

# **Improving Students' Vocabulary Achievement Through Word Walls Strategy**

**Decy Anggriani\***

**Prof. Dr. Hj. Sumarsih, M.Pd\*\***

## **ABSTRACT**

This study aims at finding out whether the application of Word Walls strategy significantly improves the students' vocabulary achievement. This study was conducted by using classroom action research. The subject of the research was VII-5 class SMP Negeri 1 Pagar Merbau which consisted of 25 students. The research was conducted in two cycles and each cycle consisted of three meetings. The result showed that the improvement of the students' scores from the first test in orientation test to the third test in cycle-II test. In the first test in orientation test, the mean was 48.48, in the second test in cycle-I test, the mean was 63.68, and the third test in cycle-II test, it was improved to be 79.04. Based on the diary notes, observation sheet, and questionnaire, it was found that the teaching learning activities ran well. Students were active and enthusiastic during the teaching learning process in the second cycle than the first one. The result of the researcher showed that the use of word walls strategy significantly improved students' vocabulary.

**Keywords:** *Vocabulary, Action Research, Word Walls Strategy,*

## **INTRODUCTION**

The basic function of language is to communicate, so language means as a tool of communication in human life. It is important to be learned in order to improve the quality of the social life. In Indonesia, English has been determined as the foreign language as stated in the 1994 national curriculum. The purpose of learning English in Indonesia according to the National curriculum is to enable learners to speak and written in English.

The latest Curriculum in National Curriculum is The Educational Unit Curriculum (KTSP or Kurikulum Tingkat Satuan Pendidikan). In order to enable students to communicate well in English, they must be able to speak very well. They are also required to read and write well in English. To achieve these aims, students must master

a large number of vocabularies. They will be able to conceive what they have heard and read.

Teaching vocabulary is one of the basic elements in achieving all four language skills. Similarly, Jordan (1997:149) also states that teaching vocabulary is such an important task in teaching English because vocabulary achievement is related to all language learning and it is of concern to all four language skills.

Vocabulary is very essential for success to comprehend the language well, speak better, or composed a good writing; it is expected that learners have to increase their vocabulary by around 1000 words a year (National: 1990:22).

Similarity, based on the competency Based Curriculum, the students are required to increase their vocabulary 1000-1500 word every year so that in three years students have mastered their vocabulary around 4000 words (Clark, D.M, & Fairburn C.G. 1997).

Based on the writer's experience in teaching training practice, most of the students have many problems in mastering English words and this situation makes them lazy to study English. Learners usually have many problems in mastering English words. They have limited vocabulary to comprehend the meaning of the words in the text; they do not know the context of word usage, cannot recognize the meaning of each word, not able to listen the English words from speakers, cannot compose their writing task successfully, and get difficulty to communicate effectively in English.

Teaching English for Junior High School needs appropriate strategy in order that they do not feel bored and they become active in the classroom. One of the strategies is Word Walls. A word wall is a group of words that are displayed on a wall, bulletin board, chalkboard, or whiteboard in a classroom. The words are printed in a large font so that they are easily visible from all student seating areas.

According Erin (2011), Interactive word walls showcase well-selected words; they help teachers build a foundation for student content vocabulary comprehension. They also support word-learning strategies by highlighting root words, suffixes, prefixes, and their meanings. This helps students decode meaning in text. Additionally, when students use the word walls they become more conscious of words and definitions. This supports content comprehension. It also helps students become aware of vocabulary in the world around them.

In reference to the explanation above and the strong desire of finding the solution of these problems, the writer has motivation to do the research improving the students' achievement on vocabulary through Word Walls.

There were some researches that used the Word Walls strategy to improve the students' vocabulary achievement. One of researchers was Maria Marshinta Arintonang (2010) academic year student of State University of Medan had done a research by using word walls in vocabulary. She conducted an action research; It focused on improving students' achievement on vocabulary through word walls. Word walls is an effective, enjoyable, and interesting way to each vocabulary because it can help the students to recognize, promote independence, develop a growing core of words, and provide reference support for students during their reading and writing.

In this research, the Word Walls strategy was applied in teaching vocabulary provided by games especially alphabet games. It will make students more interested in learning process. Hopefully that the students' vocabulary achievement will be improved. Of course by using games help the students to memorize the words and help the teacher to increase students' interest and to motivate them to learn vocabulary.

Based on the background of the study, this research problem is formulated as the following: "is the students' vocabulary achievement significantly improved through the use of Word Walls strategy?"

## **METHOD**

This study was designed as classroom action research, because it involved a substantive act with a research procedure to find the improvement. A classroom action research was conducted because it result the improvement of students' skill. Sonora in Burn (2010:5) state that action research is research carried out in the classroom by the teacher of the course mainly with the purpose of solving a problem or improving the teaching/ learning process. According to Wallace action research focuses on individual or small group professional practice and is not so concerned with making general statement. Based on the explanation above, it can be said that action research aims to improve students' learning and the outcomes of teaching and learning process.

This action research was conducted in the first year students of SMP Negeri 1 Pagar Merbau. The sample of research was VII – 5 which consists of 25 students.

The instrument of data collection was using test, observation sheet, questioner, and diary notes. In this study, there were three tests which were done during the research. They were orientation test, Post test in cycle I, and Post test in cycle II.

The procedure of data collection of the study was conducted by using two cycles in six meetings. There are four stages namely; plan, action, observation and reflection.

## FINDING

The data for this study were acquired from the diary note, observation sheet, questioner sheet and tests during the research was done. This research was conducted into two cycles. Conducting cycle one, the target still was not achieve yet so the researcher conducted the cycle two. There were six meetings. The score of the students showed improvement continuously. It can be seen in the table below.

**Table 4.1 The Score of Students' Vocabulary Test**

No	Students' Initial	Test I	Test II	Test III
1	AP	36	60	76
2	AK	56	76	88
3	AS	36	68	80
4	DS	40	52	60
5	DY	52	72	84
6	DF	68	80	92
7	DP	36	48	56
8	ES	80	92	100
9	EW	48	52	84
10	FG	40	64	80
11	ID	48	60	84
12	IS	44	56	64
13	MS	44	64	80
14	AG	48	68	76
15	NS	48	60	84
16	NM	32	44	56
17	PK	32	56	68

18	PL	44	60	76
19	RW	60	72	80
20	RM	72	88	96
21	SK	32	40	64
22	SP	52	56	84
23	SA	52	72	88
24	TA	44	60	80
25	VA	68	72	88
	Total ( $\sum x$ )	1212	1592	1976
	Mean ( $\bar{X}$ )	48.48	63.68	79.04

## DISCUSSION

Based in the result of data, it was found that the application of word walls strategy had successfully improved students' vocabulary achievement.

The finding of this research is that Word Walls strategy can help the students improve their vocabulary achievement. By applying this Word Walls strategy, the score of the students in vocabulary kept increasing from the orientation-test until the post-test of cycle 2. It was proved by the data which showed that the mean of the students in the post-test II (79.04) was higher than that of the post-test I (63.68) and also higher than that of pre-test (48.48).

The qualitative data taken from the observation sheet and questionnaire sheet also showed that students interest in vocabulary by using word walls strategy because word walls strategy can be a solution for them in facing difficulties of vocabulary learning. The students looked enjoyed the class and applied the technique well. The strategy was very useful to help the students to improve their vocabulary which was lack of stocks of English words.

## CONCLUSION AND SUGGESTION

Based on research findings, the researcher concluded that the improvement was supported by the increasing of the mean of the students' scores. The mean score of the test I was 48.93; the mean of the test II was 54.93, and the mean of the test III 64.83. It means that test II is higher than test I and test III is higher than test I. Therefore, it can

be concluded that word walls strategy can improve students' vocabulary achievement. Based on the result study, the suggestion can be stated as following:

1. To teacher, the teacher should be able to employ various techniques in vocabulary teaching. The use of various in teaching could keep the students' interested in learning. When it learned, it would help the students to keep the concentration in their subject.
2. To the students, the students were expected to learn independently outside of the class by having some other students. By this way, they could improve their vocabulary mastery by taught word walls strategy.

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**Decy Anggriani  
NIM. 208121040**

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**Pembimbing Skripsi**

**Dra. Masitowarni Siregar, M.Ed.  
NIP. 19671102 199303 2 001**

**Prof. Dr. Hj. Sumarsih, M.Pd  
NIP. 19581021 198303 2 002**