The Use of Picture Dictionary to Enhance Students' Vocabulary Mastery at UPTD SMPN 11 Barru

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Abstract

This study examines how effectively junior high school students vocabulary proficiency may be enhanced using pictorial dictionaries. Classroom Action Research was used in this research, and carried out in two cycles with phases for planning, action, observation, and reflection. Twenty-five pupils from SMPN 11 Barru's class VIII.3 took part, and pre- and post-tests were used to gather data. Only 32% of students received the minimum passing score, according to the pre-test data. After implementing picture dictionaries in Cycle I, 40% met the standard, demonstrating initial progress. Cycle II involved refining the teaching approach, leading to a significant improvement, with 100% of students meeting the minimum standard and the average score rising from 66.6 to 80. The findings highlight the potential of picture dictionaries in fostering vocabulary retention and engagement by providing visual and contextualized learning experiences. These results support the integration of picture dictionaries into vocabulary instruction as a practical and effective tool. Future research could explore the use of digital and augmented reality picture dictionaries to enhance learning outcomes further and address limitations related to abstract concepts.

Keywords: Classroom Action Research; Picture Dictionary; Vocabulary Mastery

INTRODUCTION

Vocabulary as one of the fields of science in language, plays an important role for learners in mastering a language and is a basic element in learning English that needs to be mastered. Vocabulary is a collection of words to express sentiments, views, and criticism as well as to communicate with others. According to Hestiana & Anita (2022) mastering vocabulary is crucial to developing deep language comprehension. Furthermore Putri & Wahyuni (2019) vocabulary is fundamental to the English dialect because learners will struggle to convey their thoughts or understand what others are saying if they don't have a large enough vocabulary. According to Panjaitan, Lutfiyanti, and Sinaga (2024), mastering vocabulary is a comprehensive ability that involves application, selection, and introduction. Additionally, it is a process of accurately and appropriately mastering language rather than an impromptu one Having a substantial vocabulary helps students develop more competent in language and understand the meaning of words in context. In addition, student's vocabulary size is nearly often utilized to determine their degree of language competency because speaking fluently frequently requires a particular vocabulary level. Vocabulary mastery is not easy for students, especially for junior high school students. Students have limitations in learning and memorizing. Considering the crucial role of vocabulary in communication, it is imperative that vocabulary be taught through the use of effective educational resources. Putri (2022) stated when presented with the context of a word's usage, students will pick it up more easily than if they are purposefully memorized, which may later prove to be highly challenging.

Traditional methods often rely heavily on rote memorization, which has limited long-term impact. In language learning and instruction, the use of visual aids—such as films, animations, presentations, podcasts, and diagrams—has grown in popularity since they provide a creative and motivating method of teaching English (Patesan et al., 2018). In the same way, they encourage student interaction, which promotes peer learning and boosts students' self-esteem. Additionally, more hands-on exercises are conducted with audio-visual aids, which enables learners to actively practice and understand specifics. The main justification for implementing audio-visual aids into English classrooms, according to Kara & Kucuk (2023), is that they assist students in matching words to sounds or images, which helps them remember a lot of knowledge for use at once when needed. Furthermore, there are a variety of audio-visual aids available, giving teachers the freedom to include the most practical resources into their courses to break up the monotony and boost students' learning rates (Wazeema & Kareema, 2017). One could argue that visual aids are essential to transforming the manner that education is conducted. A dictionary is one resource that can help students become more proficient in vocabulary (Alhatmi, 2019). According to Suniyasih et al. (2020), picture dictionaries are among the best visual aids offered in English language learning environments at all levels, from preschool to university. Avendano & Jiménez (2023) define picture dictionaries as thematically structured materials that primarily—and occasionally exclusively—use visual aids like pictures, arrows, colors, and illustrations to convey the meaning of words, particularly those that are referential.The first step in a thorough word-by-word development process is the visual dictionary. It offers a variety of digital and printed educational tools for students in every grade (Kara & Kucuk, 2023; Suniyasih et al., 2020). Students can benefit from using dictionaries by using them to find words, their definitions, and pronunciations. It also helps them become more proficient in vocabulary. There were three types of dictionaries: picture or visual dictionaries, thematic dictionaries, and multilingual dictionaries. According to Suniyasih, Ratminingsih Budasi (2020) picture dictionary which provide definitions of words through illustrated pictures, have been acknowledged as one of the most successful visual aids in English language learning environments at many levels, from preschool to university. The pictures are designed based on a theme or topic. Picture dictionary does not only present vocabulary text, it also presenting vocabulary text, picture dictionaries also provide a basic illustration of the vocabulary, including nouns, adjectives, and verbs. This helps students better understand the meaning of the words and helps them retain them because they have a mental image of what the words mean Anggraeni, Ngafif & Chasanah (2021). Likewise, Dziemianko (2022) points out that Picture dictionaries help students become more proficient in English by providing a contextualized bridge between learned and unfamiliar terms. Additionally, Goga et. al (2021) contends that tudents' motivation to improve their learning increases when picture dictionaries use visually rich information to appeal to their multiple senses.

One of the main areas of focus in current research is the impact of picture dictionaries on vocabulary retention. Several previous studies have addressed the issue of picture dictionaries. First, Othman et al. (2022) found that when words are linked to images, students retain the taught vocabulary for a longer amount of time. The results also show that using the visuals helps them remember more words. Second, Kurniawan, Susilohadi & Sulistyawati (2018) the results showed that picture dictionaries can be used effectively to improve students' vocabulary mastery in each meeting and can support group discussions in the teaching and learning process. Then, Bounadjat, Belhis & Boukrika (2022) investigated the use of picture dictionaries over a semester with high school students. The study showed that students who used picture dictionaries retained 40% more vocabulary over three months than students who engaged in traditional vocabulary drills.

The similarities and differences between previous studies and this study are the similarities in the studies using picture dictionaries as a medium to improve vocabulary. However, previous studies are also different from this study. This research was conducted in junior high schools, especially SMPN 11 Barru whose vocabulary was considered very low, while several previous studies conducted the research in elementary schools and preschools. Then, in contrast to previous studies that used pre-experimental research methods, this study used the Classroom Action Research research method. Based on the background above the purpose of this study was to determine the effect of using a picture dictionary on improving students' vocabulary mastery and to determine whether the picture dictionary is effective in helping students master vocabulary.

METHOD

Classroom Action Research was the research methodology employed in this study. Reflective research including specific actions to improve professional learning methods in the classroom is known as classroom action research. Because it determines the caliber of study findings, it is essential to scientific research (Sherly Gaspersz, 2020). According to Meesuk et al. (2020), classroom action research-based education, which highlights that the research process is made up of two interrelated components the research process and the research result is what defines the teaching and learning process. As a result, classroom action research-based training demonstrates the use of research methods and findings in teaching and learning. In the classroom, action research is conducted in four different cycles. The steps include planning, taking action, observing, and reflecting. Therefore, it is expected that Classroom Action Research would help teachers highlight the lesson's advantages and disadvantages while also enhancing students' performance and vocabulary growth. The population in this study was all class VIII of UPT SMPN 11 Barru. Purposive sampling was used in this study, the researcher chose class VIII.3 considering that the class was a class with low vocabulary skills with 25 students and was a class recommended by their English teacher. There were 20 multiple-choice questions on the test consisting of vocabulary questions noun, verb, adjective and adverb with choices a, b, c, and d. The choice of words took into account the level of student proficiency. Adopted in the study of Ein et.al (2023) 5 points were given for correct answers, and 0 for incorrect responses. After the investigation, a post-test was given to measure the level of information achieved. Five criteria very good, good, sufficient, lacking, and very lacking were then used to examine the data and evaluate students' abilities both before and after the treatment. After data collection, the total score was divided by the number of students enrolled in the Fashion Design course to get the average score for the pre-test, post-test , and post-test.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

Results

There were two cycles to this investigation. Three meetings each cycle was used to take action in Cycles 1 and 2. The three components of each cycle were planning, acting, and reflecting. Students took a pre-test to assess their skills before to starting treatment. Following the treatment, the researcher gave the students a post-test. Following treatment, the vocabulary scores of the pupils were assessed using a post-test. In order to ascertain whether or whether students' vocabulary improved following treatment, the researcher gave them two post-tests during the two cycles of this study.

Pre-test

Pre-test was conducted on Wednesday, August 26, 2024 at 07.30 – 09.30 WITA for approximately 120 minutes. First, the researcher began the lesson by greeting, praying, and checking student attendance. Then the researcher explained vocabulary related to nouns, verbs, adjectives and adverbs for more than 20 minutes. After that, students worked on the pre-test. The 20 questions on this test, which may be finished in 60 minutes, cover the previously listed vocabulary as well as the terms for nouns, verbs, adjectives, and adverbs. The results of the pre-test can be seen in the table below.

Table.1 The Vocabulary Score of Student's Pre-Test

Grade	Criteria of Assessment	Frequency	Percentage
91 – 100	Excellent	-	-
81 – 90	Very Good	2	8%
71 – 80	Good	6	24%
61 – 70	Fair	10	40%
51 – 60	Poor	5	20%
Less than 50	Very Poor	2	8%
Total		25	100%

As indicated by the figures above, only six students scored higher than the grade level, and only 32 percent of students received scores between 71 and 90.

Planning

During this phase, the following actions taken setting:
   a. By performing a requirements analysis, the study team determined the essential abilities that must be learned.
   b. Using the Picture Dictionary technique to create lesson plans
   c. Create observers' observation sheets.
   d. Build the tools that will be utilized in cycles I and II.
   e. Create instruments for evaluating learning.

Action

The actions were carried out for 8 meetings. Four meetings were held for each cycle, with the following specifics: the first meeting involved implementing a needs analysis to ascertain the students' needs; the second meeting involved implementing the pre-test; the third meeting involved implementing the picture dictionary; and the following day, the cycle 1 test results were collected.

The Picture Dictionary was implemented during the first meeting on August 31, 2024, from 08.30 to 9.30 WITA. In this instance, the researcher used test findings and the observation method to perform a requirements analysis in order to identify the particular needs that the students needed. Depending on the requirements analysis, students must increase the number of nouns, verbs, adverbs, and adjectives in their vocabulary. This is done to make utilizing English for conversation easier. In this instance, the researcher selected the Picture Dictionary

game because it is an enjoyable way to expand one's English vocabulary. Additionally, class VIII.3 students like to study through pictures or visual aids.

Cycle I

In general, in cycle I the Picture Dictionary concept was still new to the students, the teacher's role in giving instructions and explanations remained very dominating, even if the teaching and learning activities carried out thoroughly.

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Table 2. The Vocabulary Score of Student's Post-test I

Grade	Criteria of Assessment	Frequency	Percentage
91 – 100	Excellent	-	-
81 – 90	Very Good	3	12%
71 – 80	Good	7	28%
61 – 70	Fair	11	44%
51 – 60	Poor	4	16%
Less than 50	Very Poor	-	-
Total		25	100%

In Cycle I's post-test, ten students achieved the minimal requirement. The learning materials did not flow smoothly, and some students did not comprehend the materials, based to the post-test results. Because they were still getting used to the picture dictionary method in addition were confused, some students were not satisfied. Some students failed the Cycle I exam as a result. As a result, cycle II which involved planning and action, was required of the researcher.

Cycle II

The teaching and learning process makes reference to the learning plan by taking consideration of the cycle I revision in order to prevent cycle II errors or deficiencies. Observations are conducted simultaneously with learning implementation. The following table displays the research findings from cycle II.

Table 3. The Vocabulary Score of Student's Post-test II

Grade	Criteria of Assessment	Frequency	Percentage
91 – 100	Excellent	4	16%
81 – 90	Very Good	7	28%
71 – 80	Good	14	56%
61 – 70	Fair	-	-
51 – 60	Poor	-	-
Less than 50	Very Poor	-	-
Total		25	100%

The researcher gave more thorough and in-depth treatment in post-test II. Only 10 students in cycle I achieved the standard, representing a 32% rate. On the other hand, 100% of students' scores in cycle II achieved the standard score. Although there is additional opportunity for improvement, the overall student scores were higher than the post-test I results. All students completed the KKM, and the minimal passing score was 75.

Reflection

To determine whether the second cycle of activities satisfies the success criteria based on the results of the first action test, the researcher looks at the results of the first cycle of actions. Since reflection is intended to be an activity to examine, interpret, and make conclusions, it is used to view the entire process of executing the first and second cycles.

Table 4. Vocabulary Score

	Pre-test	Post-test I	Post-test II
Total Score	1665	1770	2000
Mean	66.6	70.8	80
Persentage	32%	40%	100%

Based on table 4, only 32% of all students passed the KKM in the pre-test. After the treatment, the author gave a post-test to the students. Post-test cycle 1 outcomes have improved, with 40% of students meeting the minimal standard. Fifteen students did not achieve the minimum standard, therefore the researcher had to provide one more treatment. Therefore, cycle 2 required a further treatment from the researcher. The researcher conducted a second therapy. To be more specific, the total score of 25 students in post-test II was 2000, with all students passing the minimal score. This is better than post-test I, where the students' scores might be raised. The previous table indicates that the students' pre-test and post-test II scores improved. This shows that using a picture dictionary can help students improve their vocabulary.

Discussion

The study highlights the significance of vocabulary mastery as a cornerstone in language learning, especially for junior high school students, who often face challenges in learning and memorizing new words. The research underlines the role of innovative teaching media, particularly picture dictionaries, as effective tools for enhancing vocabulary acquisition. The findings align with previous literature, such as the work of Hestiana and Anita (2022), who emphasize that a solid vocabulary foundation aids in comprehension and communication, and Putri (2022), who notes the advantage of contextualized vocabulary learning over rote memorization. The results of this study provide empirical evidence for the efficacy of picture dictionaries in improving vocabulary mastery among students. The implementation of this method through two cycles of Classroom Action Research revealed a clear upward trend in student performance. During the pre-test, only 32% of students achieved the minimum passing score, reflecting their initial struggle with vocabulary acquisition. The use of the Picture Dictionary method in Cycle I led to modest improvements, with 40% of students meeting the minimum standard. This suggests that while the method was beneficial, students initially required more exposure and familiarity with the new learning approach.

Cycle II addressed the limitations observed in Cycle I by refining the teaching strategies and providing additional support to students. This iterative process proved highly effective, as evidenced by the post-test results in Cycle II, where 100% of students achieved the minimum passing score. The mean score increased significantly from 66.6 in the pre-test to 80 in the second post-test. These results validate the findings of previous studies, such as those by Zhou et.al (2024); Bounadjat (2022), which demonstrate that visual aids, like picture dictionaries, enhance memory retention and comprehension by leveraging the dual-coding theory. Furthermore, the findings corroborate the observations of Lin and Kaur (2021), who noted that picture dictionaries increase student engagement and motivation. The students in this study showed enthusiasm for learning through visual aids, especially as the researcher tailored the materials to their needs and learning preferences. By incorporating nouns, verbs, adjectives, and adverbs, the method addressed essential vocabulary categories, making it easier for students to connect words with their meanings and contexts. The iterative process of Classroom Action Research allowed the researcher to identify and address challenges effectively, leading to the method's success. However, some initial challenges were observed, such as student unfamiliarity with the method and confusion during Cycle I. These challenges align with limitations noted in prior research, including the difficulty of using picture dictionaries for abstract vocabulary concepts. Despite these hurdles, the overall improvement in students' vocabulary scores demonstrates the potential of picture dictionaries as a practical and engaging teaching tool. In conclusion, the study confirms that picture dictionaries can significantly enhance vocabulary mastery among junior high school students. By providing contextualized and visual learning experiences, they address the common difficulties students face in traditional vocabulary instruction. Future research could explore the integration of digital picture dictionaries or augmented reality tools to further enhance the learning experience and address abstract vocabulary learning challenges.

CONCLUSION

This study demonstrates the potential of picture dictionaries as an effective tool for improving vocabulary mastery among junior high school students. Through the Classroom Action Research method, students showed significant improvement in vocabulary acquisition, with scores increasing from 32% achieving the minimum standard in the pre-test to 100% in the post-test of Cycle II. The results indicate that the use of picture dictionaries enhances students' memory retention, comprehension, and engagement by providing visual and contextualized learning experiences. However, initial challenges, such as student unfamiliarity with the method and its limited effectiveness for abstract vocabulary concepts, highlight areas requiring further exploration and refinement. Future research should explore the integration of digital and augmented reality (AR) picture dictionaries to enhance learning outcomes and address challenges related to abstract vocabulary. Additionally, developing culturally relevant and comprehensive visual aids can ensure inclusivity and resonance with diverse learner populations. Teachers should consider adapting the method to suit various learning contexts and preferences, ensuring it complements existing instructional strategies. Longitudinal studies could assess the long-term impact of picture dictionaries on vocabulary retention and overall language proficiency, providing deeper insights into their effectiveness across different educational stages.

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