



Unlocking Linguistic Brilliance: Elevating Ninth-Grade Vocabulary Proficiency through Strategic Word Lists at SMP Al-Azhar 3 Bandar Lampung

Suherni¹, Adenan Damiri², Eva Nurchurifiani^{3*}

STKIP PGRI Bandar Lampung^{1,2,3}

churifiani@gmail.com*

Abstract: This research aimed to improve students' vocabulary mastery through a word list. The research subjects were the ninth-grade students of SMP Al-Azhar 3 Bandar Lampung, consisting of 28 students. Classroom Action Research (CAR) was employed, comprising two cycles. Data collection techniques included both test and non-test methods. A vocabulary test was administered to assess students' vocabulary mastery, while an observation sheet was used for non-test data. Data analysis involved both quantitative and qualitative methods. Referring to the test results, the mean score of students' learning activities in cycle 1 was 6.42, categorizing as less active. Meanwhile, in cycle 2, it increased to 7.32, still considered less active, showing an improvement of 0.9%. On the other hand, the mean score of the vocabulary test in cycle 1 was 69.04, with 7 students scoring ≥ 70 , constituting 25%. In cycle 2, the mean score rose to 76.16, with 21 students scoring ≥ 70 , accounting for 75%. This indicated an improvement of 7.12%. Based on the research results, it can be concluded that a word list effectively improves students' vocabulary mastery in the ninth grade of SMP Al-Azhar 3 Bandar Lampung.

Keywords: Classroom Action Research, Word List, Vocabulary Mastery

INTRODUCTION

Vocabulary is one of the language aspects. Vocabulary helps students understand the meaning of language. Learning vocabulary is the first step in building students' language proficiency in learning English. With limited vocabulary, anyone will also have limited understanding in terms of speaking, reading, listening, and writing. There are many factors that make students have difficulty in mastering vocabulary. First, students face difficulties in understanding and remembering vocabulary. Second, learning English is very demanding, and it can lead to students feeling frustrated or developing fear

regarding their vocabulary skills. Vocabulary is needed to improve four language skills: speaking, writing, reading, and listening (Nation, 2001).

Based on the results of the preliminary research at SMP AL-AZHAR 3 Bandar Lampung, it is shown that the students' vocabulary is still very low, so their vocabulary needs improvement. Most of them have less enthusiasm for learning vocabulary and face difficulties expressing their ideas in learning vocabulary. They also often forget the meaning of vocabulary. Another problem is the technique of presenting the teacher's material in the class. The teacher cannot attract the students' attention, so they are indifferent to learning English. Most of them usually open a dictionary to look for new words in learning vocabulary without getting new words from the teacher. Vocabulary is one component, and no language exists without words; we cannot develop the four skills, namely speaking, listening, writing, and reading, without having vocabulary. Vocabulary is an important part of almost all English subjects. Vocabulary can help students write and understand the meaning of words (Dronjic, 2019).

Moreover, vocabulary is the biggest component of any language course. No matter how well the student learns grammar, and no matter how successfully the sounds of L2 are mastered, without words to express a wide range of meanings, communication in L2 just cannot happen in any meaningful way (McCarty, 2003). Moreover, vocabulary as one of the most important aspects of a foreign language, indicating its significance for students (Richards & Schmidt, 2010). If someone wants to communicate well, then they must master vocabulary. Meanwhile, vocabulary cannot be tough. It can be presented, explained, included in all kinds of activities, and experienced in all manners of associations, but ultimately, it is learned by the individual. As language teachers, we must arouse interest in words, instill excitement in personal development in this area, and help our students by giving them ideas on how to learn. However, each individual would finally learn a very personal selection of items, organized into relationships in an individual way (Thornbury, 2002).

One of the great attractions of learning lists of words is that a large number of words can be learned in a very short time. Without too much effort, learners can master well over thirty foreign-word mother tongue word associations per hour (Schmitt, 2007). According to Richard and Smith (2010), a word list is "a list of the basic and most important words in a language or in a register of a language, generally intended for use as a basis for language teaching or for the preparation of teaching materials." It means that the word list technique can be used as a basic material for language teaching, especially vocabulary teaching. Meanwhile, a list of words in alphabetical order is useful in focusing students' attention on the spelling of the initial letters of words

(Harmer, 2001). According to Thornbury (2002), word lists are an economical way of organizing vocabulary for learning, and it doesn't matter a great deal if they are put together in a rather random way. It will help, though, if list learning activities are integrated into the lesson. Thornbury (2002) suggests that words targeted for active study should be supplied to learners in the form of a list, and many students quite like learning words from lists.

Thornbury (2002) argues that the value of list learning may have been underestimated in language classrooms. He suggests several strategies for using word lists in the classroom, such as the teacher reading words from the list randomly, learners showing they can match the sound with the written form by ticking the ones they hear, the teacher giving translations and learners ticking the English equivalents, and students taking turns in order to make a sentence that includes the next word on the list to continue the story. When implementing the Word List technique, Thornbury (2002) highlights several strengths. Firstly, the approach facilitates active learning, ensuring that students engage with the words actively. Additionally, it is noted that many students exhibit a positive inclination towards learning word lists. Lastly, the method proves efficient in enabling the acquisition of a substantial number of words within a relatively short time frame. These factors collectively contribute to the effectiveness and appeal of the Word List technique in vocabulary learning.

Based on the explanation of implementing the Word List technique in teaching vocabulary, it can be concluded that the word list technique can make learning vocabulary more effective. So, the aim of this research was to know how the word list technique improved students' vocabulary mastery in the ninth grade of SMP AL-AZHAR 3 Bandar Lampung in Academic Year 2022/2023.

RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

The researcher employed Classroom Action Research (CAR) as a method to enhance students' vocabulary mastery. Action research is part of a broad movement that has been ongoing in education for some time. It is related to the concepts of "reflective practice" and "the teacher as a researcher" (Mason, 2010). Action research involves adopting a self-reflective, critical, and systematic approach to explore one's own teaching contexts. In action research, a teacher transforms into an "investigator" or "explorer" of their personal teaching context while simultaneously being one of the participants in it. The researcher utilized the Kemmis and Taggart model of classroom action research, which consists of four steps: planning, acting, observing, and reflecting (Kemmis & McTaggart, 1988).

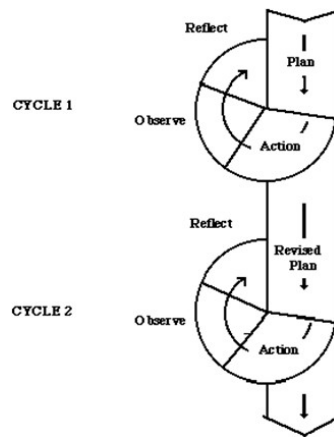


Figure 1. Action Research Cycle

Based on the figure above, there are four steps in each cycle: planning, action, observation, and reflection. The planning step involves the teacher's preparation for learning and teaching activities, which should be aligned with the syllabus. The action step must be applied for at least two cycles. The next step is observation; in this phase, the researcher implements the learning strategy and collects information using the instruments used in the learning process.

RESULT AND DISCUSSION

RESULT

This research was conducted in the ninth grade of SMP AL-AZHAR 3 Bandar Lampung, comprising 28 students. The study implemented the Word List technique to improve students' vocabulary mastery and was divided into two cycles. Each cycle comprised four meetings. The research cycles included a series of steps: Planning, Action, Observation, and Reflection. The results of the data from cycle 1 and cycle 2 of the students' learning can be seen in the table:

Table 1. Students' Learning Results for Cycle 1 and Cycle 2 at Ninth Grade of SMP AL-AZHAR 3 Bandar Lampung

No	Cycle 1		Cycle 2		Information
	Number of Student	% Completeness	Number Of Student	% Completeness	
1	11	42.85%	21	75%	Complete
2	17	57.15%	7	25%	Incomplete

Based on the table above, it can be seen that in cycle 1, 11 students passed the test, constituting a percentage of 42.85%. This percentage increased in cycle 2, where 21 students passed the test, accounting for 75%. It can be concluded that the implementation of the Word List technique improved students' vocabulary mastery.

Table 2. Students' Learning Activities of Cycle 1 and Cycle 2 of the Ninth Grade at SMP AL-AZHAR 3 Bandar Lampung

Cycle 1	Cycle 2	Improvement
Average Score	Average Score	0.9
6.42	7.32	

Based on the table above, it can be seen that the mean score of the total score in cycle 1 was 6.42 (poor), while in cycle 2, the mean score of the total score was 7.32 (enough). The improvement in students' learning activity from cycle 1 to cycle 2 was 0.9. Therefore, it can be concluded that the students' learning activity in the class improved from cycle 1 to cycle 2.

Discussion

Based on the observations conducted in this research, the researcher concludes that there was an improvement in students' vocabulary mastery through the use of the Word List technique. The data obtained from tests and observation sheets indicate a positive impact on the learning process, particularly in vocabulary, when employing the Word List technique. This method aids students in remembering words and understanding their meanings.

The results of the students' vocabulary tests from two cycles demonstrate that the implementation of the Word List technique significantly enhanced students' vocabulary mastery. Analyzing the mean scores of each cycle, the test score mean in cycle 1 was 69.03, categorized as low, with only 12 students (42.85%) meeting the Minimum Mastery Criterion of >75 points. In contrast, the mean score of the test in cycle 2 was 76.16, indicating an improvement from cycle 1, and 21 students (75%) achieved scores >75 points. The data on students' vocabulary mastery reveal noticeable progress.

Furthermore, the assessment of students' learning activities in the class indicates improvement from cycle 1 to cycle 2. The mean score in cycle 1 was 6.42, while in cycle 2, it increased to 7.32. The improvement in students' learning activity from cycle 1 to cycle 2 was 0.9. Based on the data on students' vocabulary mastery, it is evident that there was an enhancement in students' learning activity.

CONCLUSIONS

After conducting the classroom action research (CAR) on teaching vocabulary by implementing the Word List technique, the researcher reached the conclusion that the implementation of the Word List technique improved

students' learning activities in the ninth grade of SMP AL – AZHAR 3 Bandar Lampung. In cycle 1, students were not interested in participating in classroom activities as they found the steps of the Word List technique confusing, and they were shy to come forward when the researcher asked them to.

Consequently, the researcher proceeded to the second cycle. In cycle 2, students became more active and confident in remembering their vocabulary. This was evident in the results of students' learning activities in both cycles, as observed in the observation sheet. In cycle 1, the outcomes were average scores with poor criteria. In contrast, in cycle 2, the outcomes improved to good criteria.

Furthermore, the Word List Technique improved students' vocabulary mastery in the ninth grade of SMP AL – AZHAR 3 Bandar Lampung. In cycle 2, during the vocabulary test, students demonstrated that they acquired and remembered many new vocabularies. The vocabulary test results in cycle 2 met the Minimum Mastery Criteria target by using the Word List technique, with over 75% of the students passing the Minimum Mastery Criteria. This indicates that implementing the Word List technique can enhance students' learning activities and vocabulary mastery in the ninth grade of SMP AL – AZHAR 3 Bandar Lampung in the academic year 2022/2023.

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