



Tips and Tricks to Master English Vocabulary at SMPN 3 Lintong Nihuta

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ABSTRACT

Vocabulary is a fundamental component in learning English, especially at the junior high school level. A strong vocabulary foundation supports students' skills in understanding, speaking, writing, and listening to English effectively. However, in reality, many junior high school students struggle to expand and retain the vocabulary they have learned. This community service activity aims to help junior high school students master English vocabulary through an interactive and enjoyable approach. The methods used in this activity include material delivery, educational games, the use of visual media, and direct practice within sentence and conversation contexts. The results of this activity show that students are more enthusiastic about learning, understand strategies that can be applied independently, and demonstrate improvement in actively using vocabulary. It is hoped that this activity can serve as a sustainable effort to enhance English competence among junior high school students.

Keywords: Community Service; Vocabulary; English; Junior High School; Tips And Tricks

INTRODUCTION

English is one of the compulsory subjects taught at the junior high school (SMP) level and is an integral part of the national education curriculum in Indonesia. As an international language, English proficiency is not only important in academic contexts, but is also indispensable in everyday life, global communication, and future workplace competition (Khotimah et al., 2019). Therefore, English language skills are one of the important indicators in measuring the readiness of the younger generation to face the challenges of the globalization era (Yoon, 2020).

One of the fundamental aspects of learning English is the mastery of vocabulary (Bakhtiar & Auladi, 2025). Vocabulary is the main foundation that supports language skills, whether in reading, writing, speaking, or listening (Zahro et al., 2020). Without adequate vocabulary mastery, students will have difficulty understanding the subject matter, expressing ideas, and actively participating in the communication process (Rofi'i, 2023). This emphasizes that mastery of vocabulary is an important prerequisite for achieving overall English competence (Anggrayni et al., 2023; Husein, 2019).

However, the reality on the ground shows that many junior high school students, especially at SMPN 3 Lintong Nihuta, still face various challenges in mastering English vocabulary. Based on the results of observations and discussions with teachers, it is known that most students have difficulty in remembering, understanding, and using vocabulary actively and contextually. This difficulty is often caused by monotonous learning methods, lack of variety of learning media, and lack of motivation for students to learn independently (Na'imah, 2022).

In addition, the limited learning resources and the lack of optimal use of technology in the learning process are also inhibiting factors. Many students still rely on mechanically less effective methods of memorization for long-term retention (Susanto, 2017). On the other hand, teachers also face challenges in designing vocabulary learning

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strategies that are innovative, fun, and in accordance with the characteristics of students in regional schools.

Various studies have shown that the application of interactive and applicative learning methods, such as the use of educational games, digital technology, and project-based learning, can improve students' motivation and learning outcomes, including vocabulary mastery (Alqahtani, 2015). However, the implementation of these methods at SMPN 3 Lintong Nihuta is still very limited, so real efforts are needed to introduce and apply more effective and relevant learning strategies.

Through this community service activity, we intend to make a real contribution to students and teachers at SMPN 3 Lintong Nihuta. This activity is designed in the form of training and assistance regarding effective tips and tricks to master English vocabulary. With a fun, interactive, and applicative approach, it is hoped that students can be more motivated in learning, and be able to use English vocabulary actively and contextually in their daily lives.

We hope that, through this activity, there will not only be an increase in English language skills in students, but also grow their interest and confidence to continue learning independently and sustainably. In addition, this activity is expected to empower teachers in developing creative vocabulary learning strategies, so as to create a conducive and inspiring learning environment at SMPN 3 Lintong Nihuta.

MATERIALS AND METHODS

Preparation Stage

This community service activity is designed to help junior high school students understand and master English vocabulary effectively through an interactive, enjoyable, and practical approach. The stages and methods used are as follows:

1. Coordination with the partner school regarding the time and venue of the activity.
2. Preparation of vocabulary learning materials tailored to the students' proficiency level.
3. Preparation of learning media such as flashcards, worksheets, teaching aids, and educational games.
4. Development of pre-test and post-test evaluations to measure the effectiveness of the program.

Implementation Stage

The main activities are conducted in the form of workshops or interactive classes divided into several sessions:

Session 1: Vocabulary Introduction and Memorization Strategies

1. Explanation of the importance of vocabulary in English.
2. Introduction to vocabulary memorization techniques such as image association, mnemonic methods, and thematic word grouping.

Session 2: Interactive Media and Activities

1. Use of songs, short videos, and simple applications to introduce vocabulary.
2. Educational games such as vocabulary bingo, word match, and crossword puzzles.

Session 3: Contextual Practice

1. Students are asked to create sentences or short dialogues using the vocabulary they have learned.
2. Pair or group activities for speaking and writing practice.

Session 4: Evaluation and Reflection

1. Administration of a post-test to measure vocabulary mastery improvement.

2. Student discussion and reflection on their learning experiences.

Follow-Up

1. Providing self-learning modules or vocabulary guides.
2. Offering a list of free online learning resources accessible to students.
3. Establishing ongoing communication with teachers to monitor students' progress.

Vocabulary is a collection of words used in a language. The more vocabulary you master, the easier it is to read, write, speak, and understand English.

Vocabulary Introduction and Memorization Strategies

1. **Objective:** To introduce new vocabulary and effective ways to memorize it.
2. **Material:**
 - a. The importance of vocabulary in English.
 - b. Thematic vocabulary: "*Daily Activities*"

Table 1. Vocabulary for Everyday Activities

Bahasa Inggris
Wake up
Brush teeth
Go to school
Do homework
Go to sleep

3. **Memorization Strategy:**
 - a. **Picture Association:** Show pictures of activities and ask students to say the English words.
 - b. **Mnemonic Technique:** For example: "BBGS" (Wake up, Go to school, Brush teeth, School).
 - c. **Flashcards:** One side shows the English word, the other side shows a picture or its meaning.
 - d. **5-5-5 Method:** Learn 5 words per day, repeat 5 times, review for 5 minutes before bedtime.

Interactive Media and Activities

1. **Media Used:**
 - a. Pictures/photos of daily activities (e.g., wake up, brush teeth, eat, etc.)
 - b. Flashcards and worksheets
 - c. Simple audio: English children's songs about daily routines
 - d. Short videos (1–2 minutes) showing daily activities in English
2. **Interactive Activities:**
 - a. **Vocabulary Bingo**
Students receive cards with vocabulary words. The teacher reads out the meanings, and students match and cross out the correct words.
 - b. **Matching Game**
Students match English words with pictures or their meanings.
 - c. **Simon Says (Action Vocabulary)**
Example: "Simon says... brush your teeth!" → students perform the action.
 - d. **Pair Guessing Game**
One student describes a vocabulary word without saying it, and their partner guesses the word.

Contextual Practice

1. **Objective:** To use vocabulary in sentences or conversations so that students understand how to apply them in context.

2. Activities:

a. Creating Simple Sentences

Students are asked to make sentences using the vocabulary they have learned. Examples: "I wake up at six o'clock." ; "I go to school by bicycle."

b. Short Conversations

Students pair up and create short dialogues using 3–5 vocabulary words learned. Example:

A: "What time do you wake up?"

B: "I wake up at 6 a.m."

A: "Do you brush your teeth?"

B: "Yes, I do."

c. Fill-in-the-Blanks Story Sheet

Students fill in the blanks with the appropriate vocabulary. Example: "Every day, I ___ at 6 a.m. I ___ my teeth and ___ to school."

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

Implementation of Activities

This community service activity was carried out at SMPN 3 Lintong Nihuta by involving 30 students in grades VII and VIII as the main participants. The entire series of activities lasted for one day, with a total duration of about four hours. The activities were divided into four main sessions, namely: material delivery, interactive activities, contextual exercises, and evaluation. Each session is designed to allow students to be actively engaged and have a fun and applicative learning experience.

Session 1: *Delivery of Vocabulary Memorization Material and Strategies*

In the initial session, students are introduced to the importance of mastering vocabulary in English. The material provided includes vocabulary with the theme "Daily Activities", such as wake up, brush teeth, go to school, do homework, and go to sleep. In addition, students are also introduced to various vocabulary memorization strategies, including image associations, grouping words by theme, the use of simple mnemonic, and the 5-5-5 method (learning 5 words per day, repeating 5 times, and reviewing 5 minutes before bed). This strategy aims to make it easier for students to remember and understand new vocabulary.

Session 2: *Media and Interactive Activities*

The second session focused on the use of varied learning media, such as flashcards, pictures, children's song audio, and short videos about daily routines. Various interactive activities were also carried out, including vocabulary bingo, matching games, Simon Says, and guess words in pairs. Through this educational game, students seem more enthusiastic and the classroom atmosphere becomes more lively. They not only memorize, but also practice recognizing and using vocabulary in fun situations.

Session 3: *Contextual Training*

In contextual practice sessions, students are encouraged to use the vocabulary they have learned into simple sentences and short conversations. For example, students make sentences like "I wake up at six o'clock" or "I go to school by bicycle." In addition, they also practiced making paired dialogues using new vocabulary, as well as filling in the blanks that had been prepared by the facilitator. This exercise aims to ensure students understand the use of vocabulary in contexts relevant to everyday life.

Session 4: Evaluation and Reflection

To measure the effectiveness of the activity, pre-tests and post-tests related to vocabulary mastery were carried out. The results of the evaluation showed an increase in the average score of students' vocabulary mastery by [insert percentage or grade if available]. In addition, reflection sessions were conducted to explore students' learning experiences. Most students said that they felt more confident and motivated to learn English vocabulary after participating in this activity.

Achievements and Impact of Activities

Based on the implementation and evaluation results, this activity has several positive impacts, including:

1. Increased Participation and Enthusiasm

Students show active participation and high enthusiasm, especially when participating in educational games and group activities. The learning atmosphere becomes more fun and not monotonous.

2. Understanding Vocabulary Memorization Strategies

Students are able to understand and practice various vocabulary memorization strategies, such as image associations, mnemonics, and word groupings. They also actively ask questions and discuss difficult vocabulary.

3. Improvement of Evaluation Score

There was an increase in the average score of vocabulary mastery based on the results of the pre-test and post-test, which indicates that the learning methods applied are effective in helping students understand and remember new vocabulary.

4. Ability to Use Vocabulary in Sentences

In contextual practice sessions, most students are able to create simple sentences and short dialogues using the vocabulary they have learned. This shows that students not only memorize, but also begin to understand the context of their use.

Follow-up

As a form of sustainability, students are given independent learning modules as well as a list of online learning resources that can be accessed for free. In addition, the service team also establishes communication with teachers to monitor student development and provide assistance if needed. Teachers are encouraged to continue to develop creative and adaptive vocabulary learning strategies according to students' needs.



Figure 1. Material Delivery Activities, Interactive Activities, Contextual Exercises and Evaluation

This community service activity has proven to be effective in improving the mastery of English vocabulary of SMPN 3 Lintong Nihuta students through an interactive, fun, and applicative approach. In addition to improving students' knowledge and skills, this activity also fosters interest in independent learning and strengthens the role of teachers in English learning innovations in schools.



Figure 2. Students of Grades VII and VIII of SMPN 3 Lintong Nihuta

DISCUSSION

Based on the results of the activity, it can be concluded that the application of an interactive and fun English vocabulary learning method has a positive impact on increasing students' interest and ability to learn English. The use of educational games-based approaches, visual media, and group activities has been proven to be able to create a more lively and participatory learning atmosphere. This is in line with the findings Alqahtani (2015) which states that interactive activity-based learning can improve students' motivation and learning outcomes, especially in vocabulary mastery.

In addition, the integration between memorization techniques, such as image and mnemonic associations, with hands-on practice through sentence creation and dialogue, provides a deeper understanding and helps students remember vocabulary over a longer period of time. Students also show increased confidence to speak and write in English, as well as be more courageous to actively participate in class discussions. This practice supports the results of the research Devi et al (2024) which emphasizes the importance of contextual exercises in vocabulary learning.

However, the implementation of activities also faces several obstacles, including limited implementation time and variations in the level of students' abilities that are quite diverse. This difference causes some students to take longer to understand the material, while others can follow along more quickly. Therefore, for future implementation, it is recommended that activities be designed more structured based on the level of students' ability, and equipped with follow-up in the form of regular assistance or further learning. Thus, each student can get optimal benefits according to his or her needs and learning development.

CONCLUSIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

Community service activities carried out at SMPN 3 Lintong Nihuta have succeeded in showing that an interactive, fun, and contextual approach to learning English vocabulary can increase students' motivation and ability to master basic vocabulary. Through various strategies such as image

associations, mnemonic, the use of digital media, as well as educational activities such as games and contextual dialogues, students more easily understand and remember the vocabulary learned.

The active involvement of students in each activity session encourages the creation of a positive, communicative, and applicative learning atmosphere. The results of the evaluation showed an increase in students' participation and understanding of the vocabulary taught, which is expected to contribute to their general English language skills. In addition, this activity also has a positive impact on teachers in enriching learning methods that can be applied in the classroom.

Thus, this activity not only provides solutions to the challenges of learning vocabulary at SMPN 3 Lintong Nihuta, but also becomes a model approach that can be replicated in other schools, especially in areas with limited access and learning resources. It is hoped that the sustainability of this program can be carried out through monitoring, the provision of advanced modules, and continuous collaboration between the school and the service team.

Conflict of Interests

The authors declared that no potential conflicts of interest with respect to the authorship and publication of this article.

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