
Developing Vocabulary Mastery of the Eighth Grade Students of MTs Negeri 2 Palu through English Comic Strips

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Abstract: *The objective of this research is to prove whether the use of English comic strips can develop vocabulary mastery of the eighth grade students of MTs Negeri 2 Palu. This research used a quasi-experimental research design which involved two groups experimental and control groups. The sample was class VIII B as the experimental group and class VIII A as the control group. In collecting the data, the instrument used an exercise for each meeting. Both experimental and control group given pre-test and post-test. The experimental was given treatment while the control treated by regular teaching. The result showed that the students' mean score of the experimental group was 66.03 on the pre-test and 82.97 on the post-test. Furthermore, the students' mean score of the control group was 64.26 on the pre-test and 75.5 on the post-test. Consulting to the t-table value by applying degree of freedom (df) and 0.05 level of significance, the researcher found that the value of the t-counted (2.02) is higher than the t-table (1.651). It means that the hypothesis is accepted. In other words, the use of English Comic Strips can develop vocabulary mastery of the eighth grade students of MTs Negeri 2 Palu. The implication of applying comic strip in teaching vocabulary is that comic strip is able to attract students' attention and help students enhance vocabulary.*

INTRODUCTION

Vocabulary is one of the language components needed by students in order to master English as a foreign language. It can show students' ability to understand the use and meaning of words. The less vocabulary is mastered by students, the more difficult it is for them to communicate with each other. In this case, students are not only expected to learn as many new words as possible but they also need to know their form, use, and meaning because this definitely has an impact on their ability to communicate in English.

In learning English, vocabulary has an important role that links the four skills of listening, speaking, reading, and writing. It can support students' understanding in expressing ideas and

opinions both in oral and written form. In short, students can use language more effectively if they have strong vocabulary (Juwita & Sunaryo, 2013). Therefore, the learning system in the classroom is accepted to help students develop their vocabulary because more or less students' mastery of vocabulary affects their vocabulary mastery.

Based on the Curriculum 2013, the syllabus for class eighth of junior high school in Basic Competency 3.7 and 4.7 explains that, "students are expected to be able to apply and compose simple texts by paying attention to the structure and linguistic elements according to the context". To achieve these basic competency students must develop their vocabulary mastery, especially with countable nouns, descriptive adjectives, and action verbs.

Based on the preliminary observation results of MTs Negeri 2 Palu, most students still strain when dealing in mastering vocabulary. The problem is they cannot answer the teacher's questions because they have lack of vocabulary and do not understand the meaning of the teacher's utterances. In addition, students feel confused and not interested to learn English. Allen (1999) states that lack of interest, self-confidence, motivation, teacher and environment are factors that hamper students to master English vocabulary. The less of English vocabulary becomes a prominent problem that is why they are not interested in learning English because almost schools in learning English just focus on using textbooks and dictionaries.

Based on the problems above, it is very clear that the students have most problems in understanding the meaning of words and the use of words in sentences. The teacher and the teaching method factor are one of the important elements in achieving the goal of the learning process. Moreover, inappropriate teaching methods may worsen the situation by failing to engage students or support their learning needs.

Several teaching methods, strategies, or media have been used to make students interested in learning English. One of the interesting media that can be used to develop students' understanding is English Comic Strips as a medium to teach. Priatin et al. (2021) states that the implementation of English Comic Strips in teaching and learning process can significantly improve students' vocabulary mastery. In addition, comic strips made learning vocabulary more enjoyable, helped them understand word meanings more easily, and motivated them to participate in class activities.

Comic strips share similarities with comic stories in terms of structure and content, as both combine visual elements and brief dialogues to narrate a sequence of events. They are both designed to deliver messages or stories through a series of images accompanied by text, which makes them effective tools for enhancing comprehension and vocabulary learning in an engaging way. The purpose of using Comic Strips in teaching English, especially vocabulary, is to bring fun and joy into the classroom, lessening students' fear (Csabay, 2006). Therefore, comic strips can play a powerful, influential role in the English classroom, and have a positive impact on the learning abilities of many students.

In addition, the research was focused on the development of students' vocabulary mastery by using comic strips to teach vocabulary of the eighth grade students of MTS Negeri 2 Palu. The researcher uses comic strips to investigate whether comic strips is useful to develop vocabulary of students.

METHOD

The researcher used Quasi-Experimental design to prove that English comic strips can develop students' vocabulary. This study is designed experimentally because the researcher intends to bring changes and development of students' vocabulary after using English Comic Strips.

To know there is effect of using English comic strips the researcher takes the samples of this research consisted of two classes namely the experimental group and the control group. Both groups were given a pre-test and post-test. However, the control group is treated by regular teaching which is to compare the experimental group with the treatment. In applying the treatment the researcher used formula by Arikunto (2013).

The population of this research was the eighth grade students of MTs Negeri 2 Palu. The numbers of students in this population has 222 students consisting of seven classes. The sample was a part of the representative population that would be observed. The researcher took VIII A and VIII B classes as the sample of this research. VIII A and VIII B consisted of 62 students. In this research the researcher applied a purposive sampling technique to select the sample. Based on the preliminary observation that the researcher had done, there were some aspects that needed to be developed in students' vocabulary, such as lack of reading English texts, fluency, and vocabulary.

The variable is a focus point of the research. In this research, variables were divided into the independent and dependent variable. The independent variable is the use of English comic strips media, and the dependent variable the ability of the eight grade students of MTs Negeri 2 Palu in vocabulary mastery.

This research used a vocabulary test to collect the data. Most of the test that was used by the researcher was taken from the internet such as "englishwsheets, tahilalats, etc". It is in the form objective and subjective test. The test consisted of fill in the blank with 10 items, multiple choices with 15 items, and sentence-making with 6 items as a test. The pre-test was conducted at the beginning and the post-test was conducted at the end. The post-test was conducted to measure the development of students' vocabulary after the treatment.

To make the validity of the research, the researcher used several ways or steps to gather the data. These methods are considered to collect valid data.

The pre-test was conducted before giving the treatment to know the students' vocabulary ability. The researcher asks the students to do an exercise based on the lesson plan. In this case, the test was given to both the experimental group and the control group. It means that the test was conducted twice. It is to measure the students' English vocabulary after getting the treatment.

Post-test was given to both groups (experimental group and control group), after the treatment. This test aims to find out the students' development and whether the technique that was applied to the experimental group is successful or not.

The format of the the test is fill in the blank, multiple choices, and making sentence. The scoring system for the tests is present in the following table:

Table 1 The Scoring Rubric of fill in the blank and multiple choices test

Type of test	Score	Description
Fill in the blank	1	The answer is correct
	0	No answer or incorrect
Multiple Choices	1	The answer is correct
	0	No answer or incorrect

Table 2 The Scoring rubric for making sentence

Description	Score
Correct answer and correct structure (meaning and use)	3
Correct answer but incorrect structure (meaning or use/if only one aspect is correct)	2
Incorrect answer and incorrect structure (no one aspect is correct)	1
No answer	0

(Adopted from Kurikulum 2013)

After doing the pre-test, the researcher treated the students by using learning material and English comic strips to develop students' vocabulary. The researcher conducted the treatments for six times exclude posttest and pretest. Each meeting would be 2x40 minutes.

RESULT AND DISCUSSION

The results of the pre-test and post-test of experimental group are presented on table 3. Table 3 Deviation score of pre-test and post-test of the experimental group:

Table 3 Deviation and Square Deviation on Pre-test and Post-test of Experimental Group

No.	Initials	Score		Deviation (d)	Square Deviation (d ²)
		Pre-test	Post-test		
1.	AKNF	81	88	7	49
2.	AH	51	84	33	1.089
3.	AMP	60	86	26	676
4.	AM	33	86	53	2.809
5.	ARH	49	56	7	49
6.	DFA	72	86	14	196
7.	FNF	70	88	18	324
8.	FA	77	86	9	81
9.	FM	70	84	14	196
10.	FJ	86	91	5	25
11.	FAH	81	86	5	25
12.	FF	49	70	21	441
13.	MYAR	65	84	19	361
14.	MZA	77	84	7	49
15.	MB	81	84	3	9
16.	MIR	40	88	48	2.304
17.	MRA	35	51	16	256
18.	MF	72	84	12	144
19.	MSH	49	86	37	1.369
20.	MS	35	84	49	2.401
21.	MM	88	91	3	9
22.	MZ	67	84	17	289
23.	MZA	72	84	12	144

24.	MS	93	95	2	4
25.	NDK	91	95	4	16
26.	NMF	37	81	44	1.936
27.	RA	95	98	3	9
28.	RMP	72	86	14	196
29.	RZ	84	88	4	16
30.	RIN	60	84	24	576
31.	SI	81	86	5	25
32.	ZDP	40	47	7	49
Total		2.113	2.655	542	16.122
Average		66.03	82.97	16.93	503.81

The results of the pre-test and post-test of control group are presented on table 4. Table 4 Deviation score of pre-test and post-test of the control group:

Table 4 Deviation and Square Deviation on Pre-test and Post-test of Control Group

No.	Initials	Score		Deviation (d)	Square Deviation (d ²)
		Pre-test	Post-test		
1.	AFN	70	88	18	324
2.	AR	79	84	5	25
3.	APR	81	84	3	9
4.	ARB	47	72	25	625
5.	AAP	63	67	4	16
6.	DDN	72	74	2	4
7.	DL	79	81	2	4
8.	DRN	74	77	3	9
9.	EO	67	77	10	100
10.	FF	63	72	9	81
11.	FM	53	72	19	361
12.	FG	58	72	14	196
13.	MR	58	67	9	81
14.	MA	53	72	19	361
15.	MH	53	67	14	196
16.	MRR	72	74	2	4
17.	MR	56	67	11	121
18.	MHS	58	72	14	196
19.	MIM	49	81	32	1.024
20.	MIA	58	77	14	196
21.	MMR	53	67	14	196
22.	NHR	49	67	18	324
23.	RT	72	74	2	4
24.	RZ	74	77	3	9
25.	REN	60	72	12	144
26.	RZR	77	91	14	196
27.	RDR	53	67	14	196

28.	SN	74	81	7	49
29.	SM	74	81	7	49
30.	ZAR	79	91	12	144
Total		1.928	2.265	332	5.244
Average		64.26	75.5	11.06	174.8

The data shows that the students' mean score of post-test in control group was 75.5. Therefore, the improvement of the experimental group is more significant than the control group. The computation above shows the scores of both class are different. The mean score of post-test of experimental group was 82.97, while the mean score of post-test of control group is 75.5. Therefore, this result revealed the fact that the score obtained by the experimental group in posttest is clearly higher than the score obtained by the control group. It means that the treatment applied by the researchers is successful.

After calculating the students' pre-test and post-test to both experimental and control group, the researcher computed the students' deviation (d) and square deviation (d²) score of both experimental group and control group.

Table 3 shows the total deviation of experimental group was 542 and the total square deviation was 16122. The highest deviation (D) score was 53, and the lowest deviation was 2. While the highest square deviation (D²) was 2809 and the lowest square deviation was 4.

The table 4 shows the highest deviation (D) of control group was 32 and the lowest deviation was 2. While the highest square deviation (D²) of control class was 1024, and the lowest square deviation was 4.

Furthermore, the researcher needed to test the hypothesis to find out whether the treatment is accepted or rejected. There are two criteria for the hypothesis of this research. First, if the t-counted was higher than t-table then the hypothesis was accepted. It means that the use of comic strips strategy can be applied to develop the students' vocabulary mastery. Second, if the t-counted was lower than t-table then the hypothesis was rejected.

To find out the significant difference between the two groups, the researcher uses 0.05 level of significance with 60 degree of freedom (df), which is obtained by deducting the total of research sampling from two classes (N_x+N_y-2).

Since the value of df (60) with the level of significance is listed on t-table, the researcher then applied interpolation formula in order to determine t-table. The degree of freedom was 60 which were between 40 and 80 on the t distribution table.

Based on the computation, the researchers found that the result of t-counted is 2.02. To prove whether hypothesis of the research is accepted or rejected, the researchers tested the hypothesis. If the t-counted is higher than t-table, (t-counted > t-table) it means that the hypothesis is accepted. In other words, it indicates that using of English Comic Strips can develop students' vocabulary mastery. In contrast, if the t-counted is lower than t-table (t-counted < t-table), the hypothesis is rejected or there is no significant influence to the development of vocabulary mastery of the students.

The result of data analysis showed that t-counted is 2.02. To know the significant effect from both experimental and control groups, the researchers compared the value of the t-counted (2.02) with the t-table value (1.651) by applying the degree of freedom (df) = N_x + N_y - 2 = 32 + 30 - 2 = 60, with the level of significance 0.05. The researchers found that t-table value was (1.651). In summary, it showed that t-counted (2.02) was clearly higher than t-table (1.651). It means that the research hypothesis was accepted. In other words, the

developing vocabulary mastery of the Eighth Grade Students of MTs Negeri 2 Palu through English Comic Strips can develop students' vocabulary.

DISCUSSION

Overall, the findings showed that the students of the experimental group can develop their vocabulary mastery after getting treatment by using the English comic strips media. During the treatment process in the experimental class, the researcher focused on developing students' vocabulary mastery through the comic strips media. The intensity of implementation of the English comic strips from the second until the end of the treatment showed that the students had a significant change in their vocabulary ability. All students' active to participate and asking the meaning of words that they do not understand, felt relaxed also interested in learning English by using comic strips, and they responded well during the learning process. Besides, the students know how to identify nouns (countable and uncountable), adjectives (descriptive), and verbs (action) in the comic strips conversation, and also know how to make a simple sentence based on words provided by the researcher.

The selection of English comic strips as the primary media corresponds to the scope of the research because comic strips integrate textual and visual information, making the learning of vocabulary more engaging and comprehensible for the students'. This combination allows students to infer meaning from context and visuals, which is crucial for the targeted vocabulary items specified in the study. This is as what Hatch and Brown (2001) said, the effectiveness of the strategies for individual teachers and learners depends on many factors, and language educators must approach decisions about method and materials systems.

The finding of this research is related with research that had been conducted by Azizzah and Hamid (2022), which found that the use comic strips can serve as an effective and engaging technique for teaching English, particularly in increasing vocabulary retention among high school students. Then, Aquariza and Susanto (2023) also found that comic strips offer several pedagogical advantages, including the ability to help facilitate vocabulary teaching, and create a more enjoyable and meaningful learning experience. In addition, Amir et al. (2024) also indicated that the use of comic strips positively influenced students' vocabulary mastery.

However, during the implementation of the English comic strips strategy, there are several limitations were found by the researcher, namely, it takes a long time to find appropriate comic strips, so the researcher must prepare them carefully. Meanwhile, some students struggled to understand unfamiliar words and tended to rely only on visual clues. Time constrains also posed a challenge because some students required more time to complete the tasks. In addition, a few students were unfamiliar with reading English in comic form, and varying levels of attention affected class engagement.

To overcome these challenges, the researcher provided more explanation, contextual examples, and the use of dictionary to complete tasks. Interactive activities such as group discussions and vocabulary games were used to maintain students' motivation. Additional time and peer collaboration were allowed to assist slower students. Also, introductory session was conducted to help students understand how to read the comic strips in the right way.

Even though there are some limitations in its use, the English comic strips strategy has proven effectively develop students' vocabulary mastery. According Dwianto (2019) the visual nature of comic strips helped students better understand narrative texts by providing context clues, visual sequencing, and simplified dialogues. His also give suggest to the teacher

to use interesting media like comic strips in teaching vocabulary. In addition, Priatin et al., (2021) stated that students who were taught vocabulary through comic strip it can significantly improve their vocabulary mastery. Thus, it can be concluded that by using English comic strips can develop students' vocabulary mastery.

CONCLUSION

After analyzing the data, the researcher found that the result of the individual mean score on post-test both in experimental group and control group. The students' mean score on experimental group is 82.97, while the students' mean score on control group is 75.5. In other words, the students' mean score on experimental group is higher than control group. The result of t-counted is 2.02 and t-table is 1.651, although the value of the t-counted seems relatively small it still indicates that the students in the experimental group performed significantly better than those in the control group, therefore t-counted is higher than t-table. It means that the hypothesis is accepted. Thus, it can be concluded that the use of English comic strip in teaching vocabulary mastery of eight grade students of MTs Negeri 2 Palu is effective to develop the students' vocabulary.

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