



Enhancing Vocabulary Mastery through Applying Visual Auditory Kinesthetic (VAK): A Classroom Action

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Abstract

Vocabulary mastery is paramount to support the four language skills and it determines the success of students' communication after grammatical competences. lexical competence is assumed as the second competence to that of the grammar. One of the alternatives in teaching vocabulary is visual auditory kinesthetic (VAK). This classroom action research (CAR) aimed at applying the VAK due to the students' difficulties in memorizing new vocabulary especially the abstract noun. The procedure of the CAR comprises planning, acting, observing, and reflecting. Each stage has activities to attain the research goals. The subjects of this study were the Seventh Graders of SMP Islam Al-Badriyah. There were a vocabulary test, questionnaire, and observation sheet as the research instruments. Then, the data was analyzed using both quantitatively and qualitatively. The findings from the vocabulary test showed that 21 out of 25 students passed the settled minimum criteria or the mean score fell on 77. It found out the students were active participation, paid good attention to the material and showed enthusiasm in the English class. It can be concluded that the application of the VAK could increase not only the students' vocabulary mastery but also classroom participation. In addition, the result of this current study proved that the application of VAK as one of the teaching alternatives could lead the students in memorizing abstracted vocabularies

Keywords: Visual auditory kinesthetic, teaching media, vocabulary mastery

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INTRODUCTION

In the ELT contexts, vocabulary learning is one of the areas has increasingly paid considerable attention in designing teaching materials (Clarke, 2018; Mustafa et al., 2019; Alamri & Rogers, 2018). Many efforts have been done to teach students with lists of words related to a real world contexts (Joyce, 2018; Indrasari et al., 2018; Wyra & Lawson, 2018). Vocabulary is a core component of language proficiency and provides much of the basis for how learners speak, listen, read, and write (Zhong, 2018; Teng, 2019; Kinasih & Olivia, 2022). On other words, vocabulary is the main thing that hold a very important role in being able to master the language itself. It means that the students are able to master the language without mastering the vocabulary first, because the mother language is very different from English in vocabularies and meanings. The big gap became one of the difficulties that have by students in learning English. Mostly, students find difficulties to memorize a lot of vocabulary (Rafi, Islam, & Cahyani, 2021;

Eliata & Miftakh, 2021), difficult to understand the meaning of words (Alfattihah & Tyas, 2022), and arrange the words into appropriate sentences (Terai et al., 2021; Rusmawan et al., 2021).

Preliminary study was conducted and found students' problems in vocabulary especially in Islam Al-Badriyah like memorizing some vocabularies especially abstract words. However, the students are easier to memorize the vocabularies that they can see around them like the things in the classroom. In addition, Urai and Nurnisa (2021) revealed that memorizing long syllable-words is one out of four difficulties faced by the students. Another problem is the teacher is using direct method and only focusing on the textbook as the teaching media which not suits the students' problems and needs. This finding is in accordance with Kusmayati and Hendryanti (2021) who state that learning vocabulary should be designed appropriate with students' needs. The researcher also found that the school is having trouble in supporting the appropriate media for the teacher to help them in the teaching process. That is why, the teacher finds it difficult to give new information with very limited media in the classroom. Since the students are mostly new to English, it becomes one of the biggest challenges in teaching English.

Additionally, based on the result of the second observation that researchers have held on the 7th of January 2022, they showed that only 7 out of 25 students who can pass the minimum score on the vocabulary test and almost all the students gave negative responds towards all of the elements (students' interest, students' vocabulary mastery and teaching method) in the questionnaire. In other words, students have weak vocabulary mastery because the lack of media and teaching method that could not cover all of the students' learning style that it caused lack of interest in learning English. In practice, the coursebook employed by teachers is concerned to rationalize vocabulary as contents in which teachers provide students with a set of contexts to enable vocabulary development can take place (Khan et al., 2018; Kho et al., 2021; Ihsan & Syafitri, 2021). However, the success of vocabulary mastery depends on students' learning input and learning strategies. It is in line with Cho et al. (2019) who argue the history of learning vocabulary has be focused on two activities, namely explicit and implicit learning activities.

Based on the problems above, the researcher used VAK and media to help the teaching and learning process. Some of the students may be visual learners. Some others are maybe auditory or kinaesthetic learners. VAK is a teaching method that can be applied to the entire student with different learning styles at a time. And to make the teaching and learning process using this method more interesting, the researcher added cue cards as the media. It has helped to solve the students' problems that have been explained on the previous paragraph because when using the cue cards the students are expected to be able to understand the abstract noun. This method hopefully could make the teaching and learning process easier since the teacher had reached all of the students' learning style.

Based on the overviews, the researcher interested to conduct the study using VAK and media in teaching vocabulary in order to describe how the implementation of VAK and Media can improve the students' vocabulary mastery at seventh grade students of SMP Islam Al-Badriyah entitled "The Use of VAK (Visualization, Auditory, Kinesthetic) In Teaching Vocabulary at Seventh Grade Students of SMP Islam Al-Badriyah".

METHOD

This study is a classroom action research. Action research is any systematic inquiry conducted by researchers, principals, school counselors, in the teaching-learning environment to attain information about how particular school management operates,

how teachers teach, and how the students learn (Cohen, Manion, & Morrison, 2018). In other words, action research is one of the research approaches that conducted to know the problems in teaching and learning, and then solve the problems using some techniques, and improve the quality of teaching and learning process itself (Miles, Huberman, & Saldana, 2016). The data of this study comprise descriptive data and quantitative or numeric data. Therefore, this study is categorized as a mix method. It is the combination of qualitative and quantitative approaches. So, this study used descriptive and numeric data.

This research was conducted at Seventh-grade students of SMP I Al-Badriyah in academic year 2021/2022. This school is located in East Lombok as a part of an Islamic Boarding School named Al-Badriyah Education Foundation. The students who attend this school come from many backgrounds. Mostly, their parents are farmers and from middle to under economical range. Since the students are obligated to stay and live in the boarding school, the students have many activities and of course most of them are related to Islamic Education. They also happen to provide many other general programs, such as Boys Scouting and English Course. The students spend their time in boarding school by attending these programs that are very good for them.

There are 25 students in the seventh grade, and all of them are male. This year, they only have one class and that became the subject of this research. The researcher applied VAK and Media in teaching vocabulary in order to see how the implementation of this method can improve the students' vocabulary mastery, especially the abstract noun. The researcher used three instruments, i.e. vocabulary test, a questionnaire and observation. Vocabulary Test is the way to examine the students' vocabulary mastery. In this study, the researcher used multiple-choice tests in order to examine the students' vocabulary mastery after the researcher teaches them using VAK and media. The test consisted of 20 questions where each questions have four options and the students have to choose one right options as their answer. Questionnaire is a research instrument consisting of a series of questions for the purpose of gathering information from respondents through survey or statistical study. In this study, the respondents are the students and were given 20 questions where each questions have two options (yes/no) that the students have to answer. The purpose of this instrument is to collect the qualitative data.

Observation is one of the instrument that use to observe and evaluate someone, group, or phenomena, and then draw a conclusion or make notes. During the observation the researcher has observed the process of teaching and learning and make some notes in the observation sheet that already prepared before. The purpose of the implementation of this instrument is to gain information about the teaching and learning process using VAK and media.

The researcher used four steps, namely planning, acting, observing, and reflecting (Cohen, Manion, & Morrison, 2018). The phase of planning refers to what researchers have to do before conducting actions in the class. In this activity, the researcher made a plan or strategy of learning process such as the method, material, and learning media. This plan is also known as lesson plan in the process of teaching and learning. The researcher also prepared an assesment in form of a test that realated to the vocabulary mastery. The test was in form of multiple choice with 20 questions and the students have to choose the best option to answer each question. Every right answer counted as five points and wrong answer counted as zero point. All the point was added to get the students' scores. The minimum score that the students have to reach in this subject is 70. This score is based on the schools criteria of success.

In the phase of acting, researchers carried out what the strategy that already prepared in the previous step. The researcher used VAK and media during the teaching learning process to teach students about the vocabulary. In this study, researchers become teachers and the real teacher in the school acted as the observer. Observing is the activity that aimed to gather information about the teaching and learning process. In other words, by doing this activity, the researcher would know the learning process was running well or not. To do the observation, the researcher has prepared some instruments in the form of vocabulary test, an observation sheet and a questionnaire. The vocabulary test and observation sheets are the main instrument that were used to get the information about the students' scores during and after the treatment. The test consists of 20 questions. Next, the score was used to know whether this study can improve the students' vocabulary mastery or not. Meanwhile, the observation sheets were used to observe the process of implementing VAK and media. The last instrument was questionnaire which became the supporting instrument where the researcher can get some other information about the response or experience of the students to be taught using VAK and media in teaching vocabulary, especially abstract noun.

Reflecting. In this activity, the researcher evaluated the students in order to know their improvement after they join the class. This evaluation was done by using the mean formula by Bluman (2012) and percentage formula where the first formula is used to find the average score of the students. It can be found by adding all the scores and dividing it by the total number of the students. The formula can be seen as follow:

This study considered as success if 75% of the students in this class reach the minimum score. If it was less than 75%, than this study considered as failed and the researcher should continue to the next cycle. This statement is supported by Djamarah and Zain (2010: 108) that says: 1. If 75% of the students who attended the teaching and learning process reached the minimum, optimum, or even maximum score, so the next teaching and learning process can be discussing a new topic. 2. If 75% or more of the students who attended the teaching and learning process reached less than the minimum score (under the minimum score), so the next teaching and learning process should be revision (remedial).

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

Research Results

The data of the study was gained using vocabulary test, observation, and questionnaire. Based on the evaluation, it showed that the mean of the class was improve that is 77 and the percentage was 84%. It means that there are 84% students who pass the minimum score and reach the criteria of learning succes that is the learning can be considered as success if 75% of students reach the minimum score. The second data was gained from observation sheet and it revealed that the teacher managed to teach successfully because the teaching and learning process was following the lesson plan, the teaching method was following the procedures of VAK, the materials were compatible with the students' needs, and teacher was successfully made the teaching and learning situation joyful and conducive, that the interaction between the teacher and the students were going well. By this joyful and conducive learning situation, it was able to increase the students' interest in learning English and make them actively participated in the teaching and learning process. It also helped the improvement of students' vocabulary mastery especially in memorizing abstract vocabulary. In other words, the process of implementing VAK and media in teaching vocabulary was running well because of the great cooperation among researcher as teacher, the observer and the students.

The last data was gained from questionnaire and it described into three elements i.e. teaching method, student interest, and students' ability. In the first element, there are 88% of the students agreed that VAK is an appropriate method to improve students' vocabulary mastery and is a joyful teaching method in learning English. In the second, element there are 64% of the students are interested to learn English using VAK and Media compared to the previous method that the teacher used. While in the last element, 68% of the students stated that there are improvements in their vocabulary mastery especially in abstract vocabulary. It means that, VAK can help the students in learning English easier and can improve their vocabulary mastery. Based on the result from all of the instruments, it can be concluded that this cycle was succes and running well, then the researcher decided to finish the study with first cycle.

Discussion

This study investigate the use of the VAK to enhance students' vocabulary mastery in ELT contexts. The learning vocabulary is oriented to habit formation. Due to this, students gradually are able to use those in communication (Puimege & Peters, 2019; Kalogirous et al., 2019). Students have capacity about a set of words which they express their actions, beliefs, and lives. The development of vocabulary mastery through reading (Wang & Liu, 2020; Lee & Chen, 2019), playing videos or word games (Montero, 2019; Castillo & Alto, 2018), and participating in vocabulary-related programs (Sippel, 2019; Dubbiner, 2017), are the teachers' effort to facilitate students in generating sentences in written forms and in oral communication (Uchiyara & Saito, 2019).

In the context of the teaching and learning, this current research investigate how the implementation of the VAK is to improve the students' vocabulary mastery at seventh grade students at the middle schools. Students are facilitated with various learning activities to acquire an amount of vocabulary. For instance, students are asked to do simple reading activities. Reading activities are designed to learn and acquire very large vocabulary. Students made notes of vocabularies that are new for them. These learning activities direct students to practice writing and to make strong memory of vocabularies they learn (Kazemian, Irawan, & Haerazi, 2021; Haerazi & Kazemian, 2021). In addition, students are directed to find out new vocabulary through online learning activities. Students are asked to access some websites relating to the reading themes. It lead students to expand their vocabulary mastery. It is in line with Ajabshir and Sadeghi (2019) who argue that reading comprehension is affected by the vocabulary level and it is solved by providing students with online learning uptake. This current study proved that the vocabulary mastery of seventh grade students of SMP Islam Al-Badriyah could be improved especially on the abstract noun. This research was considered as success because it has fulfilled the criteria of success of CAR itself where it needs to be 75% students pass. The percentage of the students who pass the minimum score (KKM) is 84% so this research was only held in one cycle without continuing to the next cycle.

At the very first, students were having trouble in memorizing new vocabularies, especially the vocabularies that did not exist and could not be found in their environment (abstract vocabulary). Additionally based on the preliminary observation's results, it showed that the students were having very weak vocabulary mastery since they have lack of appropriate media in teaching and the teaching method couldn't cover all the students' learning styles. Therefore, the researcher used VAK and media to solve this problem. In learning activities, students are asked to find out videos from youtubes containing a certain topic. The activities are directed to access a large amount of input (Chiew et al., 2019; Ebadi & Bashiri, 2018). It is in accordance with Setianingsih et al.

(2018) and Rassaei (2018) who state students in vocabulary learning should be directed to reading authentic texts because the more students find out the vocabulary items, the more they recognize those in minds. In this study, the use of the VAK combines three students' learning styles, namely Visual, Auditory, and Kinesthetic. In line with this, Shoimin (2014) states VAK is learning style that optimizes the three learning modalities to make the learners feel comfortable. Teaching using this model needs the delightful and real-time studying experience. Real-time studying experience using learning by memorizing. It can be done in visual learning, learning by listening which can be done in Auditory learning, and learning by movement and emotion which refers to kinesthetic activities (Shoimin, 2014). After the treatment using VAK and media through the body movements and all the exercises during treatment, the result is they can memorize new vocabularies way easier.

The result of the questionnaire and observation sheets are also showing the same thing, where almost all students were excited to learn English and really loved the researcher's method. It is because VAK can create a joyful and conducive learning atmosphere that can increase the students' interest in learning English so students can understand and master new vocabularies that the teacher taught. The various learning activities lead students to carry out whole learning activities such as utilizing youtube videos and translation practice (Augustyn, 2013; Anwar et al., 2021). It is in line with Arnd & Woore (2018) who allege youtube videos containing English native speakers' speech bring students to recognize word formation and how the words pronounce in sentences. The morphological instruction also is done during the implementation of the VAK. It helps students recognize the word formation and semantic association (Bowers & Kirby, 2010; Nation, 2006; Nayan & Krishnasamy, 2015; van de Bosch et al., 2019).

This result is support by some previous studies that used VAK. The first study was conducted by studies in which the use of VAK learning model can improve students' reading comprehension. In classes, students show active participation, paid good attention to the material and showed enthusiastic in the reading activity. Those activities affected the students' reading comprehension that can be seen in the comparison of the scores from each cycle. In the same time, this study is in line with the current study that revealed that the VAK is able to create joyful situation and can improve the students' learning interest not only in vocabulary mastery, but also in reading comprehension. Therefore, this study was success with one cycle and the implementation of VAK and media can improve the students' vocabulary mastery in the context of abstract noun and special cases obtained at the seventh graders of SMP Islam Al-Badriyah.

CONCLUSION

Having problems in memorizing vocabulary especially abstract noun becomes the main issue of this current research beside the lack of media and the less suitable teaching method that the teacher has been using in the teaching and learning. So the researcher was interested to solve the problem by applying VAK and media because this method can reach every students' learning styles since it combined three activities, namely Visual, Auditory, and Kinesthetic. the VAK refers to learning style that optimizes the three learning modalities to make the learners feel comfortable. Students are asked to do simple reading activities. Reading activities are designed to learn and acquire very large vocabulary. Students made notes of vocabularies that are new for them. These learning activities direct students to practice writing and to make strong memory of vocabularies they learn. In addition, students are directed to find out new vocabulary through online learning activities. Students are asked to access some websites relating to the reading themes. It lead students to expand their vocabulary mastery

The result of this study proved the improvement on the mean score of the class that is 77 where from 25 students, there are only 21 students who pass the Minimum score (KKM). The result also showed that after the treatment, students were showing active participation, paid good attention to the material and showed enthusiastic in the English class. Those activities affected the students' vocabulary mastery. It then leads the researchers to conclude that the application of visual, auditory, kinesthetic (VAK) can improve the students' vocabulary mastery of abstract noun.

RECOMMENDATION

Considering the findings of the study, the researchers have some suggestions for the English teacher, students and other researchers in the future. The first suggestion for the English teacher is that VAK and media may help improving students' vocabulary mastery and this study proved it, but it has some weaknesses like some students still have low vocabulary mastery and bored with the class. Therefore, teacher should know about the students' characteristic in order to be able combined VAK with the other media dealing with the students' characteristic beside the media that researcher used in this study. The next suggestion for the students is they should know how important learning English in their live and the advantages to mastering English. This is expected to be able to improve the students' interest and will to learn English. The last suggestion for other researchers is that there are so many other medias that are waiting to be investigated. In this case, this present study studied about VAK with cue card as the media. It is hopefully that the result of this study could help the other researchers better in understanding VAK.

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