

Teaching Vocabulary by Using Short Stories: A Study at MTs Nashriyah NW Sekunyit

Pengajaran Kosakata Menggunakan Cerita Pendek: Sebuah Studi di MTs Nashriyah NW Sekunyit

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Abstract: *This study investigates the effectiveness of using short stories as a medium to improve vocabulary acquisition among second-grade students at MTs Nashriyah NW Sekunyit in the academic year 2025/2026. The research employed a quantitative pre-experimental design with one group pre-test and post-test. The sample consisted of 25 students selected purposively. A vocabulary test comprising 25 multiple-choice items was administered before and after treatment. Results revealed a significant improvement in students' vocabulary mastery, with mean scores increasing from 33.44 in the pre-test to 60.96 in the post-test. The paired sample t-test showed a t-count of -9.752 with a significance value of 0.001 (<0.05), indicating a significant effect of short stories on vocabulary acquisition. These findings suggest that incorporating short stories in language classrooms provides an engaging and effective approach for vocabulary learning.*

Keywords: *Vocabulary, Short Stories, Students.*

Abstrak: Penelitian ini mengkaji efektivitas penggunaan cerita pendek sebagai media untuk meningkatkan penguasaan kosakata pada siswa kelas dua MTs Nashriyah NW Sekunyit pada tahun ajaran 2025/2026. Penelitian ini menggunakan desain kuantitatif pra-eksperimental dengan metode pre-test dan post-test pada satu kelompok. Sampel penelitian terdiri dari 25 siswa yang dipilih secara purposif. Tes kosakata yang mencakup 25 butir soal pilihan ganda diberikan sebelum dan sesudah perlakuan. Hasil penelitian menunjukkan adanya peningkatan yang signifikan dalam penguasaan kosakata siswa, dengan nilai rata-rata meningkat dari 33,44 pada pre-test menjadi 60,96 pada post-test. Uji-t sampel berpasangan (paired sample t-test) menunjukkan nilai t-hitung sebesar -9,752 dengan nilai signifikansi 0,001 ($<0,05$), yang mengindikasikan adanya pengaruh signifikan dari penggunaan cerita pendek terhadap penguasaan kosakata. Temuan ini menunjukkan bahwa penggunaan cerita pendek dalam pembelajaran bahasa merupakan pendekatan yang menarik dan efektif untuk mempelajari kosakata..

Kata Kunci: Perbendaharaan Kata, Cerita Singkat, Siswa

1. INTRODUCTION

Vocabulary plays a crucial role in second language acquisition, as it determines learners' ability to communicate, comprehend texts, and engage in meaningful interaction [1]. Without sufficient vocabulary knowledge, learners often face challenges in reading comprehension, writing fluency, and oral communication. As Wilkins famously stated, "Without grammar very little can be conveyed, without vocabulary nothing can be conveyed" [2]. Therefore, vocabulary teaching remains a fundamental concern in EFL pedagogy.

In Indonesia, English has been introduced from early educational levels as a foreign language to equip students with linguistic skills for global competitiveness [3]. However, many students struggle with vocabulary learning due to lack of exposure, limited reading habits, and insufficiently engaging instructional methods. Traditional memorization strategies often fail to sustain learner motivation or foster meaningful retention of new words [4]. Thus, effective teaching strategies are needed to improve vocabulary mastery among junior high school learners.

Reading is widely recognized as an effective means of vocabulary development. Short stories, in particular, provide contextualized exposure to new vocabulary, enhance learners' imagination, and sustain motivation through narrative engagement [5]. Unlike longer texts, short stories can be completed in a single session, making them practical for classroom use. They also promote comprehension, cultural awareness, and language fluency by embedding vocabulary in meaningful contexts [6].

Prior studies have highlighted the benefits of short stories in language learning. Research by Ginting et al. [7] and Astriana et al. [8] demonstrated that short stories significantly enhance vocabulary and reading comprehension skills. However, empirical studies focusing specifically on vocabulary improvement among Indonesian junior high school students remain limited. Therefore, this study aims to investigate whether short stories significantly improve students' vocabulary mastery at MTs Nashriyah NW Sekunyit.

2. RESEARCH METHOD

This research employed a quantitative pre-experimental design using a one-group pre-test and post-test model [9]. The design involved measuring students' vocabulary knowledge before and after treatment without a control group.

3. RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

The mean score increased from 33.44 (pre-test) to 60.96 (post-test), suggesting a substantial improvement in vocabulary mastery.

The paired sample t-test revealed a t-value of -9.752 with a significance value of 0.001 (<0.05), indicating a statistically significant difference between pre-test and post-test scores. Thus, the null hypothesis (H_0) was rejected, and the alternative hypothesis (H_a) accepted, confirming that short stories significantly improved students' vocabulary.

The findings demonstrate that short stories are effective in enhancing vocabulary acquisition among junior high school students. This aligns with Harmer [10], who emphasized that short stories provide meaningful contexts for new vocabulary, and Nation [11], who argued that extensive reading fosters vocabulary growth. The observed improvement in this study corroborates previous research by Astriana et al. [8] and Ginting et al. [7], who also found short stories to be effective tools in vocabulary teaching.

Students in this study not only showed measurable vocabulary improvement but also reported higher engagement [12] and motivation [13] during lessons. The contextual nature of short stories enabled learners to understand meanings beyond rote memorization, supporting deeper retention and application of new words [14].

4. CONCLUSION

This study concludes that teaching vocabulary through short stories significantly improves students' vocabulary mastery at MTs Nashriyah NW Sekunyit. The mean post-test scores were notably higher than pre-test scores, and statistical analysis confirmed a significant effect. Short stories proved to be an engaging

and practical medium that facilitated both comprehension and vocabulary retention. The findings imply that English teachers should incorporate short stories as an alternative instructional strategy to foster vocabulary growth and motivate learners. Schools are encouraged to provide more varied and appealing reading materials, while future researchers may expand this study with larger samples and control groups for broader generalizability.

5. CLOSING STATEMENT

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