Improving Students' Vocabulary Mastery: Strategy, Obstacles, and Problems

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Abstrak

Penelitian ini bertujuan untuk: (1) menguraikan strategi guru dalam meningkatkan kemampuan penguasaan kosakata bahasa Inggris siswa; (2) menganalisis kendala-kendala yang dihadapi guru SD dalam meningkatkan kemampuan penguasaan kosakata bahasa Inggris siswa; (3) menganalisis kesulitan-kesulitan yang dihadapi siswa dalam meningkatkan kosakata bahasa Inggris. Penelitian ini merupakan penelitian kualitatif dengan jenis studi kasus. Subjek penelitian adalah siswa SD yang berjumlah 13 siswa. Teknik pengumpulan data dengan observasi, wawancara, dan dokumentasi. Teknik uji keabsahan data adalah dengan triangulai teknik dan triangulasi sumber. Analisis data dalam penelitian ini menggunakan 3 tahapan yaitu reduksi data, sajian data, dan penarikan kesimpulan. Hasil penelitian ini adalah sebagai berikut: (1) Strategi guru SD Pagentan dalam meningkatkan penguasaan kosakata bahasa Inggris adalah dengan menggunakan metode games dan penggunaan media pembelajaran audio-visual; (2) Kendala-kendala yang dihadapi oleh guru SD Pagentan dalam meningkatkan penguasaan kosakata bahasa Inggris siswa adalah keberagaman siswa di SD Pagentan, dan keterbatasan buku teks yang menggunakan bahasa Inggris; (3) Kesulitan-kesulitan yang dihadapi siswa dalam penguasaan kosakata bahasa Inggris adalah kesulitan dalam pronunciation serta kesulitan dalam penulisan dan ejaan.
Kata Kunci: Kosakata, Strategi Guru, Sekolah Dasar, Pengajaran

Abstract

The objectives of this research are to (1) elaborate on the teachers' strategy in improving students' English vocabulary mastery; (2) analyze the obstacles faced by the teachers in improving students' English vocabulary mastery; (3) elaborate on the difficulties faced by students in mastering English Vocabulary. This research is a qualitative research which is a kind of case study. The subject of the research is the students at the primary level which is amount 13 students. In collecting the data is used observation, interviews, and documentation. The validity test uses a triangulation technique and resources. The data analysis technique uses 3 stages namely data reduction, data display, and conclusion. The results of this research are as follows: (1) teacher's strategy in improving students' English vocabulary mastery is by using games and audio-visual learning media; (2) the obstacles faced by teachers in improving students' English vocabulary mastery are the diversity of the primary students in Pagentan the limitation of the English textbook in the Pagentan Buddhist Sunday school; (3) the difficulties faced by students in mastering English Vocabulary are lack ability in pronunciation, to write, and to spell.
Keywords: Vocabulary, Teacher's Strategy, Elementary School, Teaching

INTRODUCTION

Vocabulary is one of the important components in language. Vocabulary is part of language that is used to communicate by delivering meaning of what the speaker wants to say (Kumala, 2021). By mastering vocabulary well, someone can connect the four skills of speaking, listening, reading, and writing. Skills in expressing ideas or thought in English, both spoken and written, are greatly influenced by the amount of vocabulary that is known and understood. Mastery of vocabulary becomes a fundamental skill for students. Having adequate vocabulary shows that students are able to use a variety of appropriate word choices.

For fluency in communicating orally and in writing, it is strongly influenced by how much vocabulary is mastered by students. Without extensive vocabulary, learners often achieve less than their potential and maybe discouraged from making use of language (Irmanda et al., 2021). If students' vocabulary mastery is very low, then the ability to understand or produce spoken or written texts in the four language skills, namely listening, speaking, reading and writing will be difficult to carry out properly (Widodo, 2021). Ideally, to produce a text, both oral and written, it requires mastery of a lot of vocabulary, so that the ideas to be conveyed are carried out perfectly. The quality of a person's language skills depends on the quantity of vocabulary he has (Widodo, 2020b). The more vocabulary a person has, the greater his language skills. This, of course, can be understood that the quality and quantity of vocabulary or vocabulary owned by students will help these students absorb various information submitted by teachers or information from various other learning sources. Good vocabulary mastery greatly affects students' ability to communicate, both verbally and in writing.

Looking at the explanations related to the urgency of students' vocabulary skills above, it can be concluded that vocabulary skills are a stronghold and initial foundation for students to develop their language skills. Therefore, educators need to consider various learning strategies that can be used to improve students' vocabulary skills. The learning strategies applied in each elementary school are different depending on the quality of the teachers in the elementary school. The learning strategy applied by the teacher at SDN 1 Pagentan is interesting to study because of the fact that the students at the schools have good skills related to their English language skills. This research is motivated by the existence of students' skills that are quite prominent in relation to English language skills. The case becomes interesting and deserves to be studied because if you look at the background of the condition of students who generally have farming parents and rarely find parents who teach their children English. These English skills are obtained from the implementation of attractive teacher teaching strategies. Therefore, it needs an in-depth study of how the teacher's strategy in improving students' English vocabulary mastery.

Study about English foreign language learners to improve vocabulary mastery through several strategies such as games, pictures, application, etc have been conducted by several researchers (Kumala, 2021; Najmussaqib & Alhaq, 2022; D. K. Sari et al., 2022; Tahir et al., 2021). Moreover studies about teachers' teaching method to be used to improve students' vocabulary mastery have been conducted by several researches (Dzulfikri, 2016; Hamid et al., 2022; Tahir et al., 2021). However studies about teachers' obstacles and students' problem in improving students' vocabulary mastery are needed to be explore more. This is the gap that will be completed by this study. By knowing students' and teachers' obstacles in improving students' vocabulary mastery it can be used to be a consideration to select the strategies in English teaching and learning process.

METHOD

This research is a qualitative research with a case study approach or method. This research focuses intensively on one particular object which is studied as a case. The selection of the case study approach is based on matters relating to the place and subject of the research. The case that occurred in the research subject was a problem related to the students' good English skills and was possibly caused by the learning in SD Dhammasen. In addition, another characteristic is the homogeneity which can reduce the competitive value for students. Through case study research, the meaning of these things will be explored. This research was conducted at SDN

1 Pagentan Banjarnegara involving class VIII with the number of student respondents as many as 13 students and a teacher. To find out the teacher's strategy in increasing the students' English vocabulary, the researchers used observation and interview techniques. Furthermore, the researchers examined various supporting documentation such as student grades, question sheets, and assignments to determine the increase in students' English vocabulary. Data analysis is done by reducing data, presenting data, and drawing conclusions.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

Results

The data in this study were obtained through several techniques, namely interviews, observation, and documentation. The data obtained from the interview is data that contains the perceptions of the informants related to a number of aspects such as students' English vocabulary skills and learning strategies at SDN 1 Pagentan. Observation can be said to be the main technique in this research, it is said to be the main technique because through this observation the three formulations of the problem will be solved. While the technique of collecting data through documentation is to collect or find out how students' English vocabulary skills are seen from the existing documentation. The documentation in question is the value of daily tests or student report cards.

The three techniques are interrelated with each other. In addition to being related, the three techniques also support and support one another. For example, documentation studies are used to support observations made in the learning process, this is because the results of observations need to be supported by accurate data that occurs in informants. Likewise, interviews also strongly support the data obtained from observation and documentation. Moreover, the interview data is the interpretation of the informants on the phenomena that exist at the research location. In this study, to obtain data related to students' English vocabulary skills, a documentation study was carried out. The documentation study conducted is to collect data on students' English scores through test scores or report cards for the past year and a half. Based on the documentation study, data related to students' English vocabulary skills were obtained as follows:

Tabel 1
Students' Score at Odd Semester in The Academic Year of 2020/2021

No	Student's Code	Score
1.	X1	70
2.	X2	78
3.	X3	72
4.	X4	86
5.	X5	73
6.	X6	72
7.	X7	78
8.	X8	90
9.	X9	83
10.	X10	77
11.	X11	73
12.	X12	86
13.	X13	85
Total		**1023**
Average		**78,69**

Based on the data in the table above, it can be seen that the lowest score of students is 70 while the highest score is 90. The total value of the thirteen students is 1023 while the average value is 78.69.

Tabel 2
**Students' Score at Even Semester in The Academic Year of 2020/2021**

No	Students' Code	Score
1.	X1	72
2.	X2	83
3.	X3	72
4.	X4	90
5.	X5	75
6.	X6	76
7.	X7	84
8.	X8	95
9.	X9	88
10.	X10	82
11.	X11	80
12.	X12	90
13.	X13	90
Total		**1077**
Average		**82,84**

Based on the data in the table above, it can be seen that the lowest score of students is 72 while the highest score is 95. The total score of the thirteen students is 1077 while the average value is 82.84.

Tabel 3
Students' Score at Odd Semester in The Academic Year of 2021/2022

No	Nama Siswa	Nilai
1.	X1	75
2.	X2	83
3.	X3	71
4.	X4	92
5.	X5	75
6.	X6	80
7.	X7	86
8.	X8	95
9.	X9	88
10.	X10	86
11.	X11	84
12.	X12	92
13.	X13	92
Total		**1099**
Rata-rata		**84,53**

Based on the data in the table above, it can be seen that the lowest score of students is 71 while the highest score is 96. The total score of the thirteen students is 1099 while the average value is 84.53. If you look at the tables above, it is known that the value or ability of students' English vocabulary has increased, although not so significantly. However, there are still a number of students whose grades remain or even decrease, but on average the overall grades of students from one semester to the next have increased, although not significantly. The comparison chart diagram of the average score of students' overall English vocabulary skills is as follows:
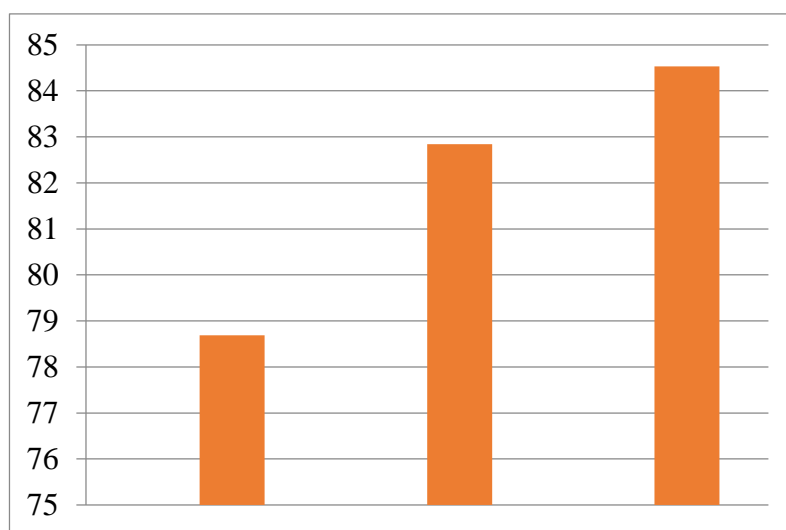
Gambar 1. Diagram Chart of Students' Score

The data on the value of students' English vocabulary skills above show that students' English vocabulary skills can be said to be in a good category. The scores of these students indicate that there is a teacher's contribution to the ability of English vocabulary. Teachers, both in terms of learning carried out and from other activities, can actually support the academic abilities of their students. This must be maintained and carried out to maintain the quality and ability of the students.

Teacher's Strategy to Improve Students' Vocabulary Mastery
Using *Games*

The use of games or games is one of the most effective ways to improve one's abilities or skills. The use of games at SDN 1 Pagentan seems to have become a habit. Based on observations made in almost every learning carried out there will always be games given to students. The games provided are very diverse, ranging from individual games and games that require teamwork or group work. In fact, not infrequently in one learning activity there is more than one game that is carried out. Games are usually done when learning will start and when learning will finish.

The games that are played always have their own goals and reasons. The objectives and reasons refer to the material and subject that will be delivered. Usually elementary school teachers identify the games that will be used or applied in learning. Teachers use various sources to find and identify games that can be used in learning. The sources used are the internet and learning game books for elementary school children.

Using Audio-Visual Learning Media

Learning media is a tool commonly used in various schools and places related to other educational processes. Likewise at SDN 1 Pagentan, based on observations made, audio-visual learning media is quite often applied to learning activities. Audio-visual media is one of the choices of learning strategies used by teachers at SDN 1 Pagentan. According to one teacher, the use of audio-visual learning media is very effective in improving students' abilities and understanding of certain materials.

The audio-visual learning media used at SDN 1 Pagentan are in the form of recordings and other videos that contain a number of materials in the elementary English curriculum, for example material about animal stories, material about daily activities, tourism, and others. -other. These recordings and videos are generally in the form of soft files, making it easier for teachers to implement them. The language contained in the audio-visual learning media is also very diverse, for example for material about narrative texts in the form of animal stories, there are 2 languages used, namely Indonesian and English.

Teacher's Obstacles in Improving Students' Vocabulary Mastery
Students' Diversity

Overall the number of students who became the subject of the study were 13 students. These students come from various different family characters, both farmers, breeders, employees, and others. These background differences lead to disharmony in association and teamwork. Often group assignments do not go smoothly. In addition, distrust of teammates often causes divisions in solving problems in the group. These differences in backgrounds make it an obstacle for a number of students to be able to follow what is conveyed by the teacher.

According to one teacher, this situation is not only a big obstacle for the teacher but also a challenge for the teacher. As it is known that students whose level or class is higher of course tend to have more English vocabulary skills, but in one class learning must contain students who are at different levels and levels. According to the teacher, some English vocabularies may be indispensable for some students, but on the other hand, these vocabularies may not be important for other students..

Not Many English Textbooks

At SDN 1 Pagentan, there are very few textbooks that specifically use English. The constraints of the reference books are an obstacle for teachers to improve students' English vocabulary mastery, especially for teachers who do not have a bachelor's background in English education. Teachers usually only rely on the internet to find learning references, even though it is known that there are still many sources of references from the internet whose validity and reliability are not clear. In addition, references taken from the internet usually do not use certain rules or systematics. This of course has a negative impact on students.

Problems Facing by the Students in Improving Vocabulary Mastery
Lack in Pronunciation Skill

In relation to students' mastery of English vocabulary, pronunciation skills are quite difficult to be mastered and done correctly by students. Pronunciation is the most difficult area in English (Yang & Kongjit, 2022). Pronunciation is one of the skills that requires students to be able to pronounce a word or sentence correctly according to the native speaker. To be able to arrive at the right pronunciation skills, students certainly need a long process. Based on the observations made, it appears that a number of students have difficulty pronouncing a number of English vocabulary correctly. The cause of this is the habit of students who do not use English in daily conversation. In addition, it is very rare for teachers to practice or teach a number of words to be pronounced, even some teachers are still wrong in pronouncing a number of words. Another reason is that the words that appear in learning in elementary school are relatively new words.

One of the students revealed that pronouncing a word correctly is not easy because they are not familiar with it, besides that sometimes the existing words are words that have never been encountered before. Another student said that pronouncing words was the most difficult thing because they were rarely taught to pronounce words, usually only meaning the words in the video. A teacher revealed that mastering English vocabulary is not easy. Moreover, if you have spoken related to pronunciation skills, it is a difficulty that is not only experienced by students, even the teachers themselves are still having trouble pronouncing some English vocabulary correctly and precisely..

Having Difficulties in Writing and Spelling

The teachers at SDN 1 Pagentan usually in learning that present English vocabulary, students are only asked to read and then translate the word or sentence. This habit has an impact on students' lack of skill in rewriting or rewriting words or sentences. In general, students understand if they read and see a word but will have difficulty if asked to write a word. Usually these difficulties arise in words that contain elements of double letters or words that have almost the same pronunciation as the letter "e" or the letter "i". A number of students admitted that they had difficulty in writing or spelling a word. One student said that he was not used to writing

English vocabulary and his teacher rarely asked him to write English words. This makes the students not accustomed to writing or spelling English words.

Discussion

The use of games in learning has been shown to have a positive impact on students' abilities. Using games as media in learning forign language such as English is an appropriate and wise option (Najmussaqib & Alhaq, 2022). Through games allow students to be directly involved in learning activities. One of the most important reasons for using games is simply that they are very enjoyable for both teacher and student". Through games, students and teachers will feel fun learning so that the learning objectives themselves can be easily achieved. In addition to the strategy game used by the Pagentan Elementary School teacher in improving students' English vocabulary mastery, the use of audio-visual learning media is used. Through audio-visual students will be able to easily remember things seen in the video. Through the use of audio-visual learning media students will be able to understand the meaning of a number of words contained in the video. However, teacher and students need tool to be used to access learning material through internet (Pratiwi et al., 2020).

The strategies used by the Pagentan Elementary School teachers in the learning process did not fully run well and smoothly. The EFL teachers did their reflection by telling stories on their technology usage, which increased their awareness of their teaching practices and led them to make decisions towards improvement (Y. R. Sari et al., 2021). While skills and dispositions were implied in the teachers' interviews, knowledge construction emerges when the teachers addressed students' experiences and prior knowledge about the topic learned (Anggraeny & Khongput, 2022). There are a number of obstacles that arise in an effort to improve students' mastery of English vocabulary. Since children have different characteristics than adults, English teachers for young learners require specific strategies to achieve learning outcomes (Putra et al., 2021). These obstacles arise due to various factors, both from within SD Pagentan itself and from outside SD Pagentan related to a number of policy making. If these obstacles are not resolved immediately it can have an impact on the quality of learning and also on the students. The obstacles that exist in the learning process at SD Pagentan related to the ability of students in mastering English vocabulary have an unfavorable effect on the students. The students experienced a number of difficulties related to mastery of their English vocabulary. The first difficulty is related to the ability of pronunciation or pronunciation. Difficulties in pronunciation arise because the teacher's teaching method is not appropriate (Widodo & Mugiyo, 2021). In teaching pronunciation, a teacher must pay attention to the role of the teacher towards students, the teaching approach, what approach is suitable and in accordance with the student's learning style, as well as emphasis on aspects of pronunciation. Thus, teaching can be successful if all of the things mentioned above are carried out according to the rules of existing theories. Pronunciation teaching must be adapted to each student's age, because each age level of students has a variety of responses both cognitively and emotionally. Pronunciation skills depends on the age of the students the more stdents' age the more they able to pronounce (Ramli et al., 2020).

There is a demand for students to master English in today's world as currently most books, journals, encyclopaedias, and scientific printed materials are available in English (Hamid et al., 2022). In addition to problems in pronunciation, other difficulties experienced by students in mastering English vocabulary are related to writing and spelling. The writing referred to here is that students find it difficult to be able to rewrite English words which in principle have known translations. Teachers discovered numerous English grammar errors or non-standard vocabularies used in students' works (Nurkamto et al., 2022). One form was through writing reflective journal entries and the other was through giving responses to a survey that the student teachers completed as they explored their identity construction in terms of teacher expertise domains (Aktekin & Celebi, 2020).The difficulty in rewriting is due to the habit of teachers who rarely apply this strategy. The explanation above shows that the students' English vocabulary difficulties in principle can be well overcome if the teachers are willing to apply a number of appropriate learning methods (Widodo, 2020a). The application of appropriate

learning methods is believed to be able to improve the academic quality of the students. A teacher must be brave and be able to explore information and ideas from various reference sources to improve the quality of learning.

The results of this study give impacts towards teaching and learning process especially in learning English which focuses on improving students vocabulary mastery. It is better for the teacher to use various games and learning media to improve students' vocabulary mastery. The results of this research also shows that teachers have different obstacle so that they must be able to obtain the best solution in order to create a good learning atmosphere. However, this research has several limitations. It is needed a further study about how the implementation of games and audio-visual media to be used in improving students' vocabulary mastery. On the other hand, it needs a certain study about students' pronuncaition skills, because in this research students' pronounciation skills is just obtained by interview with the teachers and some students, it is needed a certain test to obtain clear and complete data.

CONCLUSION

The strategies used by the teacher both in learning and in giving assignments are able to have a significant influence on students' vocabulary mastery skills. Choosing the right strategy and giving the right reward and punishment will motivate students to continue to improve their performance. The strategy used by the teacher must be able to consider the character of the student, the background of the student, and the skills possessed by the student. Student comfort in learning is the key to improve students' learning achievement.

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