

Elevating Vocabulary Mastery: Implementing the Acrostic Poem Technique for Eighth Grade Students at SMP Negeri 9 Medan

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Abstract

This research was primarily conducted to prove that the application of Acrostic Poem technique could improve the eighth-grade students' vocabulary of SMP Negeri 9 Medan and describe their responses towards the application of Acrostic Poem technique in the processes of learning vocabulary mastery. This research is Classroom Action Research which has been conducted in two cycles. Each cycle consisted of four meetings. The quantitative data analysis showed that the students' mean score increased continuously from 57,22 in pre-test, 72,40 in formative-test, and 84,81 in post-test. The qualitative data analysis showed that the students gave good responses towards the application of Acrostic Poem technique. It can be seen from observation sheets and field notes; they felt more enthusiastic and motivated to learn vocabulary mastery by using Acrostic Poem technique. The questionnaire data also showed that the students are agree with 55,55% in learning through Acrostic Poem technique. To sum up, the application of Acrostic Poem technique could improve the students' vocabulary. It is advisable that English teachers apply Acrostic Poem technique in teaching Vocabulary.

Keywords

Vocabulary Mastery, Acrostic Poem Technique, Classroom Action Research

Introduction

English is one of the international languages spoken by many people in many countries. English is also recognized as the primary language to communicate with other people, from different countries and cultures. Due to the importance of English as an international language, many people try to learn and master it as well as possible so that they will not find any difficulties in communicating with others. In Indonesia itself, the government has made some efforts to

produce human resources who are able to understand and master English well. As foreign language in Indonesia, English is learnt by many people including students in schools.

Students always think about vocabulary development by learning words. Vocabulary is one of the basic language elements and it is very important for learners in their lives to make them able to communicate well. According to Thornbury (2002:13) “Without grammar very little to say, without vocabulary nothing to say. “He puts forward that because he believes that the vocabulary would be able to improve the language skills quickly. Harmer (2009:153) also states that if language structures make up the skeleton of language, then it is vocabulary that provides the vital organs and the flesh. It may be concluded that in order to communicate, vocabulary is more important than grammar.

In fact, many people who learn English especially the beginners’ level are often faced with the problem of vocabulary mastery. After doing an observation during practical teaching around August to early October 2021, the writer found that the eighth-grade students of SMP N 9 Medan still had difficulty in mastering vocabulary. For example, they did not know whether a word was noun, verb, or adjective. As a result, they produced wrong sentences; 1. Mary is like a coffee, 2. the boy going to school with walk. Therefore, the writer decided to do further action to overcome these problems by conducting research. In fact, there were still many words that students did not know. They mostly did not know the meaning of words during the learning process. Because of the lack of vocabulary, they knew, they had difficulty in recognizing the words. Students also had problems during teaching and learning process in class. They were less enthusiastic in doing assignments because they did not understand the learning material. Not a few students made mistakes by imitating directly from examples because of their limited vocabulary.

Based on the background of study above, the problem of the study can be formulated as follows:

- 1) Can acrostic poem technique improve the students’ vocabulary mastery?
- 2) What are the students’ responses after being taught by using Acrostic Poem technique?

The main purposes of this research are to find out the following:

- 1) to prove the students’ vocabulary mastery by using Acrostic Poem technique to the eighth-grade students of SMP Negeri 9 Medan.
- 2) to describe the students’ responses based on the application of Acrostic Poem technique to improve the students’ vocabulary mastery of the eighth-grade students.

The findings of the research are expected to be useful theoretically and practically.

Literature Review

Learning a language cannot be separated from learning vocabulary. Since it is a component of learning a language, including English. Vocabulary is a basic of a language to build language

skills namely listening, speaking, reading and writing. Vocabulary supports the speaker to express opinions, ideas, and feelings in communication. According to Cameron (2001:73) vocabulary is a core to the learning of a foreign language to building up the useful words to the students. Vocabulary is an arrangement of words that becomes a sentence arranged according to aspects and uses standard language and has meaning and also the meaning contain in each word.

Further, Banhart (2008:697) states that the vocabulary is a combination of various words used by people that contain operations and can communicate. From the definition above, the writer can conclude that vocabulary is a combination of a number of words that can help students understand the teaching and learning process in the classroom. By memorizing a lot of vocabulary students can talk a lot with words. It means that, vocabulary is very important to build students' knowledge in class.

Vocabulary Mastery

According to Read (2000:16) vocabulary mastery is knowledge of knowing the meaning of words and therefore the purpose of a vocabulary test is to find out whether the learners can match each word with a synonym in a dictionary or an equivalent word in their language. Vocabulary can be defined as a number of vocabulary (words) in a language which contains information about its meaning, form, and usage in context of communication. Vocabulary mastery is not an easy automatic process. The process of vocabulary begins when a person is still a baby. Initially, the baby's first language comes from the mother tongue. They will master vocabulary through simple words they hear from their mother or other people.

According to Manullang, Raja and Sari (2018) vocabulary is one of the language components which are quite decisive because without vocabulary people speak limitedly. Learning English vocabulary cannot run successfully without English skills because both are very important in the teaching and learning process in English. Students cannot do well in conversation without a large vocabulary, because passages and questions involve a much wider range of words than everyday conversation. Therefore, the more students know their vocabulary, the better they will be in language. When they have little vocabulary, students will find many difficulties in speaking and other skills.

Acrostic Poem Technique

Most of poems are written to express someone's feeling, for example happy, sad, angry, etc. Poem is about a writer sharing with the reader an experience and strong feelings. Nurgiyantoro (2005:312) states that poem as a kind of literary work which focuses on word choice and the language of poem is a filtered language. It means that poem uses selecting words that the writer of the poem carefully selects because the writer also considers about the beauty aspect of the poems. Poem can also motivate the students to enjoy learning vocabulary by having fun while reading the poems.

Acrostic poem is one of the simplest poems for students to write because it gives students concrete format to follow. This strategy focus in the initial letters of each line can be read down the page to spell a word, phrase, an alphabet, a name or some other concealed message. According to John (2016:105) acrostic poem is a poem where the first letters of each line spell out a word or phrase vertically that acts as the theme or message of the poem. Sometimes a word or phrase can also be found down the middle or end of the poem, but the most common

is at the beginning. Further, Hamsa and Sukirman (2019:28) state that acrostic poem is the poem that at the beginning of the word in each line uses letters taken from the title of the poem. They also add that acrostic poem is a memorization technique that is easy and can be understood quickly by students.

Khairani (2018:42) suggest that poetry with acrostic techniques tends to be short and does not require rhyme to make it. Acrostic poetry writing originally develop in ancient Greece. Acrostic poem is a unique form of poetry with a focus on inspiring initial letters.

Methodology

Research Design

This study was conducted by applying Classroom Action Research (henceforth CAR) which is to find how well the Acrostic poem in teaching vocabulary to the eighth-grade students of SMP Negeri 9 Medan in the academic year of 2022/2023. Stringer, Christensen and Baldwin (2010:10) state that action research functions best when it is a cooperative action research. This method of research incorporates the ideas and expectations to all of students involve the situations. Based on the statement above, CAR is a method to solve the problems in teaching and learning activities in the classroom. This is important to improve students' vocabulary mastery well in teaching and learning activities. To obtain accurate data in this research, the writer used quantitative and qualitative methods.

The Source of Data

Data collection was the systematic approach to gathering and measuring information from a variety of sources to get a complete and accurate picture of an area of interest. The source of data in this research are test, observation, questionnaire, and field notes.

The Technique of Collecting Data

Here were some techniques in collecting the data of this research:

1. The writer used tests as one of instruments to measure the students' ability and to know how far they could improve their vocabulary mastery.
2. The writer made notes in each observation to record all activities during the teaching and learning process and also noted about the students' reaction and responses.
3. The writer gave a questionnaire to the students.
4. The writer used the checklist observation to make it more systematic.

The Technique of Analyzing Data

This study used quantitative and qualitative data.

The test was graded by using score from 0 – 100 by counting the correct answer using the following formula.

$$S = \frac{R}{N} \times 100 \%$$

Where:

S : Score of tests

R : Number of the correct answer

N : Number of the test items

The writer got score from two cycles that was conducted in this study. The mean of score from the first cycle was compared to the mean of second cycle. It was used to know how far the progress of the students in this study. To categorize the students who got up 75 (Minimum Mastery Criteria/Kriteria Ketuntasan Minimal (KKM) in pre-test, formative test and post-test calculated by applying the following formula:

$$P = \frac{R}{N} \times 100\%$$

Where:

P : Percentage of the students who get point 75

R : The number of the students who get point 75 up

N : The total number of students

To know the mean of the students' score for each cycle, the writer applied the following formula which is formulized by Best and Kahn (2006:359):

$$x = \frac{\sum x}{N} \times 100$$

Where:

x : The mean of students' score

$\sum x$: The total score

N : The number of the students'

To find out the percentage of students' score who passed the minimum mastery criterion / Kriteria Ketuntasan Minimal (KKM) as follows:

$$P = \frac{R}{N} \times 100\%$$

Where:

P : The percentage of students who get the point ≥ 70

R : The number of students who get the point ≤ 70

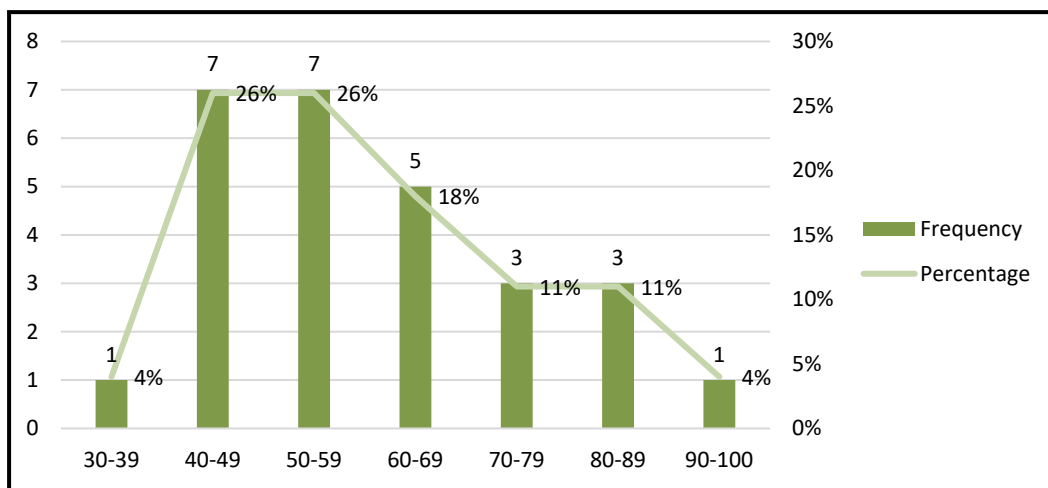
N : The total number of the students

Findings

Data Analysis

The data was analyzed by quantitative and qualitative data. The quantitative data were taken from the mean of the students' score in taking vocabulary test. The qualitative data were taken from observation sheets and questionnaire.

Chart 4.1 : The Histogram of Pre-test Score



Based on the histogram of the pre-test it could be seen that the interval and frequency score, there are 7 students (26%) who occupied in score interval 50 to 59. There are 7 students (26%) who occupied in score interval 40 to 49. There are 5 students (18%) who occupied in score interval 60 to 69. There are 3 students (11%) who occupied in score interval 70 to 79. There are 3 students (11%) who occupied in score interval 80 to 89. There are 1 students (4%) who occupied in score interval 90 to 99. Thus, from the explanation above there are 6 (22%) students who got score ≥ 75 (KKM) in the pre-test. The cart shows that the students' score in the pre-test was still low. Thus, the writer conducted the treatment and post-test. The elaboration of the students' post-test result is explained in the following table.

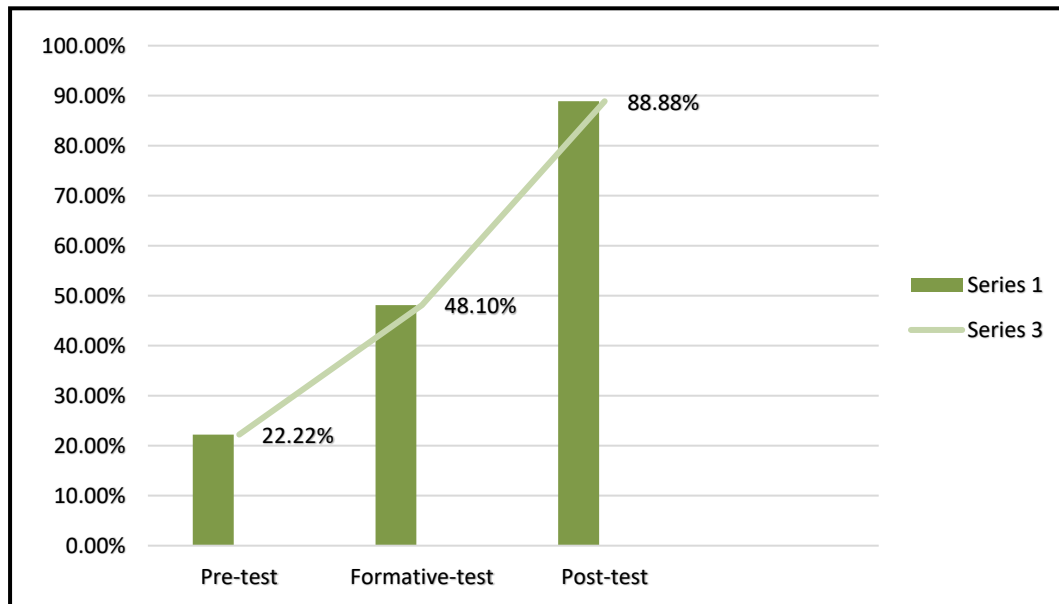
The students were said competent if they passed the topic and got the score above the Mastery Minimum Criteria (*Kriteria Ketuntasan Minimum/KKM*). The percentage of the students who got the score ≥ 75 also showed the improvement of the students' score from the first until the last meeting. It can be seen in the histogram as follow:

Table 4.1 Percentage of the students who got the score ≥ 75

Pre-test	Formative-test	Post-test
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Students who got ≥ 75	6	13	24
Percentages	22,22%	48,1%	88,88%

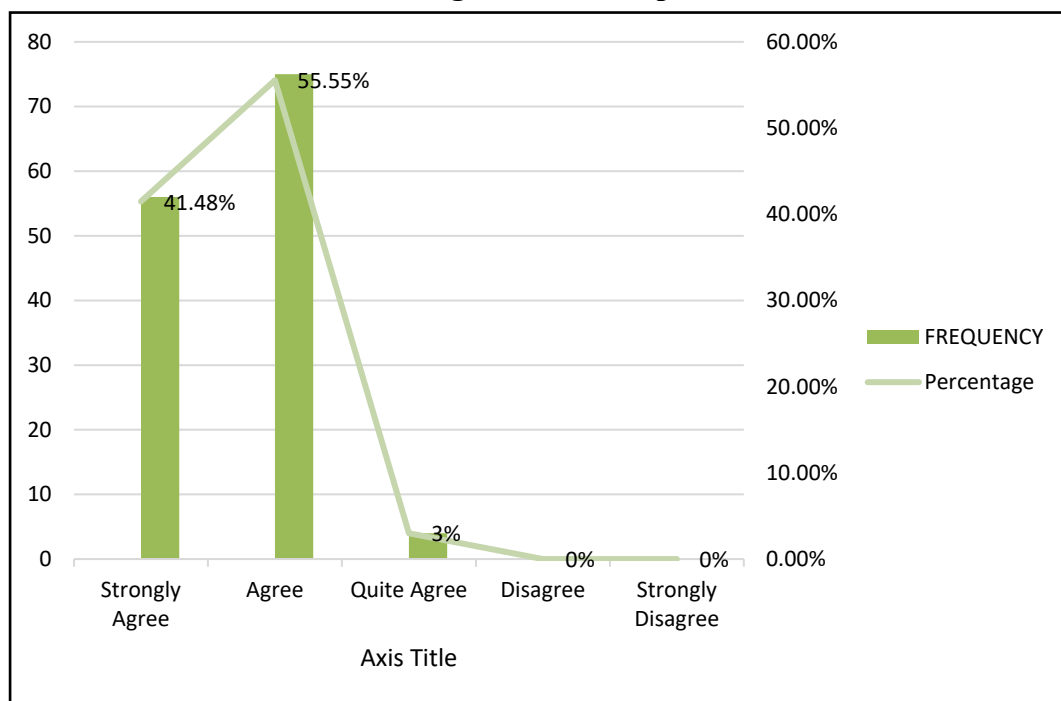
Chart 4.2 The Histogram of Percentages of the students who got score ≥ 75



The histogram shows the percentage of the students in pre-test who got score ≥ 75 is 22,22% (6 students). The percentage of the students in formative test who got score ≥ 75 is 48,1% (13 students). The percentage of the students in post-test who got score ≥ 75 is 88,88% (24 students). It can be concluded that there is an improvement from pre-test to formative-test until post-test.

The students' responses which were obtained from the questionnaire was shown in the following list.

Chart 4.3 The Histogram of the responses of Questionnaire



Based on the result of questionnaire, it can be seen from the percentage of Strongly Agree is 41,48%, the percentage of Agree is 55,55%, the percentage of Quite Agree is 3%, the percentage Disagree is 0% and the percentage of Strongly Disagree is 0%. It can concluded that the students responses towards learning teaching process of vocabulary mastery by using Acrostic Poem Technique are good, and their vocabulary mastery also improves.

Conclusion

After analyzing and discussing the data, the writer draws the following conclusions: Acrostic Poem technique can improve students' vocabulary mastery. It was found that the students' achievement of vocabulary mastery improved from pre-test to post-test after Acrostic Poem technique was applied. The students' total mean score in pre-test is 57,22 the formative is 72,40 and post-test is 84,81. Meanwhile, the students' score percentage who passed Mastery Minimum Criteria (Kriteria Ketuntasan Minimum) from pre-test is 22,22%, the formative is 48,1% and post-test 88,88%, the students score percentage continuously increased. Therefore, it is concluded that Acrostic Poem technique can improve students' vocabulary mastery successfully. The students' responses were very enthusiastic and they felt motivated after being taught with Acrostic Poem technique. It could be seen from the qualitative data such as observation sheets, questionnaire, and field notes during the study. The questionnaire result that the first item is 41,48%, the students interested with the application of Acrostic Poem technique. The second item is 55,55% the students understood the learning material that taught by the writer with used the application of Acrostic Poem Technique. The application of Acrostic Poem Technique could also increase the students' interest and motivation in the classroom activities.

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