Vocabulary Instruction In Improving Students' Reading Comprehension
In SD Negeri 8 Menteng Palangka Raya

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Abstract

One of the most important lessons in elementary school is understanding what they read. While reading comprehension is essential to academic success, not all students demonstrate adequate proficiency. The researcher interviewed and observed classes in SD Negeri 8 Menteng Palangka Raya, notably sixth grade, and found this issue. The researcher utilized one of the instructions to promote reading comprehension from that issue. Vocabulary instruction could increase English text comprehension, according to the study. Semester this, students studied Describing People and Objects and picked descriptive text. The researcher solved the challenge with a quasi-experimental non-equivalent control group design. This study had two groups: 6A (control) and 6C (experimental). The experimental group randomly sampled vocabulary training, while the control group received non-vocabulary education. There were also two variables in this study: vocabulary teaching served as the independent variable, and the mean scores of both groups' tests served as the dependent variable. Pre- and post-test results determined the class's vocabulary instruction effectiveness. Finally, the data showed that vocabulary instruction improves reading comprehension more than non-vocabulary instruction. Scores were less than 0.05, rejecting H₀ and accepting H₁. Data less than 0.05 indicates that independent variables only partially impact the dependent variable. Vocabulary education improves students' reading comprehension in SD Negeri 8 Menteng Palangka Raya.

Keywords: Vocabulary Instruction, Pre-Test, Post-Test

INTRODUCTION

Communication is the most important thing we do as humans. A person needs to learn a language in order to interact with other people. Tsai (2020) mentioned that communication between individuals relies on their shared ability to use language. It is more than just a method of communicating
through the use of shared meanings. Communication is essential for people to be able to carry out their
daily responsibilities and engage in social activities (Peeples et al., 2019). Language lets us express
ourselves. Individuals are required to follow the guidelines of the community in order to communicate
effectively. In addition to this, the English language is widely used across the globe.

People all over the world communicate using English. This language has been essential to the
modern advancement of social, economic, and scientific fields. According to Capin et al. (2021),
English has historically played an important role as a primary mode of communication across the globe.
There are people who speak English as their first, second, and even third language. English is spoken
in countries where it is not the primary language because it facilitates communication between people
living in those countries. To put it another way, the people of Indonesia rely heavily on the English
language.

According to Astiani & Widagsa (2021), English instruction is emphasized in Indonesian
classrooms to better prepare students to communicate in the local language. Reading, writing, listening,
and especially speaking are all essential components of the English language that schools strive to instill
in their students in today's globalized world (Baleghizadeh & Ashoori, 2011). Students of English have
a variety of opportunities to practice making use of the language (Mohd Tahir et al., 2020). In addition,
in order to prepare for important roles in society, young people need to learn proper reading technique
(Sylvester et al., 2014). Reading-based language development in early childhood is challenging.
According to Wanzek (2014), reading in class is expected to be comprehended by the students since the
fundamental premise and purpose of the text must be understood by the learners. The ability to
comprehend what one reads is essential to successful academic performance, particularly in reading and
literature classes (Vaughn et al., 2022). Furthermore, reading comprehension is regarded as one of the
primary goals of elementary school (Tsai, 2018). However, not all students attain an adequate level of
reading comprehension to accomplish learning goals and objectives. As reading comprehension is based
on the combination of cognitive mechanisms at the (sub)lexical, sentence, and text levels, the reasons
of poor reading comprehension may differ from case to case (Müller et al., 2015).

One group of young students is elementary school students. In addition, the term English for
Young Learners is commonly used for the initial stages of language education (EYL). Teaching English
to children properly is essential if you want to see results. It requires careful, focused teaching since
students bring their own background information and experiences (Stephanie et al., 2018). According
to Moody et al. (2018), to effectively instruct their students in English, teachers must be familiar with
their students' mental processes. The information here used to shape EYL lessons. Teachers could help
students flourish and concentrate by addressing these concerns. Consequently, teachers in the early
years of schooling have a responsibility to provide their charges with loving guidance. Education should
be tailored to each student's stage of development in order to maximize learning (Blachowicz et al.,
2015).
The researcher conducted a preliminary interview with an SD Negeri 8 Menteng Palangka Raya English teacher on April 15, 2022. In the interview, the teacher said sixth-grade students had trouble understanding English-packed texts. According to their English reading score, it showed that they struggle to comprehend texts. The researcher also observed on June 19, 2022. The observation indicated that traditional, teacher-centered classrooms dominate the learning process. Teacher-centered instruction encourages student dependence. The sixth-grade teacher speaks while students hear and remain silent and students often do classwork alone. According to Carlisle (2013), the teacher-centered approach hurts reading comprehension.

Nevertheless, the researcher decided to do the research in SD NEGERI 8 Menteng Palangka Raya in order to help students improve their reading comprehension based on the problem found. McKeown (2019) stated that students spontaneously acquire high-quality vocabulary through extensive reading and involvement in language-rich contexts that provide sufficient chance to practice words and grammar frameworks. Moreover, vocabulary instruction became the instruction to apply in this class to ensure the effectiveness for students who struggle with reading and do not use English language much on their own.

The researcher chose vocabulary instruction to help struggling readers after considering several options. Anderson & Freebody in 1981 proved that vocabulary instruction was indeed help them to increase students’ reading comprehension. Since Kamil et al. (2000) has a more updated vocabulary instruction process, the researcher then used the theory for this research. Vocabulary instruction also aids reading comprehension. Reading expands students’ oral vocabulary since vocabulary greatly affects reading comprehension (Kemil et al., 2000). When teaching vocabulary, students must actively consider word definitions, word relationships, and the many ways they could use words. Dapa (2020) stated that some students might not recognize that they can use their understanding of dissection to determine meaning of words. In-depth education most likely affects learning outcomes (McQuillan, 2019). According to Dahl & Vulchanova (2014), teaching students to read should focus on instant, automatic word recognition.

This research focused on helping sixth-grade students in SD Negeri 8 Menteng Palangka Raya enhance their reading comprehension across vocabulary instruction using descriptive texts in English class. According to their lesson plan, students were studied Describing People and Objects at the time. The vocabulary in this study corresponds to what students are learning that semester. The instruction of vocabulary might not improve their speaking, writing, and listening comprehension. However, this instruction might affect their ability to comprehend English words (Tan & Goh, 2020).

METHOD

This research employed a quasi-experimental approach using a non-equivalent control group design. According to Caporaso & Roos (1973), the effects of one treatment are assessed to those of different treatment and no treatment in a quasi-experimental. It was determined that a quasi-
experimental design is utilized to determine the effect of one variable upon other. This design demonstrates that participants cannot be randomly assigned to the experimental or control group, and the researcher cannot pick which group will get the treatment. In other words, not all individuals have an equal chance of being randomized to the control and experimental group.

In this study, a quasi-experimental is placed on treatment and outcome; hence, pre- and post-test scores are gathered to assess if vocabulary instruction may improve students' comprehension especially in descriptive text. The use of this quasi-experimental design is predicated that in the implementation of this research, learning must occur organically and students should not feel as though they are being tested. Moreover, it is envisaged that this circumstance will contribute to the validity of the research.

There were two variables in this research: the dependent and the independent variable. The dependent variables are the mean of students’ pre-test and post-test scores both from control and experimental group. Meanwhile, vocabulary instruction is the independent variable.

Two classes included as the study subjects; one group served as the experimental group and treat used a vocabulary instruction, while the control group received the conventional instruction. This research conducted in 6C as the experimental group and 6A as the control group. The researcher used a random sampling to decide which class that would be an experimental and control group in the treatment.

This research also included two hypotheses for further examination. The students' reading comprehension was not improved by the vocabulary instruction, which supported the null hypothesis. On the other hand, according to the alternate hypothesis, vocabulary instruction did help students improve their reading comprehension.

The researcher also created a classroom lesson plan. The English teacher helped the researcher adapted the lesson plan to her students' regarding the learning objectives. Since the English teacher stated that descriptive text was their learning objective at the time, the researcher employed descriptive text-related learning materials and texts in this research. Both groups were receiving the same descriptive texts that made by the researcher and English teacher. Animated videos and flashcards became the main media to help the researcher apply this instruction. The researcher also employed different games to increase their word recognition confidence. For the data collection, the researcher questioned the English teacher who handle the students about students' classroom behavior, what skills they struggle with, and the teacher's lesson plan. In addition, the researcher observed classroom learning in the pre-research. Both data sets showed students were struggle with their reading comprehension. Furthermore, the teacher noted students struggled with English vocabulary.

The second data collection method was giving the students a pre-test to assess their comprehension of descriptive text and then evaluated them as the primary data. Twenty vocabulary lists and five essay questions from the texts showed on the pre-test. Furthermore, collecting the post-test scores was the third data collection procedure. The form of the post-test was the same with the previous
test, which were twenty vocabulary to circle and five essay questions to answer related to the text provided in the paper.

To analyze the data, the researcher used two ways as follows:

**Students’ Scores**

The researcher decided to adopt the school's scoring formulation since the pre-test and the post-test contain twenty multiple-choice questions and five questions that require an answer based on the offered descriptive text.

Each question was worth one point on the multiple-choice part of the test. Moreover, the essay earned two points for each question. Furthermore, the scores were totaled together and then divided by two. The scoring at the school is as follows:

\[
T = \frac{(\text{Total score of question part I})}{(\text{Total score of question part II})} \times 2
\]

**Independent Samples t-test**

To define the students’ improvement using the vocabulary instruction, the researcher used independent samples t-test. If the results show that the pre-test, post-test, and index gain data were normal and homogeneous, the researcher would done an independent t-test on the data.

The independent t-test used to determine the significance of the difference in mean between two independent groups. Moreover, it used to determine if this result is null. The t-Test is derived as follows:

\[
t = \frac{\bar{x}_1 - \bar{x}_2}{s_p \sqrt{\frac{1}{n_1} + \frac{1}{n_2}}}
\]

With

\[
s_p = \sqrt{\frac{(n_1 - 1)s_1^2 + (n_2 - 1)s_2^2}{n_1 + n_2 - 2}}
\]

\(\bar{x}_1 = \text{Mean of the first sample}\)
\(\bar{x}_2 = \text{Mean of the second sample}\)
\(n_1 = \text{First sample size}\)
\(n_2 = \text{Second sample size}\)
\(s_1 = \text{Standard deviation of the 1st sample}\)
\(s_2 = \text{Standard deviation of the 2nd sample}\)
\(s_p = \text{Pooled standard deviation}\)

Then, using SPSS, the researcher examined if vocabulary instruction could improve classroom performance in reading English texts.
RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

During this research, the investigator was allowed to conduct a quasi-experimental test at SD Negeri 8 Menteng, located in Palangka Raya. In order to solve the research problem, 60 different students were evaluated. The research was carried out throughout four meetings, with the describing people and objects learning objective serving as the primary focus. The samples come from two different classes: 6A, the control group, and 6C, the experimental group. Due to the fact that the researcher used this class as a control group, 6A did not receive the treatment that was intended for them.

Moreover, this class obtained the conventional method that their English teacher usually used in the day-to-day learning process. The English teacher clarified that she only used their own textbooks and whiteboards in the teaching process. Students only listened and got several assignments after the lesson was finished homework. Based on this learning process, the researcher used the method they usually used, namely teacher-centered, where the role of the teacher was more dominant than that of the students. The researcher also used textbooks that the English teacher had provided. Students could follow the process well during the meeting, but some needed support.

Furthermore, 6C received the treatment since this class became the experimental group. 6C accepted vocabulary instruction treatment during the class. The researcher used the learning materials that she prepared for 6C. The researcher used several learning media during the meeting, such as flashcards and an animated video about Describing People and Object. While the researcher showed the flashcards, students were shown several English words and pictures showing facial expressions, and they were asked to guess what the translated Indonesian was. Roskos et al. (2017) mentioned that struggling readers should be taught how to find clues and definitions. Students are offered an animated video in the next meeting showing a descriptive conversation. In this process, students were seen repeating several sentences said in the video. Students enjoyed the learning process using vocabulary instruction. Students were also very enthusiastic during class, as proved by many students who asked about some of the vocabulary in the learning materials and the animated video.

The primary data consisted of the pre-test scores and the post-test scores, so the researcher went over what the students needed to do before the test in the classroom. Before the class began, as well as before any treatment was administered to the group that was participating in the experiment, the pre-test was handed out. In contrast, the post-test was carried out once all of the teaching procedures had been completed. The students had one hour to complete each test, and they turned them in on time during class. Both examinations followed the same format, which consisted of 20 questions with multiple choice answers and five questions that required an answer based on descriptive passages connected to describing people and things. In addition, those scores were collected in order to determine the learning outcomes for both the experimental group and the control group. The results of the tests are summarized in the following table.
Table 1. Students’ Mean Score (Control Group)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>No.</th>
<th>Test</th>
<th>Mean Score</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1</td>
<td>Pre-test</td>
<td>54.83</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2</td>
<td>Post-test</td>
<td>50.66</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

According to the data in the table above, their mean score on the pre-test was 54.83. On the other hand, the scores dropped to a total of 50.66 on the post-test. Between the pre-test and the post-test, there was a noticeable change in the performance of the control group. The researcher utilized textbooks as the primary mode of instruction when carrying out this non-vocabulary instruction. Even though the researcher attempted to engage students in a more involved learning process, based on what was observed, the students were less active in the learning process than was intended. It was indicated that instruction focusing on topics other than vocabulary would have been more appropriate for that class. According to Moody et al. (2018), the result of low comprehension of reading in a class might cause by a lack of learning process and various learning media made by a teacher.

Table 2. Students’ Mean Score (Experimental Group)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>No.</th>
<th>Test</th>
<th>Mean Score</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1</td>
<td>Pre-test</td>
<td>56.66</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2</td>
<td>Post-test</td>
<td>70.16</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

The treatment was performed on the experimental group. The researcher used various vocabulary instruction media throughout the learning process, such as flashcards and animated videos, to help improve students’ reading comprehension and aid in learning. The student participants seemed enthusiastic about learning English words, while the researcher utilized various media.

It is possible to draw the following conclusion from the data presented in the table above: the students' pre-test mean score was 56.66, and their post-test mean score was 70.16. This suggests that the learning outcomes for 6C’s students improved as a result of the instruction that was provided. It was aligned with Crevecoeur et al. (2014) that said vocabulary instruction had a better result for students since they could explore more vocabulary from various learning media.

Table 3. Hypothesis Test Result

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Levene’s Test for Equality of Variances</th>
<th>Significance</th>
<th>Mean Difference</th>
<th>Std. Error Difference</th>
<th>95% Confidence Interval of the Difference</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>f</td>
<td>Sig.</td>
<td>One-Sided p</td>
<td>Two-Sided p</td>
<td>Lower</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3.106</td>
<td>.088</td>
<td>- .892</td>
<td>.188</td>
<td>-.49167</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>58</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>- .892</td>
<td>54.152</td>
<td>.188</td>
<td>.376</td>
<td>-4.9167</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

In this study, an independent t-test was performed by first determining the values of the variables that are regarded as significant. Next, the results of the test are compared to one another. According to the information that is provided in the table above, the null hypothesis cannot be supported
if the values are significantly lower than 0.05; however, the alternative hypothesis could be supported in this situation. If the results were significantly different from 0.05, then it was possible to draw the conclusion that the independent variable did not have some impact on the dependent variable.

CONCLUSION

In the experimental group, the analysis of the data indicates that vocabulary instruction is effective. The experimental group's post-test means of 70.16 proved the hypothesis. The researcher's average pre-test score was 56.66 before he or she implemented the vocabulary teaching. If the value of the hypothesis test is less than 0.05, then the null hypothesis ($H_0$) is rejected and the alternate hypothesis ($H_a$) is accepted.

The results showed that the independent factors have a moderate effect on the dependent variable if the p value is less than 0.05. Thus, it might be inferred that the experimental group of 6C students benefited greatly from the vocabulary instruction. The results of this study indicate that vocabulary instruction could boost students' reading comprehension of descriptive texts.

However, more testing is needed to evaluate their comprehension thoroughly. Students were satisfied with the animated video and flashcards in several ways, including familiarizing themselves with the new vocabulary linked with Describing People and Object and increasing their self-learning ability to understand descriptively. Likewise, students could review certain new wording multiple times due to the short length of the animated film.

It made studying more pleasure and boosted the students' interest. Post-test scores of students' comprehension could have been affected by factors other than this instruction, even if efforts were made to adjust for variations between the control and experimental groups. A different outcome might occur if English teachers were assertive in encouraging their students' needs. Consistently promoting students receive multiple learning media other than flashcards and animated videos may increase students' learning outcomes.

Moreover, students with lower levels of comprehension are needed to be given high levels of instruction for other topics. In conclusion, vocabulary instruction improves reading comprehension accuracy, fluency, and expression.

REFERENCES


