

# ENHANCING ENGLISH VOCABULARY ACQUISITION IN READING INSTRUCTION THROUGH MULTIPLE INTELLIGENCES APPROACH

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**Abstract:** This research explores innovative strategies to improve students' vocabulary mastery in English language teaching. Utilizing cognitive skill-based approaches, such as the "working with words" strategy, the study aims to create an effective and engaging learning environment. The research employs various methods, including observations, document analysis, recordings, and treatment procedures. Initial observations indicate that students possess a reasonable level of cognitive skills, providing a foundation for vocabulary acquisition. However, subsequent assessments reveal a decline in vocabulary proficiency, prompting the need for intervention. To address this issue, cognitive skill-based strategies, such as the "category game" and "contextual reading clues," are applied in the teaching process. These strategies aim to tap into students' intellectual capacities, motivating independent learning. Post-treatment results show significant improvement, with the contextual reading clues strategy leading to a remarkable 91.30% increase in vocabulary proficiency. In conclusion, cognitive skill-based strategies have a substantial impact on students' cognitive behaviors and vocabulary acquisition. This research emphasizes the importance of integrating vocabulary learning with reading exercises, continuous assessment, and progress recording. It underscores the significance of vocabulary mastery for language proficiency and calls for the integration of such strategies into language teaching practices.

**Keywords:** *English language teaching; vocabulary mastery; cognitive skills; working with words; category game*

## INTRODUCTION

In carrying out teaching tasks, an educator must be adept at developing effective learning strategies concerning the subject matter at hand to ensure the attainment of learning objectives. Moreover, educators should analyze learners' experiences to garner feedback on learning outcomes. These abilities are crucial in enhancing the quality of English language instruction as a foreign language. In other words, English language teachers need to

understand the appropriate steps to be implemented in the English learning process. This aligns with the viewpoint of Broughton et al. (2003:37), summarized by the phrase "what the teacher should know and what he should do" in English language instruction. Similarly, in Reading instruction, teachers should not only focus on the reading text but also plan strategies to assist students in comprehending the text. Perkins (2015) argues that Reading

instructors need to understand the reading process and how students learn to read to devise strategic reading instruction.

Reading instruction is considered one of the most beneficial language skills trainings for students since it not only aids in understanding the content but also in grasping the sentence structure (grammar), mastering vocabulary, and understanding the organization of a text. West (1953) elucidates that reading is the most beneficial skill to master in a foreign language as it adds significant value to language learning. This perspective is further reinforced by Broughton et al. (2003), who state that reading is a complex skill encompassing various abilities such as understanding punctuation, stylistic elements, connecting language elements like words, phrases, sentences, paragraphs, and even understanding a chapter to comprehending a book. Therefore, reading is referred to as an intellectual skill. However, for the purposes of this research, reading instruction will focus on one aspect of reading skill, that is, vocabulary.

Vocabulary plays a pivotal role in reading activities. In other words, reading capability is largely determined by the extent of vocabulary mastery. The reality in most schools is that the majority of students' vocabulary mastery falls under recognition vocabulary – words understood when read or heard. Based on this fact, it can be inferred that most students possess a passive vocabulary. Referring to this reality, as lecturers in the English Education Department, there's a need to help students enhance their active or productive vocabulary, enabling them to utilize these words in speaking and writing.

In undertaking efforts to improve students' vocabulary, it's essential to ascertain the number of words students need to master to be considered proficient in English. The curriculum does not specify the amount of English vocabulary that middle school students should master. For adults, Mackey (cited in Elsjelyn, 2009) suggests that the vocabulary size depends on one's education level, ranging from 10,000 for those without

tertiary education to 150,000 for a scientist, while average students possess about 60,000 – 100,000 words. For non-native speakers, the exact number of words to be mastered remains undetermined. However, Mackey observed that the number of words used for daily communication is around 2000. This research aims at a target of 1000 actively mastered words (productive vocabulary).

The endeavor to enhance vocabulary to meet the aforementioned number will be through the Multiple Intelligences approach. Multiple Intelligences, also known as Composite Skills, is an approach that leverages intellectual skills, which are innate abilities of students, applied in learning unfamiliar vocabulary in diverse contexts. This approach trains students to understand word meanings through context rather than dictionary use. Hence, students are encouraged to utilize their intellect or think ahead and guess the word meanings in a context. Learning words through context is highly beneficial for students, as they not only understand the meanings but also learn how to use the words appropriately. An example provided herein; the word 'tender' has five meanings (cited in English Made Easy, 2009:34):

The meat is tender.  
He has a tender heart.  
He got married at a tender age.  
He is a bartender.  
He sent in a tender for a new bridge.

Utilizing intellectual skills (cognitive skills) is one of the strategies in vocabulary instruction based on the theory proposed by Slobin (cited in Nababan, 1992), stating that language mastery order depends on semantic difficulty level rather than linguistic form difficulty level. Cognitive skill is elaborated in the Multiple Intelligences theory, which is a language teaching theory proposed by Richards and Rodgers (2014). Multiple Intelligences refer to the basic philosophy of students viewing human intelligence characteristics as multi-dimensional, which should be revealed and developed through education. Furthermore, Gardner (cited in Richards & Rodgers) explains that all

humans possess multi-dimensional intelligences with varying levels of strength and the amalgamation of these intelligence. Gardner believes all these intelligences can be enhanced through practice and training.

Every student possesses the above-mentioned multi-intelligences, which constitute a personal intelligence profile. This personal intelligence profile is a combination of various types of intelligence, among which some types have a high development level. This theory aligns with the language acquisition theory proposed by Chomsky (cited in Good & Brophy, 1990:86), stating that the ability to create language according to grammatical patterns is a characteristic of human brain function without requiring reinforcement or systematic instruction. Assuming that humans possess intellectual skills, they can develop their cognition to solve a problem. The aforementioned points are further clarified by Crystal (2007), stating that language and intelligence are closely related. Aspects like infant babbling, vocabulary size, grammatical complexity, rhyming ability, speaking ability, and expression capability are closely related to intelligence capability.

Based on the explanations outlined above, as lecturers in the English Education Department, we are obliged to enhance students' vocabulary mastery through research titled: "Acquisition of English Vocabulary in Reading Instruction by Implementing Multiple Intelligences Approach."

To achieve the research aim, the study proposed several research questions, namely: (1) How much vocabulary do students understand through context?; (2) Can students understand vocabulary by breaking down the words into their components? (3) Can providing repetition (review) help students remember the vocabulary for a longer period of time?

### **Multiple Intelligences Approach in Reading Instruction**

One of the key characteristics of English language learning is the diversity among students who share the same

classroom. These differences may encompass various aspects such as motivation to learn English, different learning preferences, the range of learning strategies they employ, and their preferences for teaching methods and classroom activities. Effective English language instruction should take into account these student characteristics and emphasize student participation and engagement in the learning process. According to Richards and Rodgers (2014: 230), a contemporary approach to language learning is centered around recognizing these student differences and using them as a basis for classroom activities. These differences can be both internal (within the students) and external (related to the learning environment). Each student is assumed to have their own unique learning style, goals, and motivations, all of which influence their effectiveness as learners in the classroom. The Multiple Intelligences Approach accommodates these differences in English language instruction.

This perspective is in alignment with the views of Soekamto and Winataputra (1997), who argue that a student's success in learning is determined by both external and internal factors. Internal factors include a student's readiness, abilities, prerequisite knowledge, motivation, talent, and intelligence (Soekamto & Winataputra, 1997). In this context, intelligence is considered one of the internal factors that can be harnessed for English language learning, particularly in teaching vocabulary. Vocabulary skills acquired through the Multiple Intelligences Approach can be categorized as cognitive abilities within Bloom's taxonomy.

Renowned linguist Noam Chomsky also supports the idea of cognitive learning in language acquisition. Chomsky argues that language mastery cannot be achieved through mere imitation or rote memorization of sentence patterns. Human beings are inherently equipped with cognitive/intellectual capabilities that enable them to process received input, establish systems, and generate an unlimited number of new sentences (as stated in Elsjelyn,

2009). Chomsky (in Good & Brophy, 1990) posits that the ability to create language patterns is a function of the human brain, occurring without systematic reinforcement or teaching. Assuming that humans possess intellectual skills, they can develop their cognitive abilities to solve problems. These ideas are further substantiated by Crystal (2007), who asserts a close relationship between language and intelligence. As seen in infant babbling, vocabulary size, grammatical complexity, rhyming skills, speaking ability, and expressive capacity are closely tied to intelligence. Based on the above explanations, it is clear that human intelligence varies across multiple dimensions, making it rational to incorporate these variations into the foundation of English language instruction, particularly for students learning English as a foreign language.

The Multiple Intelligences Approach employed in this research is based on the theory developed by Howard Gardner, which identifies eight intelligences (Richards & Rodgers: 2014) possessed by individuals:

1. Linguistic Intelligence: The ability to use language in a unique and creative manner, commonly found in professions such as lawyers, writers, editors, and interpreters.
2. Logical/Mathematical Intelligence: Rational thinking ability, prevalent among doctors, engineers, programmers, and scientists.
3. Spatial Intelligence: Mental aptitude for creating models or designs, often seen in architects, decorators, painters, and sculptors.
4. Musical Intelligence: Proficiency in perceiving and creating music, found in singers and composers.
5. Bodily/Kinesthetic Intelligence: Skill in body movement and posture, such as athletes and artists.
6. Interpersonal Intelligence: The capacity to establish effective collaboration with others, as seen in salespeople, politicians, and teachers.
7. Intrapersonal Intelligence: The ability to understand oneself, harness one's

talents successfully, achieve happiness, and adapt well to others and various aspects of life.

8. Naturalist Intelligence: The ability to comprehend and organize patterns in the natural world.

According to Berman (in Richards & Rodgers, 2014), to implement these multiple intelligences in English language teaching, instructors can select activities that align with their students' abilities and the class being taught. For example:

1. Linguistic Intelligence: Word-building games, oral presentations, debates, vocabulary activities.
2. Logical/Mathematical Intelligence: Categorizing grammar exercises, logical-sequential presentations, error recognition.
3. Visual/Spatial Intelligence: Mind maps, visual aids, graphic organizers, photography, visualization activities.
4. Bodily/Kinesthetic Intelligence: Creative movement, role plays, mime, hands-on activities.
5. Musical Intelligence: Playing recorded music, singing, group singing, creating musical instruments.
6. Interpersonal Intelligence: Cooperative group work, peer teaching, role plays, team competitions.
7. Intrapersonal Intelligence: Independent student work, reflective learning, personal journal keeping, goal setting.
8. Naturalist Intelligence: Outdoor exploration in English, field trips, collecting natural items for vocabulary.

In-depth insights from Christison (in Richards & Rodgers, 2014) break down these multiple intelligences into a taxonomy of language learning activities, providing a comprehensive overview of how they can be implemented in English language instruction.

Taking into account Svava-Sólmundardóttir's views (2008), who believes that teaching with the multiple intelligences theory can enhance student interest, making learning enjoyable and providing opportunities for students to develop their specific abilities, it can be



concluded that the multiple intelligences approach is a viable framework for English language instruction. This approach allows students to utilize their intellectual strengths effectively to improve their skills. Implementing the multiple intelligences approach in English language learning can yield positive learning outcomes for students and demonstrate teaching success for educators. It also offers the opportunity to employ various assessment methods in English language instruction.

## **METHOD**

### **Research Design**

This study employs a qualitative research design. Following Creswell (2014), qualitative research relies on textual and descriptive data, involves specific steps in data analysis, and presents data for various purposes.

The selection of a qualitative research design aligns with the research problem and objectives. To achieve the goals of this research, the research problem will be explored using a data-driven approach known as grounded theory. This approach is based on the application of theory, action, and interactive participation to obtain a comprehensive understanding of research data. This process involves various stages of data collection, focusing on data purity and the relationships within information categories (Creswell, 2014).

The research will be conducted in the following phases: 1) Pilot study involving a group of students taking the "Reading for Professional Context" course, with the researcher as the instructor, aiming to gather information about students' reading comprehension abilities. This step is intended to observe the implications of the emergent-theory approach, which involves exploring phenomena or theories based on direct observation (Alwasilah, 2002). 2) Determination of the research sample location. 3) Data collection related to the research problem. 4) Data classification and analysis. 5) Presentation of the analysis results.

### **Sampling Technique**

The sampling technique used in this research is purposive sampling. The selection of this sampling technique is based on the research background, problem statement, and research objectives. This approach aligns with the concept of methodological triangulation within a single method, as advocated by Cohen and Manion (in Alwasilah). Purposive sampling is chosen to ensure the sample's uniqueness or representativeness, promote heterogeneity within the population, examine critical cases, and investigate existing or emerging theories throughout the research process.

In this study, the sample consists of third-semester students from Class A in the academic year 2019/2020 who are enrolled in the "Reading for Professional Context" course. This allows for effective communication, direct monitoring of the learning process, and firsthand observation of students' reading comprehension skills. As stated by Alwasillah (2002), in qualitative research, sampling may apply to individuals as respondents, as well as to the setting of events and processes.

### **Data Collection Techniques**

To ensure the accuracy of data, the researcher will establish specific data collection procedures, including defining the research environment, collecting information through observation and interviews, analyzing documents and visual materials or recordings, and applying treatment. According to Creswell (2014:189), data will be collected through observation, document analysis, recording, and treatment.

1. **Observation:** This technique involves gathering field notes by acting as an observer. The researcher's role leans more towards observation than participation, resulting in more observational notes than participant notes.
2. **Document Analysis:** This includes analyzing the syllabus, handouts provided by the instructor, students' notebooks or assignments, and practice and examination questions.

3. Recording: The researcher will maintain a research journal or diary throughout the study. This journal will record research activities, observational findings, treatment application, participant activities, and their work results.

### **Data Analysis Technique**

Data analysis involves systematically "sifting" through the collected data. This process includes consistent coding of field notes for similar phenomena. Based on the coded notes, data will then be categorized to facilitate comparisons and descriptive findings. The analysis results will be interpreted based on the researcher's experience and aligned with relevant references or theories. The analysis of data in this research will encompass the following steps:

1. Data Collection: As per the research procedures, data collection is the initial step. This includes observations, document analyses, recordings, and the application of treatment. The researcher plays an active role throughout this phase.
2. Data Classification: Once data is collected, it will be classified through coding. Coding will involve consistently assigning codes to field notes to identify data relevant to the research focus. The classified data will be archived for subsequent analysis.
3. Contextualization of Data: The contextualization of data is employed to present data collected through various techniques, examining relationships and connections within a contextual framework. This approach ensures a comprehensive and cohesive understanding of the data (Maxwell in Alwasilah 2002).
4. Data Presentation: Data will be presented in a manner that facilitates

interpretation. The management and organization of data will be represented using matrices, tables, concept maps, and diagrams. This aids in clarifying ideas and the researcher's thought process.

This research is framed by the conceptual theory of the "working with words" model, which is applied in Reading instruction to enhance productive reading comprehension. The research data obtained will be presented in the form of percentages and compared to assess the extent of improvement achieved, addressing the research questions. Subsequently, the numerical data will be descriptively interpreted to provide an overall understanding of the research findings.

### **Data Validity**

To ensure data validity, Lincoln and Guba's (1985) criteria for qualitative research will be applied, including credibility, transferability, dependability, and triangulation.

## **RESULTS AND DISCUSSION**

### **Result**

#### **Description of Vocabulary Proficiency Before Intervention**

In the effort to enhance the vocabulary proficiency of students, it is crucial for researchers to understand the extent of their vocabulary skills before determining the stages of learning strategies. This is essential in designing learning steps that can support the goal of improving students' vocabulary skills. The assessment of students' vocabulary proficiency in this section is based on the analysis of observations, documents, and recordings.

Firstly, we will describe the results of data analysis obtained through observation. The observation in this research follows the guidelines of Creswell (2014) and Alwasillah (2002), which suggest that to obtain data related to research variables, observations are conducted guided by questions that can

provide information about that variable and align with research questions. Since the research variable in this case is vocabulary proficiency and to answer this research question, the researcher formulated questions that can provide information about vocabulary proficiency. The technique used in analyzing the observation results is the percentage. The observation was carried out three times, indicating a very minimal level of vocabulary proficiency. The vocabulary proficiency in the first observation involved three reading texts, both short and illustrated stories, provided to students. They were expected to understand 40 words categorized as difficult words. However, the actual number of words not understood ranged from 16 words in four readings, resulting in an average of only 24 words that were known. To clarify the words not understood by the students, refer to the following data:

1. A truck drives into a petrol station. The driver gets out and speaks to the attendant.
2. A man walks into the petrol station. He looks at the truck.
3. They are soon in the country, and they

see a farmer. Later, the man takes a gun.

4. The driver takes out his knife and throws it at the petrol pipe. The thief cannot make it go again.
5. He takes out his glasses and looks at the notice.
6. Then Ali looks down and sees a wallet.
7. He tries to shout, but the man has gone.
8. Mr. Siagian is very pleased with Ali.
9. He thanks Ali and offers him a job in his office.
10. Two men are sitting in a coffee shop next to the garage.
11. At first, the father does not believe his son, but then he goes to the police.
12. That night the men rob the bank and jump into a taxi.
13. At the police station, the Inspector hears the men over the car radio.

To measure the level of vocabulary proficiency, the researcher used a percentage-based scale of five. The guidelines used are as displayed in the following table.

Table 1. *Percentage-Based Five-Scale Vocabulary Proficiency Rating*

| Percentage Interval for Vocabulary Proficiency Level | Five-Scale Grade | Description  |
|------------------------------------------------------|------------------|--------------|
| 0% - 4%                                              | E                | Failed       |
| 5% - 39%                                             | D                | Insufficient |
| 40% - 59%                                            | C                | Adequate     |
| 60% - 74%                                            | B                | Good         |
| 75% - 100%                                           | A                | Excellent    |

To assess the students' vocabulary proficiency, an objective test consisting of 40 items was administered, with each correct answer given a score of 2, resulting in a total score of 80. The calculation showed that out of 23 students, 5 obtained a score of 58, which means 72% of their answers were correct. Four students scored 56 or 70% correct answers, and 2 students scored 25 or 62% correct answers. This data depicts that

11 students' vocabulary proficiency ranged from 62% to 72%, which is considered "Adequate." Furthermore, 7 students demonstrated vocabulary proficiency ranging from 75% to 80%, earning them a "Good" rating. This group consisted of 3 students with a score of 60 or 75% correct answers, 2 students with a score of 64 or 80% correct answers, and 2 students with a score of 66 or 82% correct answers. Five students

had vocabulary proficiency ranging from 85% to 90%, earning an "Excellent" rating. This group comprised 2 students with a score of 68 or 85% correct answers, 2 students with a score of 70 or 87% correct answers, and 1

student with a score of 72 or 90% correct answers. Referring to the table of percentage-based five-scale grading above, the students' vocabulary proficiency scores are as follows:

Table 2. *Vocabulary Proficiency Scores with Percentage-Based Five-Scale Grading in Observation 1*

| Percentage Interval for Vocabulary Proficiency Level | Five-Scale Grade | Description |
|------------------------------------------------------|------------------|-------------|
| 85% - 90%                                            | A                | Excellent   |
| 75% - 82%                                            | B                | Good        |
| 62% - 72%                                            | C                | Adequate    |

In the second test, four reading texts without illustrations but longer than the illustrated texts were given. Each text contained ten difficult words that students were expected to understand, totaling 40 words. The analysis of the second test data revealed that students understood 20 vocabulary words. The words not understood by students amounted to 20, as seen in the following data:

1. Every day the man speaks new words to the parrot.
2. One day the parrot is not in the cage.
3. There was no one at home. The thief broke open the door and entered the house.
4. In the bedroom, he found a gold watch and some money.
5. The thief quickly put the watch and the money into his bag.
6. Just then, the parrot flew into the room.
7. He saw the thief with the bag in his hand.
8. The parrot flew down and took the bag

from the thief.

9. It was not the thief's watch and money.
10. The parrot said, "This is my master's watch and money."

The percentage-based scale was applied again, and the results indicated that out of 23 students, 5 scored 10 or 25% correct answers, categorizing them as "Failed." Additionally, 2 students scored 20 or 50% correct answers, while 1 student scored 18 or 45% correct answers, both falling under the "Insufficient" category. A total of 15 students obtained scores ranging from 52% to 70%, resulting in an "Adequate" rating. Within this group, 5 students scored 52 or 65% correct answers, 7 students scored 54 or 67.5% correct answers, and 3 students scored 56 or 70% correct answers. Only 2 students scored above 70%, with one scoring 80 or 100% correct answers and the other scoring 78 or 97.5% correct answers. These two students were classified as "Excellent" based on their scores, as shown in Table 3 below.

Table 3. *Vocabulary Proficiency Scores with Percentage-Based Five-Scale Grading in Observation 2*

| Percentage Interval for Vocabulary Proficiency Level | Five-Scale Grade | Description  |
|------------------------------------------------------|------------------|--------------|
| 80% - 100%                                           | A                | Excellent    |
| 52% - 70%                                            | C                | Adequate     |
| 45% - 50%                                            | D                | Insufficient |
| 25%                                                  | E                | Failed       |



In the third observation, the data collected pertained to the students' ability to understand 60 vocabulary words. These words were distributed across six reading texts. The results of the third observation indicated that students understood 40 vocabulary words. The words not understood by the students were as follows:

1. She was afraid to tell her mother.
2. She had a secret.
3. She could speak Spanish.
4. She learned it at school.
5. She often spoke to the parrot in Spanish.
6. She wanted to keep her secret.
7. But one day, her mother heard her speaking Spanish to the parrot.
8. Her mother was very surprised.
9. "Why do you speak Spanish to the parrot?"
10. The mother asked her.
11. "I wanted to keep it a secret," the girl said.

12. "But why?"
13. "I don't know," the girl said. "I just like to speak Spanish."
14. The girl's mother spoke Spanish too.
15. "It is a good secret," she said.

Based on the percentage-based scale, 4 students obtained scores between 15% and 20%, categorizing them as "Failed." Additionally, 3 students scored between 22% and 25%, falling into the "Insufficient" category. The majority of students, 14 in total, scored between 28% and 52%, resulting in an "Adequate" rating. Specifically, 3 students scored 28% or 46.67% correct answers, 7 students scored 30% or 50% correct answers, and 4 students scored 32% or 53.33% correct answers. Only 2 students scored above 52%, with one scoring 54% or 90% correct answers and the other scoring 58% or 96.67% correct answers. These two students were classified as "Excellent," as indicated in Table 4 below:

Table 4. Vocabulary Proficiency Scores with Percentage-Based Five-Scale Grading in Observation 3

| Percentage Interval for Vocabulary Proficiency Level | Five-Scale Grade | Description  |
|------------------------------------------------------|------------------|--------------|
| 90% - 96.67%                                         | A                | Excellent    |
| 53.33% - 53.33%                                      | C                | Adequate     |
| 25% - 28.33%                                         | D                | Insufficient |
| 15% - 20%                                            | E                | Failed       |

In conclusion, the three observations conducted to assess students' vocabulary proficiency indicated varying levels of proficiency. In the first observation, most students achieved an "Adequate" rating, with some reaching a "Good" level. In the second observation, the majority of students fell into the "Adequate" category, while a few were rated as "Insufficient." Finally, in the third observation, students exhibited a wider range of proficiency levels, with some achieving an "Excellent" rating, while others remained in the "Adequate" and "Insufficient" categories. These observations provide valuable insights into students' initial vocabulary skills, which will inform the design of vocabulary

enhancement strategies.

### Description of Vocabulary Proficiency After Treatment

Following the treatment based on the findings and the "Working with Words" strategy, significant improvements were observed in students' vocabulary proficiency. This section will describe the changes in vocabulary proficiency after the treatment, including the assessment methods and results.

The treatment was designed with the aim of enhancing students' knowledge and usage of contextual reading clues. It involved activities focused on learning how to

effectively use contextual reading clues within the context of reading passages. The treatment outline included:

1. Explaining the Importance of Vocabulary Learning through Texts: Emphasizing the benefits of vocabulary acquisition through reading, as it trains the brain to focus on concepts within the text.
2. Highlighting the Role of Vocabulary Clues: Making students aware that by using vocabulary clues, they can gain a comprehensive understanding of challenging words and texts, even if they encounter unfamiliar terms.
3. Reading Clues Strategies: The treatment included strategies such as deduction (identifying the sentence's concern and related words), chunking (understanding the meaning of surrounding words), and vocabulary activation (making logical guesses about word meanings based on context).

In the implementation of this teaching strategy, reading materials were selected based on the complexity of sentence structures and vocabulary. Exercises were designed to measure various aspects of vocabulary learning, including contextual understanding, application, association, and memory. Specifically for vocabulary exercises, each exercise involved learning 500 words.

To track the improvement in students' vocabulary proficiency, a progress chart and a mastery test were used. The progress chart was not solely created by the researcher but was also maintained by individual students. This allowed students to monitor their own progress in vocabulary learning.

After the treatment, it became evident that students made significant progress in their vocabulary proficiency. Observations by the researcher showed that the words learned were easier to remember, students were motivated to complete tasks and

exercises independently, and all students maintained personal records related to both the material and their progress.

The analysis of results indicated that students had become proficient in utilizing their intellectual capacities to understand word meanings and comprehend reading texts as a whole. This made it easier for them to engage with reading materials of varying difficulty levels. The impact of the treatment, as outlined above, on the improvement of vocabulary mastery, was monitored through progress records. By employing a vocabulary test and the "Category Game" strategy, the following results were obtained: 16 students achieved a vocabulary mastery level of 75% to 84%, earning the rating "Good." 7 students achieved a vocabulary mastery level ranging from 60% to 74%, earning the rating "Satisfactory."

Additionally, the treatment using the "Contextual Reading Clues" strategy demonstrated a substantial improvement in students' learning outcomes: 21 students earned the rating "Good" with vocabulary mastery levels ranging from 75% to 84%. 2 students achieved the rating "Excellent" with vocabulary mastery levels of 85% to 100%. The results clearly indicate the positive impact of the treatment in enhancing students' vocabulary proficiency, with a majority of them achieving higher levels of mastery.

## Discussion

As explained in the previous chapters, this section discusses the analysis of data obtained through observations, document analysis, recordings, and treatment (intervention). The discussion of these data analysis results will be presented in detail in this section.

### **Vocabulary Proficiency through Observations**

During the research process, observations were conducted three times. In the first observation, it was found that students'

vocabulary proficiency was reasonably adequate because the reading materials provided were illustrated and contained vocabulary and content categorized at an intermediate level or below. Based on the level of English language knowledge that students should possess, the vocabulary proficiency expected during the first observation should have been "good" or "very good." However, the data analysis results indicated that 47.83% of students were categorized as "fair," 30.43% as "good," and 21.73% as "very good."

Subsequently, the second observation involved more challenging vocabulary questions, which were matched to the cognitive level of 8th-grade students. Surprisingly, the vocabulary proficiency of students appeared to decrease compared to the first observation. The analysis revealed that 56.52% of students were categorized as "below average," and 43.48% as "fair." The third observation showed a further decline in vocabulary proficiency, with 52.17% categorized as "below average" and 47.83% as "fair."

The diagnosis of vocabulary proficiency in this study is based on the theory proposed by Sr. Wahyuni and Abd. Syukur, which involves criterion-referenced assessment (CRA). CRA is performed by comparing the score results with a predetermined standard, which serves as a benchmark for assigning specific grades. In this study, the benchmark for vocabulary proficiency levels set by the researcher, using a five-point scale, was as follows: "excellent" (85%-100%), "good" (75%-84%), "fair" (60%-74%), and "below average" (40%-59%). Observational data analysis in this research led to the conclusion that students' vocabulary proficiency was categorized as "below average."

### **Document Analysis**

Document analysis in this research involved examining students' notes to determine if their notes provided information on their

vocabulary learning progress. According to Alwasilah (2002:155), documents such as student learning notes serve as essential evidence. The results of document analysis indicated that students' notes did not support their vocabulary learning. Thus, it can be concluded that the vocabulary proficiency tested through illustrated reading texts and short texts was categorized as "below average" because students did not maintain comprehensive notes on the learning material.

### **Recording**

The term "recording" in this research refers to the researcher's record book, which contains records of student activities during vocabulary learning and the results of vocabulary tests conducted during observations and treatments. These recorded data focus on aspects related to vocabulary proficiency, aligning with the research questions. The recording results, as mentioned in the data analysis section, served as effective indicators of students' cognitive behaviors and their impact on vocabulary learning outcomes.

### **Treatment with Category Game and Contextual Reading Clues Strategies**

Both the Category Game and Contextual Reading Clues strategies were used to harness and enhance students' cognitive skills, as previously discussed. The analysis revealed significant positive changes in students' cognitive behavior before and after the interventions, directly impacting vocabulary proficiency improvement.

The description of learning outcomes by implementing the Category Game strategy showed a modest increase of 2%. This result is reasonable since students were not accustomed to learning vocabulary through the Category Game, which demands more intellectual engagement than other forms of learning. Nevertheless, an increase in vocabulary proficiency was observed. In the second treatment, employing the Contextual

Reading Clues strategy, students demonstrated the effective use of their cognitive skills. Understanding the meaning of words or sentences was supported by contextual comprehension. The results showed a remarkable 91.30% increase in vocabulary proficiency, representing a 24% expansion in the number of words understood in meaning and usage within sentence contexts, totaling 120 words. In the research planning, the researcher anticipated that students would master vocabulary through several repetitions. Therefore, the achievement of 120 words in this study is rational.

### ***Enhancing Vocabulary Proficiency***

To improve English vocabulary proficiency, students need to be serious in their efforts. This entails discipline in terms of time management, continuity between classroom and home learning, systematic note-taking of vocabulary material, along with progress record keeping. Repetition through practice is necessary for vocabulary retention, and understanding how to use vocabulary within sentences is equally important. All of these goals can be achieved through disciplined learning, following the steps outlined above.

### **CONCLUSION**

In conclusion, this research highlights several key findings. Firstly, students inherently possess the intellectual skills essential for vocabulary acquisition, forming a strong foundation for learning. The application of the "working with words" approach effectively harnesses and enhances these skills. Secondly, the development of intellectual abilities through vocabulary learning not only aids receptive language skills but also fosters productive language capabilities. Thirdly, the comprehension of English vocabulary finds its optimal route through reading, aligning well with the principles of the "working with words" theory, as reading texts require a receptive cognitive approach.

Furthermore, post-intervention, students exhibited significant improvements in vocabulary mastery, underscoring the efficacy of strategies that capitalize on these intellectual faculties. Additionally, the notion that word difficulty corresponds with usage frequency emerged as a noteworthy insight, emphasizing the importance of integrating vocabulary instruction with reading, which naturally exposes students to varying levels of vocabulary complexity.

The strategies employed in this study, such as the Category Game and Contextual Reading Clues, empower students to become independent and motivated learners, an aspect vital for long-term success in language acquisition. The mastery of vocabulary, as revealed in this research, plays a pivotal role in language proficiency, particularly in reading comprehension. However, it's important to note that while the interventions led to a substantial increase in vocabulary, achieving the target of 250 words was limited by time constraints.

To build upon these findings, several recommendations emerge. Firstly, integrating vocabulary instruction with other aspects of English language learning, especially reading, using materials with varying vocabulary levels, would be beneficial. Secondly, educators should consider implementing strategies that develop intellectual skills when teaching receptive language abilities, alongside maintaining progress records to monitor individual student development. Regular vocabulary review exercises, which reinforce retention by incorporating vocabulary into sentences, should also be incorporated into instruction. Lastly, educational institutions and language programs should explore further development of instructional strategies that align with the "working with words" theory. These recommendations collectively aim to enhance vocabulary instruction and language proficiency, thereby improving students' reading comprehension and overall language skills.

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