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Implementing Vocabulary Journal Strategy in Intensive Reading Activities for EFL Vocational Students

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Abstrak

Penguasaan kosakata merupakan salah satu komponen kunci dalam pembelajaran bahasa, khususnya dalam konteks membaca intensif. Ada banyak strategy yang bisa digunakan dalam pembelajaran kosakata, salah satunya vocabulary journal. Sementara banyak penelitian yang mengeksplorasi pengalaman siswa menengah atas, penelitian ini mengeksplorasi pengalaman lima siswa menengah kejuruan kelas sepuluh dalam menggunakan vocabulary journal dalam membaca intensif. Penelitian ini menggunakan desain kualitatif dengan metode studi kasus dan menggunakan wawancara dan reflective journal untuk mengumpulkan pengalaman siswa dalam menggunakan vocabulary journal strategy. Data kemudian dianalisis menggunakan thematic analysis. Temuan penelitian ini mengungkapkan bahwa semua peserta memiliki pengalaman positif dalam menggunakan strategi jurnal kosakata dalam membaca intensif. Siswa mengungkapkan bahwa jurnal kosakata meningkatkan pengetahuan kosakata dan keterampilan pemahaman bacaan mereka. Selain itu, siswa lebih mandiri dan termotivasi untuk belajar lebih banyak tentang kosakata. Oleh karena itu, jurnal kosakata adalah strategi yang tepat untuk memfasilitasi pengalaman belajar siswa dalam melatih peningkatan kosakata dan memahami isi cerita.

Kata Kunci: *Membaca Intensif, Strategi Jurnal Kosakata*

Abstract

Vocabulary mastery is one of the key components in language learning, especially in the context of intensive reading. Many strategies can be used in vocabulary learning, one of which is vocabulary journaling. While many studies have explored the experiences of upper secondary students, this study explores the experiences of five students in tenth-grade vocational secondary students in using vocabulary journals in intensive reading. This study used a qualitative design with a case study method and used interviews and reflective journals to collect students' experiences in using the vocabulary journal strategy. The data were then analyzed using thematic analysis. The findings of this study revealed that all participants had positive experiences using vocabulary journal strategy in intensive reading. Students revealed that vocabulary journaling improved their vocabulary knowledge and reading comprehension skills. In addition, students are more independent and motivated to learn more about vocabulary. Therefore, vocabulary journaling is an appropriate strategy to facilitate students' learning experience in practicing vocabulary improvement and understanding the content of stories.

Keywords: *Intensive Reading, Vocabulary Journal Strategy*

INTRODUCTION

Students have an exciting opportunity to develop four crucial language skills as English learners: listening, writing, speaking, and reading. According to Zare (2011) reading is an essential skill and probably the most important skill for second language learners to master in academic contexts. To gain the full benefits of reading, it is important to have strong reading skills for effective comprehension. Reading comprehension enables students to grasp the information, ideas, and concepts presented in the text. Without good reading skills, students will struggle to keep up with lessons. One of the challenges in reading is understanding the vocabulary found in the text.

According to Harmer (2007) suggests several reasons why reading is important: first, it aids in language acquisition, meaning that the more students read, the more they learn. Additionally, reading positively impacts vocabulary knowledge. According to Sari (2015), intensive reading is a crucial method for developing vocabulary knowledge. It helps students expand their vocabulary by exposing them to a wide range of words necessary for reading comprehension. Thus, vocabulary and reading are closely interconnected. In foreign language learning, vocabulary acquisition is vital. Students with a larger vocabulary tend to have better intensive reading skills.

Some students struggle with understanding vocabulary during intensive reading, which hinders their ability to grasp the meaning of words in context and slows their overall reading progress (Wulan, 2023). Therefore, students require effective strategies to improve their reading comprehension (Short, 1996). These strategies, such as conscious plans

individuals use to interpret texts and achieve their reading goals, are valuable for teachers to enhance both instruction quality and student engagement (Roid Edd, 2005). While there are various reading strategies available, the author specifically recommends utilizing a vocabulary journal to help students overcome challenges in intensive reading.

Previous research by Nin (2019) shows that maintaining a vocabulary journal positively impacts students. Sukmawati (2018) supports this, finding that implementing vocabulary journals enhances students' reading skills and boosts their enthusiasm significantly. According to Purwati, (2022), vocabulary journals motivate students to actively engage with vocabulary, especially in narrative texts. Similarly, Nurdini (2017) notes that recording new words in vocabulary journals increases students' vocabulary knowledge, builds their confidence, and helps develop their lexical competence. Furthermore, Turnuk (2018) suggests that while keeping a vocabulary journal can effectively aid in learning target words, it must be done thoughtfully. Directly copying from peers or dictionaries without understanding can be counterproductive. Additionally, Turnuk emphasizes the importance of prior training for beginners and elementary learners to effectively use vocabulary journals. Overall, these studies indicate that while vocabulary journals offer advantages, they also present challenges that require careful implementation and learner preparation.

Previous studies have shown that vocabulary journaling is positive in enhancing vocabulary acquisition and motivating students. Most studies have traditionally focused on the use of textbooks in reading education. This study, however, aims to explore vocabulary learning during intensive reading with the assistance of Wattpad media and vocabulary journals. By bridging this gap, the research will integrate vocabulary journaling with the reading of narrative texts on Wattpad. Thus, the study seeks to investigate the efficacy of vocabulary journaling as a beneficial strategy for learning vocabulary within story contexts.

RESEARCH METHOD

Research Design

This research uses a qualitative approach to have a clear description of the research findings. According to Creswell (2012), qualitative research is an appropriate tool to solve a research problem in a real situation and needs to be explored. This research used a case study as a research design. The site of this research was a vocational high school. The participants of this research were 10th graders in vocational high school. The data were collected through interviews and reflective journals. As for the interviews, five students were picked arbitrarily and were asked some questions related to the use of vocabulary journal strategy in intensive reading. The interview questions were semi-structured. For the

reflective journal, the student who wrote the reflective journal was the same person as the interviewees. The six students expressed their feelings and opinions related to the implementation of learning by using vocabulary journal strategy.

Data Processing

The researcher employed thematic analysis by Braun and Clark (2006), the foundational qualitative method to learn due to its provision of essential skills applicable to various forms of analysis. The analysis involves six steps: familiarizing oneself with the data, identifying codes, finding themes, refining themes, reviewing each theme, and documenting the analysis. These steps are detailed as follows:

1. Familiarizing with the data

The researcher thoroughly read and became acquainted with the type and content of the data. This step included checking for recording errors and ensuring the overall credibility of the data.

2. Identifying Codes

During this phase, the researcher pinpointed notable elements within the data and recorded the main codes discovered.

3. Finding Themes in The Data

The next step involved identifying themes within the data. The researcher documented these themes and linked relevant data to each one.

4. Reviewing Each Theme

Here, the researcher assessed the credibility of each theme, ensured all relevant data was included, and verified that each theme had a distinct identity.

5. Defining and Naming Themes

The researcher refined the themes by naming them and focusing on outlining and describing each one.

6. Writing Up

Finally, the researcher expanded the themes into broader explanations, supported by written data to substantiate the findings.

RESULT AND DISCUSSION

Two main themes were identified from the interview and reflective journal. The researcher collected the data through interviews and reflective journals conducted after the teaching and learning process. The data was then analyzed using thematic analysis according to Braun & Clarke (2006). The themes that emerged are: (1) The positive

contribution of Vocabulary Journal Strategy and (2) The challenges of using the vocabulary journal strategy.

1. The Positive Contribution of Vocabulary Journal Strategy

The students responded positively to the vocabulary journal strategy, noting that it made them feel independent, and motivated and that the learning process was fun and enjoyable. While using the vocabulary journal strategy, the students not only increased their technical vocabulary but also gained a deeper understanding of the content of the text. They stated that using the vocabulary journal made it easier for them to understand the text as the list-making activity encouraged them to look for words. The following responses from two students demonstrate the benefits of vocabulary journaling in improving vocabulary knowledge and a deeper understanding of the text.

Using vocabulary journals makes me independent in looking for vocabulary that I don't understand, besides looking for the meaning, I also look for synonyms, and antonyms, and make new sentences from the vocabulary found this can increase my vocabulary knowledge (R1/W)

By understanding vocabulary I can become a better reader because when using vocabulary journals I not only know the meaning but can find synonyms and antonyms with this I can appreciate and understand the whole storyline. (R2/N)

The responses from these two students demonstrate that the vocabulary journal positively aids their text comprehension by helping them identify unfamiliar words. By selecting unknown words and looking up their synonyms and antonyms, they learned new vocabulary. The students believed that the keywords they chose significantly enhanced their understanding of the reading material. Additionally, they felt that the vocabulary journal contributed to expanding their vocabulary knowledge through the keywords they discovered during the process. This argument is supported by previous research on vocabulary journal strategies. Vigelelyn (2020) stated that using this strategy can help students not only monitor their progress but also increase their awareness in reading. Similarly, Syahara (2023) found that vocabulary journals can enrich students' vocabulary knowledge and boost their independence in learning English vocabulary. The journals also help students track their progress and make it easier to understand reading texts. Chubaryan (2023) also agrees, noting that vocabulary journals for explicit vocabulary learning can develop learner autonomy and foster independent learning skills.

Moreover, students felt that the vocabulary journal encouraged independent vocabulary learning. After becoming accustomed to the vocabulary journal process,

students reported feeling motivated to delve deeper into vocabulary learning. The responses from two students provide evidence that using the vocabulary journal motivates them to discover more vocabulary from reading texts.

More motivated because I also like English so it is more motivating to be able to better understand English vocabulary and be more able to read English fluently and understand its meaning and understand the meaning conveyed by the author and increase vocabulary because, from the vocabulary journal, I can know more vocabulary words that I don't know. (R3/RN)

When using a vocabulary journal, I am more motivated and enthusiastic because I can know more about the meaning of vocabulary in English as well as its antonyms and synonyms. The vocabulary journal strategy also broadens my vocabulary horizons and makes it easier for me to record and remember the vocabulary I have found from the story. maybe in the future, I will use the vocabulary journal strategy when reading English texts. (R4/RD)

Students' responses indicate that using vocabulary journals has motivated them to learn new words. Vocabulary journals enable students to gather a wide range of words based on their preferences. The process and the use of vocabulary journal charts help enhance vocabulary retention, preventing short-term memorization. They remarked that the vocabulary journal charts improved their understanding and long-term retention of words because these were words they found while reading the text. This argument is also supported by previous research on vocabulary journal strategies. Purwati (2022) stated that vocabulary journals can encourage students to be more active and motivated in learning vocabulary, proving to be empirically and statistically effective as a reading teaching strategy. Additionally, Sukmawati (2020) found that the effect size of the vocabulary journal strategy demonstrated increased student enthusiasm, particularly during narrative text lessons.

Furthermore, using the vocabulary journal strategy makes students enjoy their classroom experience. The responses from the following two students clearly show that they find using the vocabulary journal strategy enjoyable for learning vocabulary.

In the vocabulary journal learning process, I enjoy it because the use of vocabulary journals is easy to understand and the learning process is easy to understand. (R1/W)

When using a vocabulary journal, I enjoy it because it is fun to find new vocabulary and learn more vocabulary from the stories that have been read. (R4/RD)

Additionally, the reflective journals revealed that students enjoyed and had fun during the vocabulary journal learning process in intensive reading. The responses from the

following two students provide evidence, supported by their reflective journals, that they found the vocabulary journal strategy enjoyable and engaging.

From the vocabulary journal strategy learning activity, I am greatly helped because with this activity I can understand vocabulary that I do not understand and can find out the synonyms and antonyms of a word, and the use of vocabulary journals is fun looking for the word with the group. (R5/A)

It's a fun experience to be able to know a lot of things that we didn't know before such as finding synonyms and antonyms. I thank you for this fun learning. (R3/RN)

The responses indicate that students find using the vocabulary journal strategy enjoyable and fun because it allows them to discover new information, such as meanings, synonyms, and antonyms. They also believe that group discussions are both meaningful and enjoyable. The students felt that these discussions were valuable because they helped them complete the vocabulary journal group chart and enhanced their understanding of the text. This aligns with Hukom (2023), who found that using vocabulary journals enables students to expand their vocabulary knowledge from their readings during the treatment. This includes learning about word types, meanings, synonyms, antonyms, and collocations. Additionally, students can create their own sentences using the selected words. This repeated exposure aids in transferring vocabulary from short-term memory to long-term memory.

2. The Challenges of Using Vocabulary Journal strategy

When using the vocabulary journal, some students faced challenges with the group system. The lack of activeness, participation, cooperation, and dependency among group members made the experience less positive for some students. The responses from the following two students highlight these challenges when using vocabulary journals in a group setting.

The challenge when learning vocabulary journal is getting a group that depends on just one person and does not participate in working on the vocabulary journal (R1/W)

The challenge of learning a vocabulary journal is when you get a group of friends who do not participate in working on the vocabulary journal so my advice is that it is better to do it independently. (R4/RD)

Students' responses reveal that working on vocabulary journals in groups can be challenging due to some members relying too heavily on stronger peers, with not all students actively participating or contributing equally. Some students may dominate the activities, while others remain passive and simply follow along, hindering their own learning

and development. This is consistent with previous research by Turnuk (2017), which suggests that maintaining a vocabulary journal is an functional method for learning target words, provided it is done thoughtfully. Simply copying from peers or directly from the dictionary will not yield practical benefits.

CONCLUSION

Based on the findings and results of this study, it can be concluded that all participants had positive experiences with the vocabulary journal strategy. The study reveals that nearly all participants viewed the implementation of vocabulary journals as a beneficial vocabulary learning strategy in intensive reading. Most participants found the strategy positive in enhancing students' vocabulary knowledge and text comprehension. By searching for meanings, synonyms, and antonyms, students not only broaden their vocabulary but also deepen their understanding of the text. Utilizing vocabulary journals makes the learning process more enjoyable and motivates students to engage more deeply with the material. This strategy boosts students' enthusiasm for learning and reading. Additionally, it promotes student independence in vocabulary acquisition and improves long-term vocabulary retention through repeated interaction with new words. The collaborative aspect of vocabulary journals, particularly in group settings, further reinforces learning through peer interaction. Discussing and sharing vocabulary knowledge in a social context enhances retention and makes the learning experience more memorable.

There are some suggestions for teachers on this research topic. From the results of this study, vocabulary journals received good responses from students. Therefore, teachers can apply vocabulary journals in vocabulary learning. However, there is a challenge that teachers must consider carefully in combining students into groups and choosing group members by considering the abilities and characteristics of each student. In addition, suggestions for future research on this research topic. This study only involved five participants. Therefore, future research can involve more participants to gather various experiences. In addition, this study only focused on students' experiences using vocabulary journal strategy in intensive reading. Future research can focus on measuring the impact of using vocabulary journals as a strategy to learn vocabulary learning in comprehending texts.

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