

## VOCABULARY JOURNAL STRATEGY: ONE WAY TO HELP STUDENTS' VOCABULARY

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**Abstract:** the discussion of this article aims to the use of vocabulary journal strategy in teaching vocabulary for the students of junior high school. The topic discussion will cover the general concept of learning vocabulary, principle of teaching vocabulary, teaching vocabulary in junior high school, and teaching vocabulary using vocabulary journal. Basically vocabulary journal is a strategy to invite students for strengthen their word knowledge and internalize meaning for use throughout their lives. It is a great strategy to help students' vocabulary as naturally. Furthermore, some experts suggest that vocabulary journal can be applied in high school levels with different treatment depend on students' needs and their English proficiency.

**Keywords:** Vocabulary journal strategy, students' vocabulary

### **Introduction**

Language as a means of communication is very useful and flexible. It can serve the human needs in their communication in any situation through the language we can express almost everything such as thoughts, actions, ideas, emotion, etc. According to (Boey, 1972) cited in Nurwati (2009) says that Language has various features; one feature we notice that language is system. Another feature is that every language has a dual structure. This means that in all human languages, there are two levels of structure of systematic relationships. In other words, each language is a system consisting of two subsystems. One is the subsystem of meaningful units and the other is the subsystem of sounds, which do not have any meaning.

The integration of teaching vocabulary to the four skills of the language is aimed to help the students to master the four skills of the language. Even though, the teaching of vocabulary is integrated to the four skills of the language, but the teaching of vocabulary can be separated in its presenting as long as it has a relationship with the theme and the sub theme that the students should be learned. The learning of English vocabulary as a foreign language needs teachers' capability in determining on what kind of teaching should be used and what suitable with the media which should be used in presenting the new vocabulary. Improving vocabulary towards something we study, for instance, is closely connected with the statement expressed by Tarigan (1986: 23) as cited in Rahmiyanti (2009) says that "Pengembangan kosa kata telah dikategorikan menjadi: (1) pengajaran, (2) petunjuk konteks, (3) synonym, antonym, homonym,

asal usul kata, prefix, suffix, akar kata, ucapan, ejaan, semantik, majas, sastra, dan pengembangan kosa kata, penggunaan kamus, dan permainan kata”.

Teaching English to students at junior high school is continue for presenting vocabulary since they meet English for the first time in elementary school. The students are introduced with simple things around them, which are familiar to them. Meanwhile, the curriculum of elementary schools also contains a number of vocabularies to learn beside expressions and simple sentences about things around the children, family, school, geography, and their communication to the environment. In Indonesia, there are some English teachers who still use conventional method to teach vocabulary. Conventional method is an approach which offers an insight of grammatical rules when the process of translating from the second to the native language is done. This method is popular because students could demonstrate that they understand the grammatical construction underlying a specific sentence by it. Teacher just helps the students to translate the written text in mother tongue or gave the students long list of words with their equivalence in the students native language and asked them to memorize it. Students who are not able to translate the words correctly are blamed on being neither intelligent nor lazy or both. This approach is still implemented because many people believe that learning a foreign language means learning to translate sentences from the mother tongue into the target language.

### **Topic Of Discussion**

Vocabulary journal is a strategy to invite students for strengthen their word knowledge and internalize meaning for use throughout their lives. It is a great strategy to help students' vocabulary as naturally. Vocabulary journal can be applied in high school levels with different treatment depend on students' needs. The discussion would mostly about the use of vocabulary journal strategy in teaching vocabulary for the students of junior high school. The topic discussion will cover the general concept of learning vocabulary, principle of teaching vocabulary, teaching vocabulary in junior high school, and teaching vocabulary using vocabulary journal.

### ***Explanation of Vocabulary***

As the writer was explained previously that mastering vocabulary is important for learners since vocabulary knowledge, as one of the basic components plays an important role among the four language skills. It gives contribution to learners to perform their skills better. It is impossible for the students to perform their English appropriately, if their vocabulary is very poor. In short, by having too limited vocabulary, the students find it difficult to master language skills, since a good store of words is crucial for understanding and communicating. According to Igharia (1991) says that Vocabulary is needed for expressing meaning and in using the receptive (listening and reading) and the productive (speaking and writing) skills. “If language structures make up the skeleton of language, then it is vocabulary that provides the vital organs and the flesh. Moreover vocabulary is the knowledge of words and word meanings “all

list of words with their meanings especially in a book for a learning foreign language". Oxford University Press, (2003) assisted that through vocabulary knowledge the students do not only get the meaning of words but they can use the words in their daily life communication. Diamond and Guthlon (2006) maintained an explanation that vocabulary knowledge is not something that can ever be fully mastered; it is something that expands and deepens over the course of a lifetime. Word knowledge comes in two forms, receptive and productive. Receptive vocabulary includes words that we recognize when we hear or see them, whereas productive vocabulary includes words that we use when we speak or write. Kamil and Hiebert (2005) asserted that "receptive vocabulary is typically larger than productive vocabulary, and may include many words to which we assign some meaning even we do not know their full meaning and connotations or ever use them by ourselves as we speak and write".

### ***The Importance of Teaching and Learning Vocabulary.***

Vocabulary is the main core component of language proficiency and provide much of the basis for how learners speak, listen, read and write. If the students want to be success in learning English language skill, must have a large of vocabulary. If they have it they can express their idea, they can write in their own words, they can hear other people speak easily and they can be a good reader. According to Stafford, "benefit of good vocabulary are communicate more effectively, improves self-confidence and self-esteem, adds sophistication to speech, better job offers and improves people's perception."

From the statement above, it has been said that if the students have good vocabulary, automatically they can master both term of vocabulary expressive and receptive. Even more than that, they can enhance their self and Vocabulary is important because it allows you to communicate clearly with other people. A larger vocabulary lets you speak with greater precision than a person who has a small vocabulary.

### ***The Purpose of Teaching and Learning Vocabulary.***

The purpose of teaching and learning vocabulary is to assist students developing vocabulary knowledge. Words are one of the element in a text and lesson that comprise the learning experiences of the learners. Moreover, a student's ability to understand words and their meanings is essential in all content areas as curriculum increase in difficulty, so to do the words that make up that curriculum. At very basic level, vocabularies underlie a student's ability to understand what has being thought. Well-developed vocabulary is an essential component success in reading. As a teacher we recognize that reading becomes a great challenge for students who lack adequate word knowledge. Indeed, a research identifies that, "for adequate reading comprehension from grade junior high school, students require both fluent word recognition skills and an average or above-average vocabulary" Biemiller, (2005). Moreover, teaching vocabulary is useful to increase student's vocabulary knowledge and the teacher has important

role to use the exact strategy in teaching vocabulary. If students have large vocabulary knowledge, it can be easily for them to recognize the words when they read, write, listen, and speak.

### ***Teaching Vocabulary through Reading.***

There are many definition of reading comprehension. First that reading is a complex process in which recognition and comprehension of written symbol are influenced by reader's perceptual skill, decoding skill, experience, language background, mind set and reasoning abilities as they anticipate Harris and Sipay in Hafisah (2009). Kustaryo (1988) states that reading comprehension understands what we have been read. It is an active thinking process that depends not only on comprehension skill, but also the students experience and priories knowledge comprehension involves understanding the vocabulary, being the relationship among words and concept, organizing author's purposes, making judgments, and evaluating. Reading is an important source to increase knowledge. It is a reason why teachers are interest and little sensitive in order to teach vocabulary. Pikulsi and Templeton (2004) add more that "one reason teacher are concerned about teaching vocabulary is to facilitate the comprehension of a text that students will be assign to read " so it is important role for the teacher to building up both of them. Therefore the writer can argue that without large vocabulary from the learner, it can be difficult for the learner to understand the purpose a reading passage

### ***Mastering English Vocabulary***

As stated before, vocabulary plays a very important role in developing our language skills (listening, speaking, reading, and writing). Mastery of English vocabulary means that a certain number of English vocabulary that should be mastered by the students. The number of English vocabulary is very important for them, ability in language skill. Carthy and O'Dell (2001) as cited by Wa Ode Almiani (2005, p:11) state that to speak or to write English in normal situations we need at least 1- 2.000 words. Furthermore, Tarigan (1989: 23) as quoted by Wa Ode Almiani (2005) stated that in effort to increase the quality and quantity of vocabulary, the students also increase their life, attitude, develop their conceptual, and knowledge. Therefore, teachers should use a good technique and strategy to increase the students' English vocabulary in the teaching and learning process.

### ***Teaching English in Junior High School.***

Curriculum as one of the educational substantial needs to be a fundamental especially in syllabus development and implementation with appropriate need of students, situation of school, condition in school or district. Based on the latest curriculum system in Indonesia, teaching English in high school levels hold an important part in teaching because it has different characteristics from other subjects. It obviously important as the need to communicate in English if compared with the important of English as international language recently in the area. The students at high school levels on their development is on rapid

development in all aspects within the relation on learning. The development aspect that stated in the curriculum which are cognitive students' intelligence either as symbolic or meaningfully understanding physic motor. Students body movement and affective students' emotion. From these development, aspects of students' development thus teaching English as receptive and productive skills to communicate in oral or written have approximation on this junior level. Principally teaching and learning vocabulary in junior high school is not different from other level of education, such as in elementary school or senior high school. They are under the purpose to facilitate the students to facilitate the students to comprehend a text or listening script and to use the word in oral or written speech.

### ***The activities of vocabulary journal strategy.***

One of the most effective methods is through a vocabulary journal. This strategy, students will clarify unfamiliar words or phrases by listing them on a chart in their journals. They write what their perceive is the definition by reading and recognizing clues within the sentence or surrounding sentences. They note the type of context clue they used in order to derive the meaning of the word or phrase. The activity of the strategy should be introduced and applied in conjunction with the lesson on idiomatic expression.

Vocabulary journal strategy is not only use in reading but also in listening. For example the use of vocabulary journal strategy in listening. One of them was Dewi Lestari that conducted a research about applying vocabulary journal strategy in the class. It was "The influence of using vocabulary journal through tape recorder in learning English toward students listening ability in analyzing the word meaning of SMK Negeri 2 Brangsong". The subject of the research was the students at first grade. She did the research because the students at the first year of SMK Negeri 2 have not enough ability in analyzing the word meaning through tape recorder. The result showed that The students' listening ability in analyzing the word meaning after using vocabulary journal through tape recorder in learning English was getting increase, so that there was a significant positive influence of the vocabulary journal through tape recorder toward the first year students' listening ability in analyzing the word meaning The factors, which influenced the students of SMK Negeri 2 Brangsong able to analyze the word meaning in listening test by using tape recorder are as follows: (a) they often listened to the native speaker through the radio or television at home, (b) besides practice listening to the radio or television at home, the English teacher also often gave the practice of listening by using tape recorder to know the ability in listening to the voice of native speaker, and (c) the frequency of practice and the use of tape recorder given and done by the English teacher for two or three times a week.

### ***The steps of vocabulary journal strategy***

Vocabulary journal may be implemented using three steps of procedure:

1. Direct students to identify unknown words. The first activity which recommended is identifying unknown words after the teacher give the text.

This is done by look through the reading passage and then skimming through the reading passage. After that the students has to identify some unfamiliar words.

2. Require students to list the exact sentence. After students identify unfamiliar words they have to write and list the exact sentence from the reading passage
3. Ask students to create the definition with their own words. The last step is the students have to create what they write with their own words based on the definition of the word from the reading passage.

### ***The parts of Vocabulary Journal.***

1. Word and Page Number. The students must to fill the unfamiliar word and page number of the textbook.
2. Resource. This column is the source name of the text (the title of the text).
3. Sentence in which the words was used in the text. In this column the students should be write the sentence from the unfamiliar word that they have already took.
4. Students- friendly definition. This column is present for the students to make the definition using their own words for the words that they have already taken.
5. Antonym and Synonym. The students must decide about the unknown words itself, it have synonym or antonym and they should be put in each column if it had.
6. Drawing/picture/symbol. The students should draw of the unknown word itself if it had.

### ***The strengths and weakness of using vocabulary journal strategy***

#### **1. The strength of using vocabulary journal strategy**

- a. In applying this strategy, off course it has basic reason of why the researcher use that because from applying this strategy many of new words from the students and can be helpful for students not only to observe their progress but also to establish an increasing awareness in reading.
- b. Vocabulary journal strategy in relation to help the students learn and retain new words more easily.
- c. Vocabulary journal strategy creates the motivation for students in teaching English and they can participate actively in the learning activities.

#### **2. The weakness of using vocabulary journal strategy.**

The weaknesses of applying this strategy are when students doesn't bring their own dictionary because this strategy is demanding the students to start using dictionaries as early as possible. With adequate training, dictionaries are an invaluable tool for students, giving them independence from the teacher. As well as understanding meaning, students are able to check

pronunciation, the grammar of the word (e.g. verb patterns, verb forms, plurality, comparatives, etc). Therefore the teacher and school should provide the dictionary or students able to access online dictionaries.

## Conclusion

Based on some supported theories, the writer would conclude that in some cases, the students' improvement achieved will be determined by a learning situation and the strategy used to teach them. It should be appropriate with the level of learners. For example, the used of vocabulary journal will be able to create such a learning situation which is not going to take the students into focused students. Secondly, having own definition with some vocabulary knowledge without using the dictionary can allow or more information about how word are typically used.

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