



## The Effect of Vocabulary Journals on Eleventh-Grade Students' Vocabulary Mastery at SMK Trisakti Jaya Bandar Lampung

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### ABSTRACT

This research aimed to determine the influence of using vocabulary journals on students' vocabulary mastery at the eleventh grade of SMK Trisakti Jaya Bandar Lampung in the academic year 2024/2025. The research used a quantitative method with a quasi-experimental design. The sample consisted of two classes: XI AKL as the experimental class (16 students) and XI MM as the control class (22 students), totalling 38 students. The experimental class was taught using vocabulary journals, while the control class was taught using conventional media. The data were collected through pre-test and post-test and analyzed using SPSS, including tests of normality, homogeneity, and an independent sample t-test. The result of the Independent Sample t-Test showed a significance value (Sig. 2-tailed) of 0.000, which is less than  $\alpha = 0.05$ . This indicates a significant difference in vocabulary mastery between the experimental and control classes. The mean difference was 15.523, with a 95% confidence interval ranging from 10.564 to 20.481. Therefore,  $H_0$  is rejected and  $H_a$  is accepted. It can be concluded that the use of a vocabulary journal has a significant influence on students' vocabulary mastery. The average post-test score of the experimental class was 79.25, which was higher than the control class's score of 63.73. This indicates that students taught using vocabulary journals achieved better vocabulary mastery than those taught using conventional media.

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### INTRODUCTION

English is a compulsory subject taught in both formal and informal education in Indonesia. Students learning English are required to acquire four primary language skills, which include listening, speaking, reading, and writing (Brown, 2014). Language is not merely a system for communication but also a complex structure used to construct meaning in different contexts (Harmer, 2015). These four skills are

taught in an integrated manner during the teaching and learning process. Vocabulary is an aspect in language learning and has a strong connection with the development of these skills (Hanifia, 2013; Verhoeven et al., 2011). A limited vocabulary makes it difficult for learners to understand spoken and written texts, and it also affects their ability to communicate through speaking and writing. For this reason, vocabulary forms the foundation of communication in English learning.

Vocabulary learning has a direct influence on students' lexical competence, which is why it needs to be introduced from elementary to senior high school levels (Yang et al., 2021). A larger number of known words improves learners' ability to understand language input and express ideas clearly (Meganathan et al., 2019). Students with insufficient vocabulary often experience difficulty expressing their thoughts, both orally and in written form. Vocabulary is closely related to effective communication and also shapes how individuals are perceived in interaction. Without vocabulary, meaningful communication and language practice cannot occur (Zhang, 2020; Teng, 2015).

Vocabulary knowledge cannot be fully mastered at a single stage because it continues to develop throughout a person's life (Nation, 2008). Learning vocabulary is not limited to memorizing word meanings or using words in simple sentences. Vocabulary is gained through incidental learning from exposure to language and through intentional learning involving direct instruction and various learning media (Alemi & Tayebi, 2011). Teaching vocabulary is closely related to students' ability to understand lessons and communicate in English (Zhang, 2020). Vocabulary is a basic element of English learning because limited vocabulary often causes students to misunderstand information and struggle to express ideas clearly (Meganathan et al., 2019). When students encounter difficulties during the learning process, teachers are expected to be creative in designing learning activities that can attract students' interest and support comprehension.

Various types of learning media can be applied in vocabulary instruction, one of which is a vocabulary journal. A vocabulary journal is described as a personal and ongoing record of vocabulary items that are either selected by students or introduced by the teacher (Verhoeven et al., 2011). In addition to writing the word and its meaning, students are encouraged to include supporting details such as illustrations, examples of usage, and synonyms or antonyms (Purwati, 2022). This activity leads students to gain a deeper understanding of vocabulary and supports its use in both spoken and written language.

Vocabulary journals are commonly utilized to document new vocabulary, providing brief definitions and accompanying visual representations (Chubaryan et al., 2023). This medium can be applied at different educational levels and across various subjects, as students frequently encounter commonly used vocabulary (Nin & Dhamotharan, 2019). The use of vocabulary journals also increases students' involvement and interest in learning because the content is written by the students

themselves and can be reviewed both inside and outside the classroom (Tanjung & Daulay, 2025). In practice, a vocabulary journal functions as a note-taking medium that is usually arranged into columns containing definitions, examples, and visual cues.

According to Verhoeven et al. (2011), vocabulary journals provide a structured way for students to record new vocabulary during a lesson or unit. Through this activity, students practice identifying unfamiliar words while reading and work in groups to compare their word lists. Each group discusses which words are most relevant to understanding the lesson and presents their selections to the class. The teacher then reviews the vocabulary list by removing less relevant items and adding any words that may have been overlooked, along with explanations. The finalized list is recorded in the students' vocabulary journals (Verhoeven et al., 2011; Hanifia, 2013).

Based on the problems conveyed, this study focuses on the use of vocabulary journals in the English learning process, particularly in improving students' vocabulary mastery. The use of vocabulary journals is expected to support the development of students' English vocabulary knowledge. Therefore, this research is conducted under the title "The Effect of Vocabulary Journals on Eleventh-Grade Students' Vocabulary Mastery at SMK Trisakti Jaya Bandar Lampung."

## **METHOD**

A quantitative approach was applied in the research, as the data collected were presented in numerical form. An experimental design was carried out to examine the effect of a particular treatment on students' vocabulary mastery. Experimental research examines an idea, practice, or procedure to identify its influence on an outcome or dependent variable (Creswell, 2015). Experimental methods refer to quantitative procedures used to examine the effect of an independent variable or treatment on a dependent variable in controlled settings (Sugiyono, 2019). Experimental research also focuses on identifying whether a treatment influences students' behavior or internal learning processes (Lee, 2012). Therefore, experimental design is applied to examine relationships among variables and to test hypotheses within controlled situations.

A quasi-experimental design was chosen as the research design. This type of design is commonly applied when researchers work with intact groups rather than randomly assigning participants to different groups (Ary et al., 2010). Classroom-based research often requires the use of existing classes, making quasi-experimental design suitable for educational settings. Quasi-experimental designs include several forms, such as designs that utilize pre-tests and post-tests. As stated by Creswell (2015), pre-test and post-test group designs may be applied in quasi-experimental studies. Therefore, this research adopted a pre-test and post-test control group

design to analyze students' vocabulary mastery at SMK Trisakti Jaya.

As the first step of the procedure, a pre-test was conducted with both groups to measure students' vocabulary mastery before the treatment. After the pre-test, treatment activities were conducted in the experimental group, while the control group received conventional instruction without the treatment. The research involved two selected classes, which were assigned as the experimental group and the control group. Following the treatment, a post-test was administered to both groups to identify differences in vocabulary mastery. Through this procedure, the effect of the treatment on students' vocabulary mastery was examined (Lee, 2012).

## RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

### Results

This study aimed to examine the effect of vocabulary journals on students' vocabulary mastery in narrative texts. The research was conducted during the second semester with eleventh-grade students of SMK Trisakti Jaya Bandar Lampung. The population consisted of 145 students, from which two classes were selected as the research samples: XI AKL as the experimental group and XI MM as the control group.

**Table 1. The Average Value of XI AKL**

Class		N	Mean	Std. Deviation	Std. Error Mean
Hasil	Experimental Class AKL	16	79.25	8.668	2.167
	Control Class MM	22	63.73	6.423	1.369

Based on Table 1, the average value of XI AKL, which is the experimental Class, was 79.25, higher than class XI MM, which was the control class, which obtained an average of 63.73.

**Table 2. Independent Sample Test**

		Levene's Test for Equality of Variances		t-test for Equality of Means						
		F	Sig.	t	df	Sig. (2-tailed)	Mean Difference	Std. Error Difference	95% Confidence Interval of the Difference	
								Lower		Upper
Score	Equal variances assumed	2.221	.145	6.349	36	.000	15.523	2.445	10.564	20.481
	Equal variances not assumed			6.055	26.369	.000	15.523	2.563	10.257	20.788

According to Table 2, the findings from the independent samples t-test revealed that the obtained significance value ( $p = 0.000$ ) was below the 0.05 level of significance. This result led to the rejection of the null hypothesis and acceptance of the alternative hypothesis, suggesting that vocabulary journals had a significant effect on students' vocabulary mastery at the eleventh grade of SMK Trisakti Jaya Bandar Lampung during the 2024/2025 academic year.

## **Discussion**

In language learning, vocabulary receives considerable attention because language use depends greatly on word knowledge (Harmer, 2015). Such views indicate that vocabulary instruction is closely related to foreign language learning. Without sufficient vocabulary, learners face difficulty expressing ideas in spoken and written forms, as word knowledge supports meaning construction in communication. In terms of overall language proficiency, vocabulary knowledge contributes to students' ability to engage with texts and produce written language effectively (Hanifia, 2013; Yang et al., 2021). Learners who possess a wider range of vocabulary tend to show stronger reading comprehension and writing fluency, as vocabulary knowledge demonstrates a close relationship with language performance across skills (Zhang, 2020). These findings suggest that vocabulary instruction influences broader aspects of language development.

Regarding its definition, vocabulary refers to the collection of words known and used by an individual, although this does not include every word encountered through exposure (Injeeli, 2013). From another perspective, vocabulary refers to the set of words that exist within a language (Ur, 2012). These definitions indicate that greater vocabulary knowledge supports communication, as learners with more word knowledge tend to communicate more effectively.

In vocabulary instruction, learning media guide students to focus on word meaning and usage within context. At SMK Trisakti Jaya, vocabulary learning has commonly relied on conventional media, where explanations are followed by written tasks. Such classroom practices often limit student involvement and do not sufficiently support vocabulary development. For this reason, an alternative learning medium, namely the vocabulary journal, is introduced in this research (Tanjung & Daulay, 2025). Through the use of a vocabulary journal, students engage in discovering word meanings independently. Students record unfamiliar words considered useful, then search for meanings and related information using dictionaries, thesauruses, or other references (Alemi & Tayebi, 2011). Vocabulary items are recorded regularly, forming a personal journal that documents vocabulary development over time.

According to Verhoeven et al. (2011), vocabulary journals function as continuous personal collections of vocabulary items introduced by teachers or

selected by students. In addition to recording meanings, students include illustrations, usage examples, and synonyms or antonyms (Harmer, 2015; Zhang, 2020). Such activities deepen word understanding and support vocabulary use in spoken and written contexts. Previous findings indicate positive contributions of vocabulary journals to vocabulary development (Verhoeven et al., 2011). Several advantages emerge from the use of vocabulary journals in language learning. The process of recording vocabulary supports memory retention and strengthens vocabulary knowledge. Learner autonomy also develops, as students create a personal reference source based on individual vocabulary needs. Access beyond the classroom further enables students to respond to unfamiliar words encountered in novels, magazines, or other English texts (Nurdini & Marlina, 2017).

In terms of methodology, a quantitative approach was applied, with numerical data analyzed using statistical procedures. An experimental method was selected, specifically a quasi-experimental design employing a pre-test and post-test control group format. Two classes participated as research samples, with class XI AKL assigned as the experimental group and class XI MM as the control group at SMK Trisakti Jaya. Vocabulary mastery was measured through a multiple-choice test covering word meaning, word combination, and word use in narrative texts.

The research began with the administration of a pre-test to assess students' initial vocabulary mastery before the treatment. After six meetings of treatment using vocabulary journals, students' vocabulary mastery improved. The findings indicated that the application of vocabulary journals enhanced students' vocabulary mastery. This enhancement was demonstrated by the post-test results, in which the experimental class obtained a higher mean score than the control class. The experimental class achieved a mean score of 79.25, whereas the control class achieved 63.73. In short, the experimental class demonstrated superior performance compared to the control class ( $79.25 > 63.73$ ).

The results of the normality test conducted using SPSS indicated that the data from both the experimental and control classes were normally distributed. The pre-test scores of the experimental class showed a significance value of 0.819, whereas the control class showed 0.538. The post-test scores also demonstrated significance values of 0.296 for the experimental class and 0.460 for the control class. Because all obtained significance values were higher than 0.05, the normality assumption for this study was fulfilled. The homogeneity test results obtained through SPSS indicated that the data from the experimental and control classes were homogeneous. The test produced a significance value of 0.145, which was higher than the 0.05 significance level. Therefore, the data groups in this study were classified as homogeneous.

The data analysis and hypothesis testing results confirmed the rejection of the null hypothesis ( $H_0$ ) and acceptance of the alternative hypothesis ( $H_1$ ), indicating that vocabulary journals affected students' vocabulary mastery. The findings

suggest that vocabulary journals can be applied in teaching vocabulary mastery to enhance students' activeness and motivation, especially in narrative text reading, and can also be used in teaching various languages.

## CONCLUSIONS

This study found that the use of vocabulary journals had a significant positive effect on eleventh-grade students' vocabulary mastery at SMK Trisakti Jaya Bandar Lampung. Students in the experimental group outperformed those in the control group, with a higher mean post-test score (79.25 vs. 63.73), and the independent samples t-test confirmed that the difference was statistically significant (Sig. 2-tailed = 0.000). These findings indicate that vocabulary journals can serve as an effective instructional medium for improving students' vocabulary mastery. Pedagogically, the results imply that English teachers may integrate vocabulary journals into classroom practice to promote more active, independent, and meaningful vocabulary learning.

However, this study was limited by its relatively small sample size, its focus on only one school, the use of intact classes in a quasi-experimental design, and the concentration on vocabulary mastery in narrative texts after a six-meeting treatment period. Therefore, the findings should be interpreted within this specific context. Future studies are suggested to involve larger and more diverse samples, apply a longer treatment duration, and examine the use of vocabulary journals across different text types, language skills, or educational levels. Further research may also combine quantitative and qualitative approaches to provide a deeper understanding of how vocabulary journals influence students' engagement and long-term vocabulary development.

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