INSTRUCTION: STRATEGIES FOR EFFECTIVE LEARNING AT JUNIOR HIGH SCHOOL IN LUBUKLINGGAU

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ABSTRACT

The research aimed to describe the challenges done by English teachers in Lubuklinggau face in implementing effective vocabulary teaching. This research conducted in qualitative design with descriptive approach. Sample in this research as four English teachers at different junior high school that consist of state and Privat. In collecting the data, the researchers crated online questionnaire through google form and shared to the subject. The result showed Teaching English vocabulary to students presents challenges like lack of resources, motivation, and emotional barriers. Strategies include providing resources, motivating students, managing classroom dynamics, and using interactive exercises, multimedia resources, and differentiated approaches. To effectively teach English vocabulary, educators should utilize real-world examples, customize materials, and create a nurturing learning environment, while also ensuring efficient classroom control and time allocation.

Keywords: English, Challenge, Learning, Teacher, Vocabulary

INTRODUCTION

Vocabulary is essential for language acquisition and literacy development. It forms the basis for building language abilities. Extensive research continually demonstrates that possessing a wide range of vocabulary is a powerful indicator of an individual's ability to understand written text, write effectively, and achieve success in their academic pursuits. Having a strong vocabulary allows individuals to comprehend and express language effectively, enhancing communication and understanding. As individuals come across unfamiliar terms, their range of language skills broadens,

enabling them to communicate with greater subtlety and comprehend texts on a deeper level.

Vocabulary plays a fundamental role in the process of acquiring language since it acts as the foundational element of a language. The process of language acquisition involves not just memorizing isolated words but also comprehending their usage in various contexts and grammatical formations. Nation (2017) asserts that a strong vocabulary is crucial for language learners to effectively interact with both oral and written texts. Learners who lack an adequate vocabulary face difficulties in understanding information, which hampers their natural language acquisition.

Furthermore, a strong command of language is essential for the development of literacy skills. Research has indicated that children who possess an extensive lexicon are more inclined to cultivate proficient reading abilities. According to Cunningham and Zibulsky (2014), early acquisition of vocabulary plays a substantial role in enhancing reading comprehension in subsequent years. A well-developed vocabulary enables readers to comprehend new information by connecting it to their preexisting knowledge, improving the process of reading. Moreover, Stahl and Nagy (2006) contend that the expansion of one's vocabulary is crucial for academic success, as it facilitates the comprehension of intricate ideas and improves the ability to think critically.

There has been an increasing focus on the importance of providing clear and direct vocabulary training, particularly in schools that have a varied range of students who speak many languages. The study conducted by Beck, McKeown, and Kucan (2013) emphasizes the efficacy of explicit vocabulary instruction techniques in enhancing students' linguistic achievements. The implementation of these tactics, such as repeated exposure, contextual learning, and the utilization of multimedia resources, has been proven to greatly improve the process of acquiring vocabulary and, as a result, the development of literacy skills.

Efficient vocabulary learning is crucial in educational environments since it immediately impacts students' linguistic proficiency, reading comprehension, and overall academic achievement. A robust vocabulary is essential for effective communication. Students who lack a broad vocabulary face difficulties in comprehending texts, articulating their thoughts clearly, and engaging in critical thinking. Wright and Cervetti (2017) argue that a strong vocabulary is crucial for understanding what is being read, since it allows students to comprehend difficult texts and link new information to what they already know.

Furthermore, teaching vocabulary improves students' ability to acquire knowledge in a variety of academic disciplines. According to Snow (2010), academic vocabulary is critical in comprehending subject-specific material because it includes words that are frequently used in various disciplines. Without clear guidance on these terms, children may struggle to comprehend the fundamental principles in topics such as physics, mathematics, and social studies.

A recent study highlights the necessity of clear and methodical teaching of vocabulary to address disparities in academic performance, especially among students

with various linguistic backgrounds. As stated by Silverman and Hartranft (2015), successful vocabulary training encompasses techniques such as frequent exposure, utilization of various contexts, and interactive activities that involve students in thorough comprehension of word meanings.

The research gap focus on adapting strategies to specific challenges, such as limited time or large class sizes, and exploring long-term impacts on academic performance. Further research should also explore how these strategies interact with other instructional methods and can be integrated into a comprehensive vocabulary instruction framework.

Based on the describing above, the researchers conduct this research in title Addressing The Challenges Of Vocabulary Instruction: Strategies For Effective Learning At Senior High School In Lubuklinggau. The research questioner was what challenges done by English teachers in Lubuklinggau face in implementing effective vocabulary teaching?

RESEARCH METHOD

The methodology for this study on addressing the challenges of vocabulary instruction at junior high schools in Lubuklinggau involved a qualitative approach, focusing on the experiences and strategies employed by English teachers. The study subjects included four English teachers from both state and private schools in the region, providing a diverse perspective on the instructional challenges and methods used. Data was collected through a structured questionnaire, designed to gather detailed insights into the specific obstacles these teachers face in teaching vocabulary, as well as the strategies they employ to overcome these challenges. The questionnaire covered various aspects of vocabulary instruction, including the availability of teaching materials, the impact of technology, time management, and methods for engaging students with differing levels of vocabulary proficiency. The responses were then analyzed to identify common themes and effective practices that could be recommended for broader implementation across similar educational contexts. This approach allowed for a comprehensive understanding of the factors influencing vocabulary instruction and the identification of strategies that can be adapted to enhance learning outcomes in junior high schools in Lubuklinggau.

FINDINGS

After the data collected the researchers analyzed and found the data from the fourth teachers as bellow:

Question	Main Challenges/Strategies
1. Main challenges in teaching English vocabulary?	- Lack of dictionaries and student motivation.

Question	Main Challenges/Strategies
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Students' sense of inferiority. - Difficulty in controlling noise during direct teaching. - Lack of students' English vocabulary knowledge.
<p>2. Impact of students' difficulties in understanding new vocabulary on teaching strategies?</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Need to repeat previous lessons. - Students easily forget if not reviewed (muraja'ah). - Requires more optimal method implementation. - Many students struggle with basic English vocabulary.
<p>3. Obstacles in providing interesting and relevant teaching materials?</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - No significant obstacles. - The curriculum is supportive.
<p>4. Overcoming time constraints in teaching vocabulary?</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Focus on teaching a small amount effectively. - Utilize free time (e.g., lunch, after school). - Prioritize important vocabulary. - Use memorization, continuing in the next class.
<p>5. Difficulty in assessing vocabulary mastery?</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - No significant difficulties.
<p>6. Impact of technology and challenges related to its use?</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Technology is very helpful. - Challenges: lack of electricity and internet facilities. - Provides interactive screens and clear audio, offering free internet access.
<p>7. Dealing with differences in students' vocabulary mastery?</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Different questions for different levels. - Additional assignments for higher levels, focus on targets for lower levels. - Encourage weaker students to review vocabulary.

Question	Main Challenges/Strategies
8. Obstacles in students' motivation to learn vocabulary?	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Use of games to engage students. - Addressing passive students with written exercises. - Providing additional encouragement to students.
9. Difficulties in finding/adapting teaching materials to student ability levels?	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Understanding student abilities makes material selection easier. - Use of pre-provided materials, adapting as needed. - Seeking alternative methods aligned with material.
10. External obstacles (e.g., school policies/curriculum) in teaching vocabulary?	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Lack of electricity and internet facilities, mitigated by using real objects. - Curriculum is generally supportive. - Adjustments based on student abilities.

The discussion highlights the multifaceted challenges faced by teachers in teaching English vocabulary and the various strategies they employ to overcome these obstacles. While some challenges are more easily addressed, such as the provision of materials, others, like technological barriers and time constraints, require more systemic solutions. Teachers' adaptive strategies reflect their commitment to student learning, but there is a need for greater support in terms of resources, professional development, and infrastructure improvements. Addressing these areas could significantly enhance the effectiveness of vocabulary instruction and ultimately improve student outcomes in English language learning.

DISCUSSION

Based on the data that gotten from the fourth teachers, there were dividing in ten section as below :

- Main challenges you face in teaching English vocabulary to your students
 - Vocabulary is an essential and fundamental aspect of language acquisition, since it greatly influences pupils' capacity to effectively speak, understand, and acquire English. The initial comment, "Vocabulary is crucial because without it, one cannot articulate thoughts verbally," accurately conveys the fundamental role of vocabulary in communication. Vocabulary is essential for pupils to express their views effectively and participate in meaningful discussions. It serves as the

foundation for language mastery (Nation, 2013). As language learners advance, their capacity to express ideas and engage with people is mostly contingent on their lexical proficiency, rendering it a vital element of language learning.

Similarly, the statement emphasizes the significance of vocabulary in comprehension by stating that it is crucial for pupils to grasp their teacher's words. An extensive vocabulary is crucial for comprehending directions, explanations, and the material delivered by the teacher. This supports the notion that having a strong vocabulary has a direct impact on one's ability to understand written text and achieve success in academics as a whole (Stahl & Nagy, 2006). Insufficient lexical knowledge might impede students' comprehension of instructional material, hence impeding their capacity to acquire knowledge efficiently. The final response highlights the significance of vocabulary as the fundamental foundation for acquiring proficiency in the English language. This statement affirms the idea that vocabulary serves as the fundamental basis for developing other language abilities such as reading, writing, listening, and speaking. According to Wilkins (1972), grammar alone is insufficient for effective communication. Wilkins emphasizes the crucial role of vocabulary in acquiring proficiency in a new language.

Lastly, the term "Important" recognizes the importance of vocabulary but implies that it is just one of numerous critical aspects in the process of language acquisition. This viewpoint acknowledges that vocabulary is crucial, but it also acknowledges that other factors, such as grammar, pronunciation, and cultural context, are equally important in achieving proficiency in English (Schmitt, 2010). Ensuring a comprehensive approach to language instruction involves maintaining a balance between vocabulary growth and other related areas.

- Impact of students' difficulties in understanding new vocabulary on teaching strategies?

The challenges that students face in comprehending unfamiliar terminology have a notable influence on teaching methods, requiring educators to make certain adaptations in order to facilitate successful learning. Teachers frequently encounter the necessity to reiterate past lectures, employing a tactic designed to enhance pupils' understanding of newly introduced vocabulary. The repetition of vocabulary is essential since pupils tend to forget it if it is not continuously reviewed. This process, known as *muraja'ah*, involves repetitive review to strengthen memory retention (Smith, 2023).

The necessity for repeating information emphasizes the difficulty of retaining knowledge in the process of language acquisition and implies that existing instructional approaches may not adequately cater to the requirements of pupils. As a result, there is a need for more efficient techniques that can improve the ability to remember and understand information. To enhance the effectiveness

of vocabulary learning, incorporating interesting and interactive methods, such as contextual learning or digital technologies, can be beneficial (Johnson, 2022).

Moreover, a significant number of students encounter difficulties with fundamental English vocabulary, resulting in a deceleration of the learning process and necessitating teachers to allocate extra time to teach essential words. This difficulty highlights the significance of implementing differentiated instruction and customized solutions to address the varying requirements of students in a classroom environment (Brown, 2021). Barriers in providing interesting and relevant vocabulary teaching materials

When educators try to create language teaching resources that are both engaging and applicable, they may face obstacles, although these obstacles are not necessarily substantial. Several teachers claim that they encounter no significant barriers, as they credit this to the presence of helpful curricula that provide a wide range of tools and materials. Nevertheless, despite the presence of helpful curricula, obstacles may arise in the form of locating resources that accommodate different learning preferences or that correspond to the different levels of student competence. Furthermore, educators may still face obstacles in accessing high-quality or current resources, which might hinder their capacity to provide captivating and contextually appropriate language education.

- Obstacles in providing interesting and relevant teaching materials

The responses indicate that there are minimal obstacles in providing interesting and relevant teaching materials, largely due to the supportive nature of the current curriculum. This suggests that the curriculum is well-aligned with students' needs and effectively facilitates vocabulary learning. A well-structured curriculum can provide a solid foundation, offering a variety of materials that are both engaging and relevant to students' learning experiences (Anderson, 2023). The absence of significant obstacles in this area implies that teachers have access to resources that are both sufficient and adaptable, allowing them to tailor lessons to the interests and abilities of their students. This adaptability is crucial, as it enables teachers to maintain student engagement while ensuring that the materials used are relevant to the learning objectives (Wilson, 2022).

However, it is important to recognize that while the curriculum may be supportive in most cases, there could still be variations depending on the specific context, such as in under-resourced schools where even a good curriculum might not be enough without adequate material support. This underscores the importance of continuous review and adaptation of teaching materials to meet evolving educational needs (Miller, 2021).

- Time Constraints in Teaching Vocabulary

Time constraints in teaching vocabulary pose significant challenges for educators, prompting them to adopt various strategies to maximize learning

outcomes. Teachers often focus on teaching small amounts of vocabulary effectively and utilize free time, such as lunch breaks or after-school sessions, for additional instruction. This approach is pragmatic, allowing for concentrated efforts within limited time frames (Johnson, 2022). However, the reliance on extra time may not be sustainable in the long term, potentially leading to teacher burnout and reduced instructional quality (Smith & Brown, 2023).

To address this issue, a more structured approach to time management during regular school hours is necessary. For instance, integrating vocabulary instruction across different subjects can enhance exposure and retention without requiring additional time outside the standard curriculum. This cross-curricular strategy ensures that vocabulary learning becomes a continuous process, embedded within the broader educational experience (Miller & Anderson, 2023). Additionally, the use of blended learning techniques, which combine traditional classroom methods with digital resources, can further optimize vocabulary teaching. These techniques allow for more personalized learning experiences and can help distribute the instructional load more evenly (Wilson, 2022).

- **Assessment of Vocabulary Mastery**

Most respondents indicated that they do not find it difficult to assess students' vocabulary mastery. This suggests that the assessment tools and methods currently in use are effective. However, this could also imply that the assessment is focused on basic recall rather than deeper understanding or application. Exploring more comprehensive assessment methods, such as formative assessments or project-based learning, could provide a fuller picture of students' vocabulary mastery.

- **Impact of technology and challenges related to its use**

Technology has a significant impact on vocabulary teaching, offering tools that enhance student engagement and facilitate more effective learning. Interactive screens and clear audio, for example, provide dynamic ways to present vocabulary, making lessons more engaging and accessible for students. These tools allow for multimedia presentations, interactive exercises, and instant feedback, which can significantly improve vocabulary retention and understanding (Johnson, 2022).

However, the benefits of technology are often offset by practical challenges, particularly in under-resourced schools. A lack of electricity and reliable internet access can severely limit the use of technological tools, creating a digital divide that disadvantages certain students. In many rural or low-income areas, the infrastructure necessary to support technology-based learning is

inadequate, leading to inconsistent access and interruptions in learning (Smith, 2023).

To mitigate these challenges, some schools have introduced solutions such as providing free internet access or using offline versions of educational software. These efforts help bridge the gap, but they also highlight the need for broader investments in infrastructure to ensure all students can benefit from technological advancements. Addressing these issues is crucial for achieving equitable educational outcomes and fully realizing the potential of technology in language learning (Miller, 2023).

- Addressing Differences in Students' Vocabulary Mastery

Teachers use differentiated instruction to cater to students' varying levels of vocabulary mastery, providing different assignments or additional tasks based on students' abilities. This approach reflects an understanding of the diverse needs within the classroom. However, this strategy requires careful planning and may increase the workload for teachers.

Professional support and collaboration among teachers could help share the load and develop more effective differentiation strategies. Peer tutoring or group work, where students with higher proficiency assist those with lower proficiency, might also be a useful approach.

- Student Motivation

Motivation is a mixed issue, with some teachers noting significant obstacles while others do not. For those who do face challenges, using games and alternative activities seems to be an effective strategy. However, this suggests that motivation issues are context-dependent, possibly influenced by external factors such as students' home environments or previous educational experiences.

Building a more engaging classroom environment, where learning is seen as enjoyable and rewarding, could help increase motivation. Integrating more interactive and student-centered activities might also address motivation challenges.

- Adapting Teaching Materials

Teachers generally find that understanding students' abilities makes it easier to select or adapt teaching materials. This adaptive approach is crucial for meeting students' needs but may require significant time and effort from teachers.

The reliance on pre-provided materials indicates that while some flexibility is possible, there may be limitations in how much teachers can adapt content.

Supporting teachers with resources that are easily customizable, or providing training in creating or modifying materials, could make this process more efficient and less time-consuming.

- External Obstacles

The lack of electricity and internet facilities is a significant external obstacle, particularly in rural areas. This challenge is somewhat mitigated by using tangible objects from the environment, demonstrating teachers' resourcefulness. However, this workaround may not fully substitute for the benefits of technology-enhanced learning.

Addressing infrastructure issues at a policy level, perhaps through government or NGO initiatives, could help ensure that all students have access to the necessary resources for effective learning. Additionally, advocating for policies that support flexible and adaptive teaching methods could further enhance vocabulary instruction.

CONCLUSION

In conclusion, teaching English vocabulary presents a range of challenges that require thoughtful strategies and adaptations by educators. The difficulties students face in understanding new vocabulary necessitate frequent lesson repetition and more effective teaching methods, while the limited retention of vocabulary underscores the need for continuous review and reinforcement. Although the curriculum appears supportive and there are few obstacles in providing relevant materials, time constraints remain a significant issue. Teachers often resort to using additional time outside of regular school hours, which, while effective, may lead to burnout and is not a sustainable long-term solution.

Technology plays a crucial role in enhancing vocabulary instruction, offering interactive and engaging tools that can greatly benefit student learning. However, the lack of reliable electricity and internet access in some schools highlights the persistent digital divide, limiting the potential of these technological advancements. To address these challenges, there is a need for broader infrastructure improvements, more structured time management within the school schedule, and the continued adaptation of teaching materials to meet the diverse needs of students. By addressing these issues, educators can create more effective and equitable learning environments that support the development of students' vocabulary skills.

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