

VOCABULARY JOURNAL AS A LEARNING TOOL FOR STUDENTS IN LEARNING VOCABULARY THROUGH READING AT JUNIOR HIGH SCHOOL

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Abstrak

Vocabulary (*kosakata*) is the core component of all aspects of language competences. Someone's vocabulary greatly affects the ability in learning language primarily for reading. Indonesian students who study English as a foreign language, especially junior high school students, have difficulty in reading English text. This is because their lack of mastery and knowledge of vocabulary and words that are not familiar so reading comprehension does not achieve. When students find difficult words in reading, they tend to ask the teacher or open dictionary directly. Thus, the level of students' understanding of the word is merely understand the interpretation not understand the meaning of words. Therefore, the author proposes a vocabulary learning strategies that students can use while reading, namely, Vocabulary Journal. This vocabulary journal is used by the students during reading, when they find words that are considered as difficult or unfamiliar. Those words are recorded into the journal so that students can remember and explore the word, by writing some of components associated with the word. The components are the meaning (*makna kata*), part of speech (*kategori kata*), a sentence, synonym or antonym, and a picture. By writing and understanding these components, students can understand the words and the text they read well. So the message or idea of the text can be achieved. Furthermore, by using this journal, students are expected become more self-sufficient in achieving the learning objectives.

Keywords: Vocabulary, Vocabulary Journal, Reading

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A. Introduction

As English language learners, junior high school students need to master four language skills. The skills are listening, speaking, reading and writing. These language skills are integrated one to another in teaching and learning process. As a matter of fact, there is one component which has great influence on the skills that is called vocabulary. Vocabulary is the base component that students need to master in order to be able in those language skills. However, vocabulary is not specially taught in teaching English in the classroom. Consequently, students lack of knowledge about words and it impacts their language skills.

Compared with three other skills, reading is a basic skill which is useful for language acquisition. In addition, reading will let the students deal with many texts and words. That is to say that reading will allow students facing words and gaining them will be good for their language competence. However, students often find *unknown* words in reading. It is because the language or vocabulary they encounter in the English text is often completely new to them. As a result, they tend to look up the word in the dictionary or ask the teacher directly rather than to find the meaning by themselves. Besides, students often look up a word in their dictionary and select the first entry, without considering the context related to the unknown word they read (Smith, 2004). Therefore, students need strategies to help them understand vocabulary through reading.

Therefore, related to the problem above, which students lack vocabulary knowledge in reading, the writer suggests one of the learning strategies that involves note taking format in recording words and promotes learners' autonomy. The learning strategy is using vocabulary journal. Research on vocabulary was conducted by Hariadi and Amir in 2014.

The learning strategy by using vocabulary journal is not a single learning strategy because it can be combined with other strategies. It means that teacher can offer the students variations of learning strategy. For instance, Bone (2000) integrates the strategy with "Making Connections" and "Concept Ladder" in shared reading. Thus, this journal is flexible to be used. Moreover, it enhances students' long-term memory in remembering words (Centenario, 2013:4). The implementation requires a journal to collect difficult/unknown vocabulary that students find while they are reading. In addition, this journal is used to explore the words' meaning, make connections between the new words and their own experiences and ideas, so that students produce rich definitions about the word. Furthermore, it will help students to remember the words if they find it in other texts. By using this strategy, the students are expected not only to know the translation of the word but also know the meaning and how to put the word to the context. (O'Callaghan & Antonacci, 2012:110).

B. Literature Review

1. Vocabulary Learning Strategy

Vocabulary learning strategies have become part of language learning strategies which is purposed to encourage self-direction for learners (Ghazal, 2007:84). Self-direction concept is similar with learner autonomy which has a goal to assist students to become independent learners and have their own

responsibility in the learning process. Gu and Johnson (1996) in Ghazal (2007:85) differentiate vocabulary learning strategies into 4 groups. There are metacognitive, cognitive, memory and activation strategies.

First, the metacognitive strategy is divided into two kinds of process; selective attention and self-initiation. The selective attention involves a process of indicating the important word in a text for comprehension. In other words, this process concerns about recognizing the key words from a text. Then, the self-initiation is a process of creating a clear meaning by using many ways. To clarify, the one who uses this strategy will attempt to get a well-meaning with many methods.

Second, the cognitive strategy is a strategy which implicates guessing process, using dictionaries well and records the information. Third, memory strategy splits into two kind activities; rehearsal (making word lists and doing repetition) and encoding (associating image, visual, audio, etc.). Last, activation strategy is a way of learning by using new words in a different context.

Schmitt (1997) in Ghazal (2007:86) proposes that learners employ many strategies to facilitate their vocabulary learning. He differentiates vocabulary learning strategies into 4 groups of strategies. The strategies are social, memory, cognitive and metacognitive. The first strategy, the social strategies involves social activities such as asking for others' help to know about the meaning. For instance, asking to the teacher or to other friends. The second one is memory strategies which rely on relating or associating word knowledge. It means that learners will depend on their memory in relating the new words with the previous one which has already learned. Third, the cognitive strategy which is alike to memory strategy since the activities is making word lists, flash card, and vocabulary notebook to learn vocabulary. Then, metacognitive strategy is a strategy which allows students to take control and assess their own learning strategy.

The taxonomies discussed above are considered valuable for teachers. Thus, teacher can pick one strategy or combine some strategies to suit the students need. Otherwise, the teacher needs to consider about students' preference in deciding which strategy they want to use. In line with the purpose of vocabulary learning strategy, the teacher also needs to tell the students that they should practice in gaining their own confidence and proficiency in learning. For this purpose, make a belief that the learning strategy is merely for the students' sake so they have to be more active in learning.

After all, the role of vocabulary learning strategies is to facilitate students to be an independent learner in learning vocabulary because vocabulary cannot be taught directly by the teacher but gained by the students themselves. One of the strategies that is suggested is cognitive strategies which can be implemented by using vocabulary journal.

2. Vocabulary Journal

a. The Concept of Vocabulary Journal

Vocabulary journal is one of the ways to facilitate vocabulary learning strategy. This journal is a kind of tool which is used by the students in learning

vocabulary. Vocabulary journal is considered beneficial in exploring the meaning of words that students encounter while reading (O'Callaghan, 2012:110). It is a tool for learning new vocabulary that uses note taking format for a word in context, a definition in one's own words, and a picture. This journal can also be a personal dictionary in creating their own reference system to suit their needs. This strategy allowed students to learn independently by creating their own journal. (Centenario, 2013:5)

b. The Components Include into the Journal

There are five components that students need to write in order to use the vocabulary journal. These components will be written in a template to complete the information about the difficult word. The components are:

1. The target words.

The target word is the word which is chosen by the students themselves, can be a difficult, unknown, or unfamiliar word. Then, students complete the word by writing the information related to the word including its part of speech, origin and stress marks.

For example: *For.eign (adjective)*

2. The meaning of the target word based on students' understanding.

Students may find the meaning of the target word by using context clues. Therefore, the teacher needs to guide the students how to find the meaning of the word by paying attention to the context. There are some types of context clues that help the students. For example, students can notice the explanation or the example related to the unfamiliar word.

For example: Speaking of **foreign** languages, do you speak French?

Context clues: french.

Definition of foreign: sesuatu yang berhubungan dengan negara lain.

(Taken from <http://www.dictionary.com/browse/foreign>)

3. The example of a sentence which including the target word.

Writing a sentence using the target word should be done to improve their comprehension of the word. It is suggested for the students to write a sentence which is related to their own experience. The sentence can be in their native language or in English. Otherwise, the students may get a help from the teacher to rewrite the sentence in English.

For example: Australia adalah negara asing.

(Australia is a foreign country.)

4. The synonym or the antonym of the word.

The synonym is a word which has a similar meaning. Then, the antonym is a word which has opposite meaning.

For example: synonym of foreign: *overseas*.

5. A picture

Students can draw a picture which describing the target word. It will help students easy to remember. It is suggested to draw by illustrating

their experience about the word. Students can draw by them self or put a picture.

Those components are used to help the students understand the target word that they write in their journal. The students write the target word, the definition, the sentence, the synonym or the antonym and the picture to describe and make a relation between the information and their comprehension about the difficult word itself.

c. The Template of the Journal

There are so many models of the template in using the vocabulary journal. The picture below is one of the templates that will be used in the discussion. The teacher will introduce the template and it also will be used by the students when they want to create their own vocabulary journal.

The image shows a template for a vocabulary journal page, consisting of two identical sections stacked vertically. Each section is enclosed in a purple border with a yellow inner border. The sections are as follows:

Word: _____	Date: _____
Meaning: _____ _____	
Sentence: _____ _____	
Synonyms: _____	Picture: _____ _____
Antonyms: _____	

The second section is identical to the first.

In conclusion, vocabulary journal is one of the ways of vocabulary learning strategy that is used note taking format. The journal use a format of the template that will be used as a place for recording some information related to the target word. The target word can be the unknown word, unfamiliar word or difficult word. So, the students need to record the components above includes the target word, the part of speech, the sentence, the synonym or the antonym and a picture in using the vocabulary journal.

C. Discussion

1. Preparation for using vocabulary journal

For using the journal, there are some preparations that teacher needs to prepare. First, teacher needs to prepare a vocabulary journal for modelling. This vocabulary journal is made by the teacher to provide a real media for introducing. Second, students need to create their own vocabulary journal so they need to prepare some stuff such as suitable notebook (loose-leaf binder), coloured pens, highlighters and a good dictionary. The use of the loose-leaf binder is aimed to make the journal easily to organize. Then, students can use coloured pens to make the journal attractively. Moreover, the highlighters will be used for highlighting the target word and a good dictionary is very important since it will be used to explore the meaning of the word.

2. The Vocabulary Journal in Classroom

Vocabulary journal will be used by the students in the classroom while reading. So, in order to make the students accustomed to use it, the teacher needs to introduce this vocabulary journal as a tool to learn vocabulary. There are three stages that the teacher can do in promoting this journal to the students. The first stage is the activities before the students read their text and use their vocabulary journal. The second stage is the activities that can be done by the students while they are reading a text. Then, the last stage is the post-reading activities.

a. Pre-Reading Activities (Introducing the vocabulary journal)

This stage is when the teacher introduces the vocabulary journal to the students. So, the activities are:

1. The teacher introduces the vocabulary journal

Before the reading section is begun, the teacher needs to introduce the vocabulary journal to the students. First of all, the teacher explains the purpose of the journal. The purpose is to help students in dealing with difficult words that they may find in the text. The students will use the journal to record some words that are considered as difficult, unfamiliar or unknown so that they will be able to comprehend the text well. Then, the teacher shows the example of vocabulary journal which has made for modelling. This vocabulary journal is made by the teacher to provide a better introduction.

2. The teacher shows how to use the journal.

The teacher presents the template of vocabulary journal to explain each component of the page. For this purpose, the teacher can draw it on the whiteboard.

b. Whilst-Reading Activities (Read a text and using the Vocabulary Journal)

In this stage, there are some activities that can be done by the teacher and the students in the classroom. For example:

1. After the teacher modelling the use of the journal, the teacher may assign students to read a text to see how they will use the journal in reading. The example of the text is:

Mr. Ardi is a veterinarian. He runs a small clinic in his house. He also works for a zoo. As a veterinarian, he is responsible for animals' health. He checks animals' health at the zoo every day. He treats animals as well as he treats people. (Taken from *Buku Pegangan Guru untuk SMP/MTs kelas VII page 78*)

2. While reading the text, the teacher should guide the students to choose which word that need to be put in the journal. The words are considered as unfamiliar, unknown/difficult for them. According to the students' point of view, there are 3 difficult words which need to be recorded. The words are:

1. Veterinarian
2. Responsible
3. Treats

These words will be recorded into students' journal. Therefore, the teacher needs to assist the students in recording the word including how to find it in dictionary and the information that they need to put into their vocabulary journal.

The first word, *veterinarian*, is found in the text in the first sentence. This word is a noun, which has meaning a specialist doctor to take care of animals. This definition is defined based on the context clues from the text. The context clues is the word *veterinarian*; it is a kind of job which responsible for animal's health. The students need to write a sentence using this word in their native language and English. Also, the students need to find the synonym or the antonym of the word. Moreover, the students can put a picture to describe the word *veterinarian*.

The second word, *responsible*, is an adjective which has meaning doing the assignment well. This definition can be described from the context clues in the text. The clue is the sentence "...check animal's health every day". So, the definition is based on the students' understanding which is written in their native language and English. The students can write a sentence using the target word, both in their native language and English. Next, the students need to write the synonyms and the antonym of the target word. Also, add a picture to describe the target word.

The third word, *treat*, is a verb which is defined as the way we act toward something. This definition is based on the context clue in the text. There is a phrase in the text "...as well as..." which support the definition for the word *treat*. Then, the students need to write a sentence using the target word in their native language and in English. Also, the students add the synonym and the antonym of the word and describe the target word in a picture.

All these information will be put in the students' journal. So, the journal will be looked like as the pictures below.

Figure 1. The first word

Word: <u>Veterinarian</u> (Noun)	Date: <u>25/1/17</u>
meaning: <u>Clues: responsible for animals' health</u>	
Definition: Native Language: dokter khusus untuk merawat hewan English: a specialist doctor to take care of animals.	
Sentence: <u>Native Language:</u> Adik saya ingin menjadi dokter hewan.	
English: <i>My brother wants to be a <u>veterinarian</u>.</i>	
Synonyms: <u>Physician of veterinary</u>	Picture: 
Antonyms: <u></u>	

Figure 2. The second word


word:	Responsible (Adj)	Date:	25/1/17
meaning:	Clues: check animals' health every day		
Definition:	Native Language: melakukan tugas dengan baik. English: do the assignment well.		
Sentence:	Native Language: Bertanggung jawab adalah sifat terpuji.		
	English: <i>Being <u>responsible</u> is a good deed.</i>		
Synonyms:	Picture:		
In charge			
antonyms:			
Irresponsible			

Figure 3. The third word

Word:	Treat (Verb)	Date:	25/1/17
meaning:	Clues: ... as well as...		
Definition:	Native Language: cara bersikap terhadap sesuatu. English: the way we act toward something.		
Sentence:	Native Language: Kita harus memperlakukan orang tua dengan baik.		
	English: We must <u>treat</u> our parents well.		
Synonyms:	Act, Behave		
Antonyms:	Ignore		
	Picture: 		

c. after recording the target word into the journal, the teacher need to discuss the text with the students related to the use of the journal. The discussion will help students to understand the text they read since the students have explored the meaning of difficult words. Further, students can do the activity or use the journal independently. It is suggested for the teacher to check the students' journal in writing the information related to the word they choose. This review will let the teacher know about the students' problem and progress.

c. Post-Reading Activities

In this Post-Reading Activities, there will be no activities that the students need to do in the classroom. Otherwise, teacher may ask the students to read other texts as homework and use the journal as their learning tool at home.

3. The Advantages of Vocabulary Journal

Using vocabulary journal for junior high school students has some advantages during its implementation. The first advantages that students gain by using the journal are it helps them to add their vocabulary knowledge. The process of recording word meaning and its synonym/antonym, writing the sentence by using the word and drawing a picture, give a great contribution to students' vocabulary knowledge. Moreover, the information will help them to remember the word.

Second, it acquires learners' language autonomy because students have their own tool and strategy in learning and as reference system besides using a dictionary. Moreover, if they forget to bring their dictionary, their journal will help them. Thus, it will impact on their confidence and independence of learning process.

Third, the journal will become their personal dictionary since it records vocabulary based on students' preference. In fact, students will have their own vocabulary list. Since the students accustomed to write a sentence by using the word in their vocabulary journal, they can create more sentences which are useful for their writing skill. Thus, the vocabulary list can be used not only for reading but also useful for their writing.

Fourth, the journal is able to use outside the classroom. Learning process not only happens inside the classroom but also when students are at home while doing their homework or their independent reading. Their vocabulary journal will help them dealing with some words they may find during reading magazine, novel, or other written media in English. To sum up, using vocabulary journal has many profits in increasing students' vocabulary knowledge because it leads students' to explore the word and its relation by them self.

D. Conclusion & Suggestion

1. Conclusion

Vocabulary journal is a tool which helps students dealing with difficult/unknown words in reading. The purpose of this journal is to lead the students to become autonomous/independent learners in learning vocabulary since the vocabulary cannot be taught but gained. Using this journal, students can improve their vocabulary knowledge by doing some process of recording words. To explain, the process of recording words provide them rich definitions about words includes the translation, the definition, the part of speech, the synonym/the antonym, and how the word gets along in a sentence. The use of the journal also allows students to draw a picture as visualization to make it more attractive and easy to remember. Definitely, using this journal gives some advantages in gaining students confidence in learning and developing students' lexical competence. Then, it helps students to have their own learning strategy in learning vocabulary. Second, it assists students in becoming autonomous learners. Third, the students have their own vocabulary list or personal dictionary. Last, the journal is able to use outside the classroom.

2. Suggestion

Due to the discussion of this paper, there are some suggestions that writer needs to deliver, both for the teacher and education researcher. Firstly, since the writer uses one of model templates, teacher can design other models to add the model collection of vocabulary journal. Furthermore, in encouraging for students, the teacher needs to create their own vocabulary journal so that the students take the teacher as a model of real using. While the writer applies the use of the vocabulary journal in the second semester, it would be better if teacher introduces and suggest the students to use this vocabulary journal since the first semester. Then, it is suggested for the teacher to provide the students a digital form of vocabulary journal so the students can possess a journal which is long-lasting and resistant. Moreover, this paper has discussed the use of vocabulary journal in junior high school based on library research. It is suggested for education researcher to establish a field research about the use of vocabulary journal in junior high school. It is aimed to get a valid result about how the vocabulary journal can improve students' lexical competence and their vocabulary knowledge.

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