



Applying STAR Strategy to Improve Students' Vocabulary

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Abstract

The background of the study is the lack of adequate vocabulary by students due to lack of vocabulary exercises. The teacher teaches the students based on the textbook and running it to get the target of the curriculum which not paid attention to the students understanding when it caused them tended to be bored. This study was about the application of STAR strategy to improve students' vocabulary. Thus, this study was aimed (1) to find out how STAR strategy application can improve students' vocabulary (2) to explain the students' perception about learning vocabulary through STAR strategy. The design of this study was a pre-experimental method. The subject of this study was first grade students of the senior high school. Furthermore, the data were gained through a test (pre-test and post-test) and non-test (questionnaire). The test was used to know students' competence before and after the implementation, while a questionnaire was used to know students' perceptions towards STAR strategy. The significant findings of the recent study were the students' vocabulary mastery is significantly increased. It can be seen from the result of students' average score and good responses by students. Students' average score from pre-test was 22 and the post-test was 73. The t-test score was higher than the t-table ($2,09 < 13,66 > 2, 86$). It was meant that researchers' hypothesis could be accepted. Finally, the STAR strategy could be implemented practically and pedagogically in improving students' vocabulary.

Keywords: : Improving Vocabulary, STAR Strategy

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1. Introduction

Nowadays, no one cannot deny that learning English is not so important. This is because English has become an international language in the world and it is considered as important language to learn since it is used as the media for people to communicate, share, and get knowledge and information. That is only one of the reasons why many people try to be able to communicate by using English in the era. In Indonesia, English is positioned as a foreign language. As stated by Rahman (2018) that the status of a foreign language means that it is not used as a means of communication in a particular country, but it is taught.

Language is inseparable from vocabulary, learning language means learning its component, including vocabulary. The importance of vocabulary knowledge has been long recognized in language development. Vocabulary mastery becomes one of the requirements for people to speak a language; it cannot be denied that without vocabulary, people cannot say anything. Moreover, lack of vocabulary will discourage a learner to use

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English as the target language, either in spoken or written communication. It is supported by Sedita (2005), she argued that vocabulary knowledge is important because it encompasses all the words people must know to access their background knowledge, express their ideas and communicate effectively, and learn about new concepts. She further stated that students' word knowledge helps them to easily understand new ideas and concepts. Therefore, vocabulary knowledge is important; students also find difficulty in learning or understanding new words that they always found in the text or lesson. Thornbury (2002) mentioned some factors which cause foreign language learners feel some words are difficult such as pronunciation, spelling, length, complexity, meaning, idiomaticity, and grammar.

Learning vocabulary as a foreign language seems easy but some students feel difficult. The teacher of English should find out the solution by creating an efficient and effective technique in teaching English vocabulary. Besides that, the teachers should establish condition which makes teaching vocabulary possible. Realizing how important the vocabulary and how difficult students to build up vocabulary, the English teacher have to provide students with rich exciting exercise which are expected to help vocabulary must be helpful to improve the student ability in English communication. Allen and Vallete (1997) said that vocabulary is very important in a language. Through vocabulary, we convey our ideas, emotion and efficiently. Without mastering it, people will not be able to use English effectively. In all language teaching, students must continually learn vocabulary as they learn structure (Allen and Vallete, 1997). In fact, students are still lack in mastering English vocabulary. On the other hand, the students are also difficult to deliver their ideas because of their limitation of vocabulary.

In order to activate a vocabulary, Laufer (1998) emphasized the use of words, and she implied that teacher should encourage students to use the words; otherwise these words may only remain in passive vocabulary. She further stated that teachers should develop tasks that educe newly taught words which can help learners to employ the words productively. Moreover, Carter and Nunan (1987) focused on the lack of exercises in classes that further productive use. He also implies that in order to foster this, rather than having students look up words in a dictionary, vocabulary should be presented in meaningful contexts.

The problem faced now by a teacher that most of the students have less of vocabulary due to their lack of vocabulary practice in the classroom. As a fact, the students find difficulty to memorize the words and worry about making mistakes or answering questions. Therefore, students need an activity that draws their attention and activate their critical thinking to stimulate them in memorizing words.

Considering the importance of teaching vocabulary, there are some strategies in teaching vocabulary such as mnemonic strategy, word mapping and semantic feature analysis. In addition, some strategies are taken into account in order to improve students' vocabulary. In the case of strategy used in teaching, one of them is Select Teach Activate Revisit (STAR) which offered the meaningful learning for students in mastering vocabulary. By using this strategy, teacher will be creative in designing lesson while students will think critically. Both of them will also find new atmosphere that fun and different from what they had previously.

Furthermore, Snider (2011) conducted the research by using STAR model and investigated the effects of this strategy on the vocabulary of fourth grade students. She

found that the positive responses of the students were indicated by their good involvement in the class. Students' vocabulary knowledge was significantly increased that can be seen from their pre-test and post-test which showed before they were treated by STAR, they just knew four words; after they were treated, their vocabulary increased from four to sixteen.

However, previous research on STAR strategy focused on the effects of STAR strategy on the vocabulary acquisition of elementary students. Therefore, the sole objective in this paper is to find out the application of STAR strategy to improve senior high school students' vocabulary.

2. Method

This part explains about the methodology of the research in specific. The method used in this study was pre – experimental method with one – group pre-test – post-test design. Campbell and Stanley (2000) defined pre – experimental method as a method used in educational research with two variables (dependent and independent) which offer plausible hypothesis explaining an O1 – O2 difference, rival to the hypothesis that X caused the difference. Dependent variable is the variable that measures the influence of the independent variable. Independent variable is that variable that the researcher expects to influence the other. Dependent variable in this study was students' vocabulary knowledge while independent variable was STAR strategy.

2.1. Location and Research Design

The research took place at SMA Negeri 14 Ambon of the first grade students. This study implemented quantitative method. The quantitative method used pre-experimental design which had only one group. This was to identify whether or not the use of STAR strategy was able to provide significant difference between pre-test and post-test in the group.

2.2. Data Collection

There were 20 students in the class. The sample was taken by purposive sampling technique that is the researcher kept the existing class.

The data were gathered through test and non-test instrument. The test was used to assess students' mastering of vocabulary before and after being treated with the STAR strategy. While, The non-test was using questionnaire. The form of test was essay. Furthermore, the ways to collect data were giving pre-test, treatment, and post-test as well as asking students to fulfill the questionnaire. The pre and post test would be carried out to find out students' progress in mastering vocabulary. Whereas, the questionnaire used to get the information about students' perception about the application of STAR strategy.

The treatment using STAR strategy was implemented in 6 meetings for a class. One meeting took 90 minutes. The procedures of doing treatment as follows: The students were taught by applying the principles of STAR strategy with four instructional model: Select: teacher selected words (adjective) according to material in research which is descriptive text to be taught in learning process. Teach : Before start reading activity, the teacher taught the words (definition, synonym and antonym) based on the context. Then, during reading activity, the teacher assigned each word from selecting process and asked the students to sit in group then discuss how the author used it. The last, after reading activity, the teacher and students discussed the words and checked students

understanding about those words. Activate : Firstly, the teacher gave the tasks and asked students to work and asked them to share their answer. After that, the teacher provided an explanation about students' answer which is right and wrong as reinforcement about the word is being taught. The last, the teacher asked students to make a short descriptive text about describing people. Revisit : This stage is about look back through the words that students already have. In this stage, the teacher asked students individually to make a review about the vocabulary they already have. Then, the teacher also combined the games using those new words to check students' understanding about the words.

2.3. Data Analysis

To analyze the data, some statistical formula were applied by using SPSS program. It was started by counting the score of students' works by referring to four scales of the vocabulary rubric adapted from Padgett (2007) based on the goal of STAR strategy. After that, the program was run to find out the mean score, frequency, students' achievement of pre-test and post-test, then to determine the ranks of progress in both groups. Next, the questionnaire frequency of each item was splitted to investigate the comments on the STAR strategy using the formula of Sudjana (1989).

3. Findings

There were two kinds of technique of collecting data: test and questionnaire. Based on these techniques, the findings were divided into two parts. The first finding obtained through the test. In test, the result of the test was differentiated based on the test: pre-test and post-test. The formula by Tuckman (1988) was used to find out the significant difference between scores of both tests.

Table 1. Result of Difference Score (D) of Pre-test and Post-test

Number of Students	Pre-Test (X)	Classification	Post-Test (Y)	Classification	D=X-Y	D ² = (X-Y) ²
1	43	Poor	88	Excellent	-45	2025
2	20	Poor	82	Good	-62	3844
3	42	Poor	80	Good	-38	1444
4	14	Poor	44	Poor	-30	900
5	12	Poor	60	Adequate	-48	2304
6	64	Adequate	92	Excellent	-28	784
7	79	Good	96	Excellent	-17	289
8	8	Poor	44	Poor	-36	1296
9	8	Poor	79	Good	-71	5041
10	18	Poor	84	Excellent	-66	4356
11	8	Poor	63	Adequate	-55	3025
12	8	Poor	89	Excellent	-81	6561
13	12	Poor	76	Good	-64	4096
14	15	Poor	72	Good	-57	3249
15	8	Poor	55	Adequate	-47	2209
16	8	Poor	75	Good	-67	4489
17	12	Poor	74	Good	-62	3844
18	8	Poor	77	Good	-69	4761
19	8	Poor	60	Adequate	-52	2704
20	45	Poor	80	Good	-35	1225
TOTAL					-1030	58446

The table shows that there is a significant difference between pre-test and post-test score. It means that the use of STAR strategy has provided the improvement of the students' score after given a treatment by applying STAR strategy.

After that, the ranks of both tests were sought to present the difference of the achievement of both tests. Simply, the rank test determines the participants which have negative ranks, positive ranks, and in tie ranks. A participant with negative rank means the person has decreased score from post-test to pre-test. The participant with positive rank means the person has improved in the post-test score comparing with the pre-test. Moreover, the participant in tie rank means the person does not have any decrease or increase or their rank is stagnant, in other words, it has same score between post-test and pre-test. The rank of pre-test and post-test was given in table 2.

Table 2. The Rank of Students Score Between Post-test and Pre-test

Ranks		Amount of Student
Post-test – Pre-test	Negative Ranks	^a
	Positive Ranks	18 ^b
	Ties	2 ^c
	Total	20
a. Post-test < Pre-test		
b. Post-test > Pre-test		
c. Post-test = Pre-test		

Comparing results of the rank, it could be inferred that there are 18 students have improved of the score while only 2 students do not have any decrease or increase after being taught by using STAR strategy. Similarly, STAR strategy improves students' vocabulary by looking at the differences of mean score and standard deviation between pre-test and post-test were determined in table 3.

Table 3. Mean Score and Standard Deviation of Pre-test and Post-test

	Mean Score	Standard Deviation
Pre-test	22	21
Post-test	73	16.35

From the data of pre – test result (*see table 1*), it can be seen that the mean score of the students' pre – test **was** 22 and the standard deviation of students' pre – test was 21. The result indicates that standard deviation and the mean score of the pre – test was low. Based on the data distribution and score description of pre – test, it can be concluded that most students could not answer the questions. The students were not able to recognize the use of "adjective" correctly whether it was synonym and antonym.

The data shows that the mean score of the students' post – test was 73 and the standard deviation of students' post – test was 16,35. It means that the mean score and the standard deviation of pre – test were smaller than the post – test. It is revealed that the result of pre and post – tests were different and it was indicated that there was an improvement in the post – test.

In the last findings through the questionnaire which consisted of 13 items. The researcher divided 13 items into 3 sections that covered students' background of students' learning of English, students' perception about learning vocabulary and STAR strategy.

The questionnaire result showed several results: some numbers of questions were agreed by most of the participants. They were item 9 which all students agreed that STAR strategy helped the students learn vocabulary. This finding showed that STAR strategy did not only offer the systematic learning, but also kind of the activities which explored and activated their critical thinking in class which promoted their vocabulary mastery.

Moreover, item 10 were 16 students (80%) agreed that through STAR strategy their vocabulary get increased. On the contrary, 4 students (20%) stated that there were many activities related to STAR in every meeting which caused them confused. It indicated the previous statement where STAR strategy helped them learning vocabulary, most of them were increased but the rest were not increased.

Besides that, all students (100%) responded that they liked this strategy. Although in the first treatment, there were some of students felt confused with STAR, they had fun experience during the teaching and learning process by using STAR. The students argued that the “song and move” keep them motivated to learn.

Item 12 was used by the researchers to identify students’ response about way of teaching used by the researchers whether it makes students easier to memorize the vocabularies. 18 students (90%) stated that the strategy helped them to understand and memorize the vocabularies when the researcher applied STAR strategy. In contrast, only 2 students (10%) stated that they could not memorize all the vocabularies. It showed that even if STAR had systematic process, it did not guarantee all of the students could accept that. Furthermore, STAR strategy offered many activities which caused some of the students felt uncomfortable.

In the last item, the researchers intended to know whether STAR strategy make the students easier to define the synonym and antonym of vocabularies or not. 15 students (75%) stated that STAR strategy really helped them, while 5 students (25%) stated that STAR strategy could not help them to define the synonym and antonym. It was previously explained that there were many activities might cause the students confused. Yet, this strategy facilitated them to define the synonym and antonym.

4. Discussion

The result of the finding of the research shows that the students’ progress in learning vocabulary particularly adjective through STAR strategy can be seen in the students’ post – test result after being treated with this strategy. Before the researchers applied this strategy, level of the majority of the students were at poor level with range score less than 60, while only few students achieved adequate and good levels. However, after the treatment their grade increased. Most students were at the level of good and only few numbers of students got poor. In addition, the comparison between the mean score from pre – test result was 22 and standard deviation was 21. There was asignificantly increased in post – test result where the mean score was 73 and standard deviation was 16,35.

Apart from comparing the result of pre and post – test, the researchers would also discuss the structure stages that the students went through in learning vocabulary. In STAR strategy, the teaching starts from Select, continued by Teach, completed by Activate then finished with Revisit stage.

Firstly, in select stage, researchers selected the vocabularies that the students would learn about from the text and asked some questions. For example, researchers provided the word “beautiful” and asked the questions such as: “What is the meaning of beautiful?”,

“What is the synonym of beautiful?”, “What is the antonym of beautiful?”, “The word “beautiful” refers to ...”. At the time, the students were not reluctant to response the questions asked. Even though their answers were mostly in Bahasa Indonesia such as “cantik”, “manis”, “jelek”, but the researchers wrote their answers on the board and translated to English so they could write it. They were very enthusiastic in the beginning of learning process.

Secondly, the teaching continued to the teach stage when researchers taught about vocabularies; meaning, synonym and antonym. After that they explained the words based on the context of the text. Both the researchers and the students also discussed about the meaning of vocabularies which they thought it was difficult to understand. For example: “pointed nose” that most of the students get the meaning by translated each word in Bahasa “ditunjuk hidung”. The researchers explained about phrasal verb which consists of two or three words and it was inseparable to describe (Folse: 2004). So that “pointed nose” means “hidung mancung”.

Thirdly, the researchers activated the vocabularies by giving the task to students to do. The researchers started with the group work to define the vocabularies; its meaning, synonym and antonym. Then, the researchers continued activated the vocabularies by putting the words properly in sentences. The researchers finished by asked the students to do individual work by using the vocabularies in short descriptive text.

At last stage, the researchers checked students’ understanding about the vocabularies by reviewing the varieties games such as: synonym bugs, synonym and antonym spiders and bingo that she had done in the class.

Finally, the students’ perception is gained from the questionnaire given. From the finding of the questionnaire, most students appreciated the process of teaching and learning through STAR strategy. Although, they still depended on the other friends in working the task but the understanding of vocabulary was increased. STAR Strategy helped students to learn vocabulary, particularly in memorizing as well as defining the synonym and antonym. In addition, they had fun with learning vocabulary through STAR strategy. In summary, overall result of the questionnaire showed that the students gave the positive perceptions toward the implementation of STAR strategy.

5. Conclusion

This study comprises two main points: the application of STAR strategy to improve students’ vocabulary of adjective in specific and the students’ perception toward the application of STAR strategy. Firstly, from the previous explanation about applying STAR strategy is one way to improve students’ vocabulary. Teaching vocabulary through STAR strategy helps the students to understand and memorize the vocabularies. Based on the observation and pre – test result, students had limited vocabulary. But, after applying STAR strategy, researchers concluded that students’ vocabulary is significantly improved. The improvement is shown through their test’s results. The results have shown that the mean score of pre – test is 22. After the post test, there was significant increase the mean score is 73. Through the evidences, it can be concluded that STAR strategy is effective to increase the students’ vocabulary and makes them more active in teaching – learning process. Secondly, the students’ perception toward the application of STAR strategy are found after applying this strategy for students in senior high school level. Several responses on it are this course is well organized, the learners learn a lot about vocabulary especially adjective, they are helping complete the work, this course has good quality and

they learn the strategies to understand the vocabulary that help them much in the learning process. Also, the writer sustains to carry out research of STAR strategy on some skills in learning English language: listening, speaking, reading or writing to explore STAR strategy whether it is suitable for all kinds of skills. Finally, it is a beneficial strategy to apply in language learning about vocabulary of adjective in specific.

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