

## USING WORD WALL TO IMPROVE EFL STUDENTS' VOCABULARY ACHIEVEMENT AT JUNIOR HIGH SCHOOL

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### ABSTRACT

One component of learning English is vocabulary mastery. Teachers can develop lessons to increase student's vocabulary achievement by using media that is interesting and fun such as Word Wall. The aim of the research was to improve the students' vocabulary achievement using Word Wall. The setting of this research was at one of secondary school in Banyuwangi, East Java, Indonesia. The present study applied Classroom Action Research (CAR). The data were collected from the vocabulary test and observation. The previous students' vocabulary mean score was 60. The result from vocabulary test after the action showed that the mean score was 76.2. The result showed that there were significant improvement on students' vocabulary achievement compared to the students' vocabulary mean score before using Wordwall media. The result of observation checklist also showed significant improvement from meeting to meeting. In meeting 1, 45.5% actively participated during the teaching and learning process. In meeting, 2, 55% of students participated actively. In meeting 3 and 4, the percentage of students who actively participated in wordwall based vocabulary teaching and learning improved from 60.8% to 90%. The findings suggest that the use of Word Wall as media can significantly improve EFL students' vocabulary achievement.

**Keywords:** word wall, vocabulary achievement, EFL, secondary school

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### INTRODUCTION

There are many problems about students feeling difficult in English learning. Students have difficulty in stringing words because their acquisition of the vocabulary of the English language is limited. Wilkins in Thornbury (2002: 13) states that "without grammar very little can be conveyed, without vocabulary nothing can be conveyed". It means that when student has good grammar but it will be useless if they do not know many vocabularies. Learning vocabulary as a foreign language seems easy but some students seem difficult to memorize. The students also feel when studying English especially vocabulary, they feel bored in learning it in the class. Besides that, the teacher teaches vocabulary by repeating the word and use the same strategy in every meeting. So, it makes students bored or are not interested to follow vocabulary learning. Without having enough vocabulary, students will have difficulties to know many words as well as to express their aim in communication. On the other hand, if they have a lot of vocabulary, students can expand their ability in English since a great number of words are needed for the real language use. Harmer (2007) states that "the teaching of vocabulary is the art of the language teacher themselves". So that, it depends on the way the teachers to teach vocabulary with appropriate strategy.

In the context of language teaching, Richards and Renandya (2002:255) argue that “Vocabulary is a core of component of language proficiency and provides much of the basis for how well learners speak, listen, read, and write”. Generally speaking, vocabulary is a major aspect in English because it exists in every ability in English language skills. The four skills which have been mentioned above are very important to learn because through learning the four skills language learners will find it easier to master English language. To master those skills, language learners need to have sufficient vocabularies. Tarigan (1993:2) says that “the quality of using a language depends on the quantity and quality of the vocabulary that someone has”. It means that is the more vocabulary that student have, the better they use the language.

Pedagogically speaking, teaching vocabulary is one of the basic foundation in achieving all of language skills. Similarly, Jordan (1997:149) also states that “teaching vocabulary is an important task in teaching English because vocabulary achievement related to all language learning and it is of concern to all four language skills”. It can be considered as the basis for being able to communicate through spoken and written interaction use English language. Without sufficient vocabulary, the learner cannot understand a reading text or produce a writing text. The learners can express their ideas through both spoken and written language with learn vocabulary. Students must continue to learn words as structure as they practice in English language. So, the learners should have adequate vocabulary in order to communicate well.

In this modern era, using media has been widely considered by teachers in Indonesia particularly in English teaching and learning process. Teaching media based on Arsyad (2009:4) is a media that bring instructional purpose of messages or information of learning. Media as teaching aids are needed to help students’ understand and increase the effectiveness in the classroom interaction between teacher and students. It is also used to stimulate the students’ motivation and students’ interest to the lesson. Teaching media is used to increase the quality of teaching process. Teaching English for all of level in school needs appropriate strategy in learning process to make student not feel bored and become active in the classroom. LeDale (2011), used Word Wall as a tool to improve vocabulary. One of the beneficial media in improving students’ mastery of vocabulary is the use of word wall. Researcher choose word wall as appropriate media because this media can help learning English vocabulary for foreign students and suitable for VIII students who have developed vocabulary skills.

Word wall can be used by teachers as media to develop lessons and increase students’ vocabulary. Aggriani (2013) argues that improving students’ vocabulary achievement through word walls strategy. Word wall is media that is interesting and fun. By applying word wall, students can remember the vocabulary without feeling that they are very serious in studying. Through the habit such as looking at the Word Wall implicitly will remember the vocabulary. Word wall is a collection of vocabulary organized systematically displayed with large letters and placed on the wall of a classroom. In other words, (Brabham & Villaume, 2001; Copper & Kiger, 2003) as quoted by Jasmine and Schiesl (2009) say that a word wall is a collection of high frequency sight words that are age appropriate, classified into groups or categories, and is located on the wall of a classroom for children to easily see and learn. The main purpose of a word wall is used to improve vocabulary achievement by helping students like build vocabulary, improve spelling in written work, and explain ideas through oral communication. In teaching learning process, the teacher must be creative to create their learning by using word wall.

Therefore, based on the above description, it can be concluded that in teaching vocabulary requires the right strategy to improve students' vocabulary achievement. The

researchers used the word wall as a technique in order to improve the vocabulary achievement of eighth grade students.

Vocabulary is a word to choose and use to express thoughts and ideas in communication. Having sufficient vocabulary is helpful because without vocabulary there is no communication, people cannot understand what they are reading and even they cannot write what they want to convey. Juhendi (2011: 4) states that that "vocabulary is a vital aspect in the language, because it appears in every skill of the language including listening, speaking, reading and writing skills". Generally speaking, vocabulary is a major aspect in English because it exists in every ability in English language skills. To support this, Lado (1977) states that "vocabulary is words as units that are part of grammatical patterns." In that sense, a word can be an element which can stand alone as an utterance, it cannot be divided into two or more parts similarity characterized ".

From this understanding, it can be interpreted that vocabulary as the smallest unit of language, supports other language elements such as grammar. In addition, vocabulary is very important and part of a language because by knowing English words and their meanings, it can help a person understand the message given by the writer to the reader or speaker to hearer clearly. Shortly with vocabulary, language learners will be able to use the language for the purpose of communication.

In learning vocabulary, learners can be exposed to words printed and displayed in classroom. To support this, Cronsberry (2004: 3) says that "a word wall is a group of words displayed on walls, bulletin boards, whiteboards, or whiteboard in the classroom". The words are printed in large letters so the word is easily visible from all student sitting locations. These words are called constantly across the units or terms by teachers and students during various activities. Word wall is organized alphabetically. The teachers are encouraged to be creative in designing a word wall in the teaching learning process. Word wall activities can be used to improve literacy in all curriculum areas by helping students' build vocabulary, improve spelling in written work, and explain ideas through oral communication.

Previous studies about the use of Word Wall to teach English skill have showcased its contribution in vocabulary teaching. There are two previous studies that investigated the implementation of teaching vocabulary using word wall. Aggriani (2013) conducted an action research in junior high school. She studied about improving students' vocabulary achievement through word walls strategy. She found out that students who used Word Wall can help them in develop the vocabulary, comprehend the meaning of the words in the text, recognize the meaning of each word and compose text using their vocabulary. Furthermore, LeDale (2011) conducted an experimental research to middle school by using Word Wall as a tool to improve vocabulary. He used Word Wall to teach various components of vocabulary. Word Wall used to the tool combined five effective, research-based teaching strategies with social interaction to teach vocabulary to middle school students. In his teaching, the words for the delayed assessment were randomly selected from lists of words that each group used during the intervention phase of the study.

Based on the results of the previous studies, Word Wall in general could improve students' vocabulary achievement and also succeed students in the middle school to use vocabulary in context. In here there are little different with the two previous research above. In this research using classroom action research (CAR) as method different with one of research using experimental research with word wall as media.

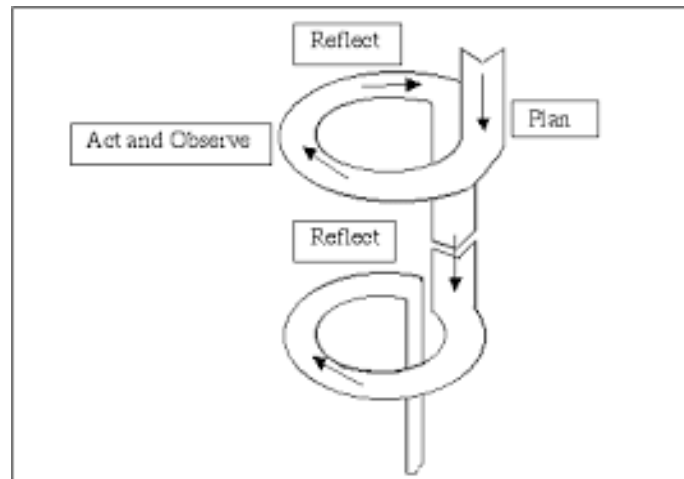
## **METHOD**

### **Research Design**

The research design used in the present study is classroom action research. Classroom Action Research (CAR) is applied in this research to improve the eighth grade students'

vocabulary achievement through the use of Word Wall. Classroom Action Research is appropriately to use as the research design. Burn (2010:5) states that "action research is a research carried out in the classroom by the teacher of the course mainly with the purpose of solving a problem or improving the teaching/ learning process". Hence, the present classroom action research aims at developing the students' achievement in vocabulary skill through word wall. In the classroom action research, if the first cycle could not improve the students' speaking ability it would be continued for the next cycle and so forth. Therefore, the researcher really knows the problems of learning faced by the student.

In this classroom action study, the teaching learning processes are divided into cycles. Kemmis and Mc Taggart (1998) suggest that the action research model is spiral from cycle one to cycle two. One-cycle stage include the procedure of the action research study that can be formulated as follows:



The cyclical process of Classroom Action Research

### Participants

The participants of the research were eighth grader of secondary school. They are 18 males and 7 females aged between 13 and 14. They have faced difficulties in learning English vocabulary. In this school, the English teacher has problem in improving students' vocabulary achievement. In this research, the action cycles was done in accordance with the English schedule in the class.

### Data Collection Method

To achieve the purpose of the study, the data required are in the form of the students' scores in vocabulary which are obtained through vocabulary test. Meanwhile, the previous score was gained from the English teacher. The test administered after the action is conducted at the end of cycle to know the improvement of students' vocabulary score.

### Data Analysis Method

Arikunto (1998:236) states that "data analysis is processing data by using formula or based on the research approach or design taken". Therefore, the formula is needed the technique for data analysis. After the researcher collects data required, the next step is to analyze the data in order to interpret the data obtained. Data analysis method is way to analyze the obtained data. In this research, the collected data are the result of students' vocabulary evaluation test and the result of observation. The score students' vocabulary test and participation is analyzed using descriptive statistics (mean).

Applying statistical method in a research must consider the kind of data obtained and kind of research conducted. The mean score formula is as follows:

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

**Notes:**

M = Mean score

$\sum X$  = the total of students' vocabulary score

N = the number of subject

Furthermore, the result of the observation is analyzed qualitatively by describing the result of percentage. To know the percentage of the students' who were active, the following formula was used:

$$E = \frac{n}{N} \times 100\%$$

**Notes :**

E : the percentage of the students who are active

n : the numbers of the students who are active

N : the numbers of students

In this research, the action is considered to be successful if it meets the following criteria:

- a. There is a significant improvement on students' vocabulary score.
- b. At least 70% of 25 students actively participate in the teaching and learning process.

**FINDINGS AND DISCUSSION**

**Finding**

The implementation of the action was based on the lesson plan made by researcher that was consulted to the English teacher. The researcher used vocabulary test in collecting data. The test consisted of 25 questions. The kind of the test was objective test namely multiple choice. After the researcher got the students' vocabulary score from the teacher, the researcher gave treatment to the students by teaching them using word wall media. The researcher administered vocabulary test at the end of the implementation of the action. The test was used to know the students' vocabulary mastery after being taught by using word wall. The collected data were described in the form of table that includes the students' vocabulary score before and after the action.

The vocabulary test was done in the sixth meeting after the actions. The test was done to measure the students' vocabulary achievement which focused on vocabulary especially large vocabulary (verb, noun, adjective, and adverb) by using word wall. The vocabulary test included multiple choices of 25 test items of antonym, synonym, and find the meaning section. The students should choose the correct answer. The score for each item was 4. So, if students could answer all questions correctly, they will get 100. Following is the result of students' vocabulary test.

Table 1: The Score of Students' Vocabulary Test

No.	Students' Name	Before the action	After the action
1.	AA	68	72

2.	BR	60	68
3.	DGP	48	72
4.	DYP	72	88
5.	EPW	56	72
6.	EI	72	76
7.	GJP	60	76
8.	HA	44	60
9.	MAR	44	72
10.	MDM	64	88
11.	NNKS	76	88
12.	OS	68	72
13.	PCN	76	88
14.	RM	48	68
15.	RBS	48	84
16.	RAR	60	76
17.	RG	56	76
18.	RKS	52	68
19.	RA	68	76
20.	SDD	60	84
	Total ( $\sum X$ )	1200	1524
	Mean (M)	60	76.2

Based on the result of data, it was found that the application of word walls strategy successfully improved students' vocabulary achievement. By applying this Word Wall, the score of the students on vocabulary increased. It was proved by the data which showed that the mean score of the students after the action was 76.2 or higher than the score before the action that was 60. The qualitative data taken from the observation sheet also showed that students were more interested in learning vocabulary by using word wall because word wall as media can be a solution for them in solving difficulties in learning vocabulary.

### Discussion

In the reflection above, the researcher knew that most of students were enthusiastic to follow the process of teaching and learning especially on vocabulary skill. In the learning activity, the students were able to develop their vocabulary skill by using word wall as media in the lesson. From the data, it showed that the use of media in teaching learning process can help students construct their vocabulary skill and give information to be more active in learning activity. In learning activity, the students did not know how to classify vocabulary into verb, noun, adjective and adverb. Also, many students did not understand about the meaning of words. Furthermore, the students asked some questions about how to classify words into verb, noun, adjective and adverb so they could make simple sentence which correlated to the topic or the material. It showed that the students participated actively in vocabulary learning.

In the process of teaching and learning, the teacher asked the students to make group. Making group is a way to share ideas when the students worked in the classroom. Besides, some students still got difficulties when they arranged words to be good sentences, because they had limited English vocabulary. The teacher provided question and answer session to solve the problem. The teacher gave motivation to the students to be more interactive with their friends. This action was successful to improve the student' vocabulary achievement especially on making sentences.

To improve their vocabulary achievement, the teacher always gave them practice to arrange words by using word wall in front of the class. According to Cronsberry (2004:3), “The use of word wall in a classroom can be a highly effective teaching strategy to improve literacy skills, besides word wall activities encourage active students’ participation”. Moreover, the use of media was implemented in the action of the teaching and learning process. The research was successful, because it could improve the students’ vocabulary achievement especially in the eighth grade. The researcher applied word wall as media to improve their vocabulary achievement.

Previous studies about the use of Word Wall to teach English skill have showcased its contribution in vocabulary teaching. Aggriani (2013) conducted an action research in junior high school. She studied about improving students’ vocabulary achievement through word walls strategy. Based on research findings, the researcher concluded that the improvement was supported by the increasing of the mean of the students’ scores. The mean score of the test I was 48.93, the mean of the test II was 54.93, and the mean of the test III 64.83. It means that test II is higher than test I and test III is higher than test I.

## CONCLUSION

The result of the research indicated that the use of word wall as media can improve students’ vocabulary achievement and students’ active learning participation. It can be seen throughout teaching learning process. The improvement above can be achieved by the following teaching steps: a) making word on the wall, b) giving and asking question, c) discussing the material in group and, d) giving feedback. So, the result had achieved the standard of passing grade that was targeted in this research.

The analysis of the result revealed that the students got advantages from the implementation of word wall as media. In addition, by using word wall, the students enjoyed the teaching learning process and also have a good motivation in learning vocabulary with this media. It also proved by the observation checklist more students become confident, active and cooperatively learn with their group. In conclusion, the use of word wall improved the students’ vocabulary achievement. The findings suggest that English teachers can adopt or adapt the technique for their class activities in teaching vocabulary. The students are also suggested to use wordwall media to improve their vocabulary. The future researcher can conduct a further research with a different research design at another school by used word wall.

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