

The Effectiveness of Use Short Stories to Improve The Students' Vocabulary Mastery

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Abstract

The purpose of this study was to determine the effectiveness of using short story media to improve students' vocabulary. With a pre-experimental using a single group pretest-posttest, the researcher employed quantitative research. The sample for this study consisted of 25 students' from class VIII2 at UPTD SMPN 11 Barru. Purposive sampling was the method utilized to choose the study's sample. Following the exam, the researcher discovered that the students' average pretest score was 55.68 and their average posttest score was 69.6. The data was then evaluated using the t-test formula. With t-count = 9.14 and t-table = 2.068, the data analysis findings demonstrated that the t-count was greater than the t-table at a significance level of 0.05. It may be said that using short tales as a teaching tool greatly increases students' vocabularies.

Keywords: Short Story; Vocabulary Mastery

INTRODUCTION

In the world of education, good vocabulary mastery is one of the important skills that every student must have. As stated by Anisa, and Andriani & Sriwahyuningsih, (2019;2016) that vocabulary mastery is very important for students who learn English, it functions as a basis for developing language skills. A rich vocabulary not only supports speaking and writing skills but also affects students' reading comprehension. This is in line with research by Amirzai and Widayarsi (2021;2023) which states that vocabulary development not only improves reading skills but also supports other language skills such as listening, speaking, and writing. In addition, rich vocabulary mastery also contributes to students' ability to communicate effectively in various situations, both in academic and social environments.

In the context of language learning, vocabulary serves as a foundation that allows students to express ideas and ideas more clearly and precisely. However, many students face difficulties in expanding and developing their vocabulary. Research indicates that students face various difficulties in vocabulary acquisition. Common challenges include pronunciation of unfamiliar sounds, correct spelling, understanding word meanings, and memorizing new vocabulary (Machfudi & Afidah, 2022; Susanto, 2021; Rosyada-AS & Apoko, 2023; Salam & Nurnisa (2021). Students also struggle with translating between languages, using words in context, and grasping idiomatic expressions (Machfudi & Afidah, 2022; Susanto, 2021). Factors contributing to these difficulties include differences between written and spoken forms, the vast number of words to learn, limited information sources, and the complexity of word knowledge (Susanto, 2021). Additionally, students' reluctance to use dictionaries, lack of interest in English, and inadequate practice hinder vocabulary mastery. Therefore, it is important to apply effective learning methods to improve these abilities. One approach that can be used is through the introduction of short stories in the learning process. In Mohammed's (2022) in his research has proven that students who are taught using short stories show a significant increase in vocabulary, both in terms of the number of words and usage, compared to the control group.

Short stories not only attract students' attention but also offer a rich context for vocabulary development. By using short stories, students can encounter new words in a natural context, which helps them understand the meaning and use of the words.

Short stories are relatively brief and concise forms of literature, usually consisting of one main plot and several characters involved in a particular situation. Through engaging narratives, short stories are not only able to capture students' attention but also provide a rich context for the introduction and use of new words. By reading and analyzing short stories, students can explore the meaning of words in the context of sentences, deepening their understanding of the vocabulary. In addition, the characters and plots in the stories often depict relevant everyday situations, so students can easily relate new vocabulary to their own experiences. Thus, short stories become a very useful tool in improving students' language skills, especially in terms of mastering diverse and applicable vocabulary.

The use of short story as instructional materials has the potential to significantly increase students' vocabulary proficiency. Students learn new terms in a rich and realistic context when short tales are used as a teaching tool. This adds an engaging element to the teaching and learning process. Students' own experiences can be directly connected to the diverse vocabulary used in short tales. Additionally, short tales can foster a more relaxed and participatory learning environment, which makes vocabulary acquisition more pleasurable for students. Furthermore, short tales can assist kids learn new words by giving them context and enhancing their spelling, pronunciation, and word use (Mohammed, 2022). This allows them to understand the meaning of words more deeply, improve memory, and relate new vocabulary to relevant real-life situations. However, teachers must be careful in choosing short stories that suit students' interests and abilities to maximize learning outcomes. This was stated by Ledy et al. (2023) that teachers are encouraged to carefully choose short stories that suit students' interests and abilities to maximize learning outcomes.

Researchers choose to use short story media in learning English so that the learning process feels fun but still provides deep meaning. This is supported by Guritno (2017), that short stories are an effective medium for teaching English, especially for young learners, because short stories create an interesting and engaging learning environment. Short stories can also significantly improve students' vocabulary mastery (Guritno, 2017; Abdullayeva, 2024). In addition, short stories offer the opportunity to teach various aspects of language, including vocabulary, grammar, and pronunciation, while conveying moral values and local wisdom (Irawati & Halim, 2018). In the study of Reza Afroogh & Mohammad Ahmadi M.A (2019), added that short stories are suitable for learners of all ages and can effectively teach advanced concepts and grammar points in an interesting way. Furthermore, in the research of Widayahening & Sri Rahayu (2021), using folklore as a learning tool showed increased vocabulary mastery and reduced anxiety during lessons. As well as providing context for new words, which allows students to understand the literal and emotional meaning of vocabulary (Abdullayefa, 2024). Based on a number of earlier research findings, researcher choose to carry out this study in order to assess how well short story media might enhance students' vocabulary knowledge at UPTD SMPN 11 Barru. Short story media are seen to offer a lot of promise for giving students an enjoyable and fulfilling educational experience. It is anticipated that this research will aid in the advancement of English learning techniques, particularly with regard to expanding students' vocabulary, and serve as a guide for teachers in selecting efficient teaching approaches.

METHOD

Research Design

This study uses a pre-experimental research method to assess how well short tale media can be used to help children expand their vocabulary. Creswell (2019) asserts that experimental design is used in quantitative research. Research that evaluates ideas, procedures, or methods to determine whether they affect the dependent variables or results is known as an experimental design (Creswell 2019). The experimental method can also determine the causal relationship between two variables, known as independent and dependent variables. Independent and dependent variables will be the two variables employed in this study. The use of short story media is the independent variable. The dependent variable is the increase in students' language proficiency.

Population and Sample

UPTD SMPN 11 Barru eighth graders from the 2024–2025 school year made up the study's population. In grade 8, there are three different classes: VIII1, VIII2, and X3. Purposive sampling, which was based on pre-observation results, was used in this study. The researcher used class VIII2, which had 22 students, as a sample because of their difficulties mastering vocabulary, according to the teacher's statement.

Instruments

The exam utilized as a research tool in this study was a multiple-choice test with ten questions and ten matching word questions. The exam was administered in two phases: a pre-test in the first stage and a post-test in the second. Both phases received the identical treatment, which involved assessing students' skills through tasks pertaining to the provided short tale. The test's administration time makes a difference.

Data Analysis

To get each student's unique score, the researcher examined each student's pretest and posttest data using the Sugiyono method:

$$\frac{A}{N} \times 100$$

Where:

A = The number of students who properly answered the question

N = The total quantity of item

100 = Constant number

The researcher applied the following formula to ascertain the pre-test and post-test average scores.:

$$\bar{X} = \frac{\sum X}{N}$$

Where:

\bar{X} = Mean score

$\sum X$ = Amount of each data

N = Amount of data

The researcher utilized the following formula to get the mean deviation of the students' scores between the pre-test and post-test results.:

$$Md = \frac{\sum d}{N}$$

Where:

Md = Mean deviation

$\sum d$ = Deviation

N = Number of students

The researcher utilized the following formula to obtain the square deviation.:

$$\sum x^2 d = \frac{\sum d^2 - (\sum d)^2}{N}$$

$\sum x^2 d$ = Mean deviation

$\sum d$ = Deviation

N = Number of students

The researcher performed an investigation using the following Arikunto formula to obtain square deviation:

$$t = \frac{Md}{\frac{\sqrt{\sum x^2 d}}{N(N-1)}}$$

Where:

t = Score of t-test

Md = Mean of differences pretest and posttest

$\sum d^2 d$ = The sum of square deviation

N = Number of sample

1 = Constant number

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

Results

The researcher administered a pre-test to the sample before to starting the therapy. These are the study's results:

Table 1. Students Pre-test Scores

No	Students	Correct	Wrong	Score
1	AC	13	7	65
2	BC	12	8	60
3	GS	11	9	55
4	KU	12	11	60
5	WJ	13	7	65
6	NB	13	7	65
7	KA	10	10	50
8	LQ	10	10	50
9	PZ	11	9	55
10	XA	14	6	70
11	LE	12	8	60
12	GX	9	11	45
13	MO	9	11	45
14	OP	10	10	50
15	RZ	13	7	65
16	QW	12	8	60

17	ER	12	8	60
18	TY	7	13	35
19	UI	11	9	55
20	OA	10	10	50
21	SD	10	10	50
22	FG	10	10	50
23	HJ	11	9	55
24	KL	13	7	65
25	ZM	13	7	65
Total				1.390

After the data is collected, the calculation of the average pre-test score of students is carried out using the average score formula. To get the average score, the researcher first totals up all of the students' standard scores and divides that total by the total number of students. The formula that explains how to calculate the average score is as follows:

$$\bar{X} = \frac{\sum X}{N}$$

$$\bar{X} = \frac{1.390}{25}$$

$$\bar{X} = 55.68$$

According to the preceding description, the data indicates that the pre-test's mean value is 55.68, with the lowest number being 35 and the highest being 65.

Table 2. Students' post-test Score

No	Students	Correct	Wrong	Score
1	AC	18	2	90
2	BC	17	3	85
3	GS	17	3	85
4	KU	16	4	80
5	WJ	18	3	90
6	NB	10	6	50
7	KA	15	5	75
8	LQ	14	6	70
9	PZ	19	1	95
10	XA	16	4	80
11	LE	18	2	90
12	GX	10	2	50

13	MO	9	3	45
14	OP	13	7	65
15	RZ	10	5	50
16	QW	17	3	85
17	ER	16	4	80
18	TY	15	5	75
19	UI	9	5	45
20	OA	13	7	65
21	SD	13	7	65
22	FG	17	3	85
23	HJ	14	6	70
24	KL	16	4	80
25	ZM	16	4	80
Total				1.740

Following data collection, the researcher needs to use the following formula to get the mean score:

$$\bar{X} = \frac{\sum X}{N}$$

$$\bar{X} = \frac{1.985}{25}$$

$$\bar{X} = 69.6$$

According to the preceding description, the data indicates that the post-test mean value is 69.6, with the lowest value being 45 and the highest being 95. The researcher then proceeded to count the deviation and square deviation after obtaining the mean scores for the pre-test and post-test. The outcome is shown below:

Table 3. Students' Pre-test and post-test Score

No	Students	Pre-test	Post-test	Deviation	D ²
1	AC	65	90	25	625
2	BC	60	85	25	625
3	GS	55	85	30	900
4	KU	60	80	20	400
5	WJ	65	90	25	625
6	NB	65	50	5	10
7	KA	50	75	25	625
8	LQ	50	70	20	400
9	PZ	55	95	40	1.600
10	XA	70	80	10	100
11	LE	60	90	30	900
12	GX	45	50	5	10

13	MO	45	45	0	0
14	OP	50	65	15	225
15	RZ	65	50	15	225
16	QW	60	85	20	400
17	ER	60	80	20	400
18	TY	35	75	40	1.600
19	UI	55	45	10	100
20	OA	50	65	10	100
21	SD	50	65	10	100
22	FG	50	85	35	1.225
23	HJ	55	70	15	225
24	KL	65	80	15	225
25	ZM	65	80	15	225
Total				480	11.870

The researcher calculated the average deviation of the students' scores after calculating the difference between the pre-test and post-test scores. Here is the calculation:

$$Md = \frac{\sum d}{N}$$

$$Md = \frac{480}{25}$$

$$Md = 19.2$$

The researcher calculated the square deviation as follows after counting the mean deviation:

$$\sum x^2 d = \frac{\sum d^2 - (\sum d)^2}{N}$$

$$\sum x^2 d = \frac{11.870 - \frac{(480)^2}{25}}$$

$$\sum x^2 d = 11.870 - \frac{230.400}{25}$$

$$\sum x^2 d = 11.870 - 9.216$$

$$\sum x^2 d = 2.654$$

To ascertain the significance of the pre-test and post-test, the researcher must also do a statistical analysis of the data using the t-count. The following was the calculation:

$$t = \frac{Md}{\frac{\sqrt{\sum x^2 d}}{N(N-1)}}$$

$$t = \frac{19.2}{\frac{\sqrt{2.654}}{25(25-1)}}$$

$$t = \frac{19.2}{\frac{\sqrt{2.654}}{600}}$$

$$t = \frac{19.2}{\sqrt{4.423}}$$

$$t = \frac{19.2}{2.103}$$

$$t = 9.14$$

The degree of freedom (df) is 23 with two independent variables and a sample size of 25. At a significance level of 5% (t -table = 2.068) and 1% (t -table = 2.807), the value of t -count = 9.14 indicates a significantly higher result than the value of t -table. Because the likelihood of mistake (p) is significantly less than 0.01% ($p < 0.001$), this finding is very significant. As a result, we may declare the link or impact examined in this study to be statistically significant and reject the null hypothesis (H_0).

Discussion

The study's findings demonstrated that using short tales at UPTD SMPN 11 Barru greatly enhanced students' vocabulary knowledge. An rise in the average vocabulary test score following the adoption of the short story-based learning approach serves as evidence of this. This method helps students retain and use the vocabulary in different contexts by giving them a deeper context in which to grasp new words. According to earlier research, short story media can enhance vocabulary mastery in a number of domains, including spelling, pronunciation, meaning, and word usage (Moradan & Vafae, 2016). This finding is consistent with those findings.

According to the research, using short stories is one of the best strategies for helping students expand their vocabulary. This is demonstrated by the students' willingness to complete the assigned tasks. Because of their insatiable curiosity, students must interpret every word in the short stories they read. Furthermore, researchers may use short tales to successfully organize their classes so that both students and researchers are at ease and calm during the learning process. According to Jeni (2020), short tales can boost students' engagement and excitement for the learning process, which in turn can enhance their reading comprehension.

Based on these findings, the use of short stories has proven effective in improving students' vocabulary, but requires careful planning. Teachers are advised to choose short stories that are relevant to the cultural background and interests of students to make learning more interesting. In addition, integration between short stories and interactive activities such as vocabulary games or creative projects is needed to increase retention. Further research is also recommended to test the effectiveness of this method on groups of students with different levels of language ability to get a more comprehensive picture.

CONCLUSION

Based on the study's findings and the preceding discussion, it is feasible to conclude that eighth graders' vocabulary understanding has significantly increased as a result of utilizing short story media. The pre-test results showed that the lowest score was 35, the highest was 65, and the average was 55.68. A post-test was given by the researcher once the therapy was over. In the post-test results, the mean score was 69.6, the maximum was 95, and the minimum was 45. Short stories may be a helpful teaching and learning technique for students, as evidenced by the average pre-test score rising from 55.68 before therapy to 69 after treatment. This is particularly true when it comes to expanding one's vocabulary.

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