THE STUDENTS' EXPERIENCES USING THE VOCABULARY SELF-COLLECTION STRATEGY (VSS) FOR LEARNING VOCABULARY AT SMA ISLAM HISBUL WATHAN

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ABSTRACT

The study aims to find out the students' experiences in using the Vocabulary Self-Collection Strategy (VSS) for vocabulary learning at SMA Islam Hizbul Wathan. The VSS method encourages students to actively select, collect, and analyze new vocabulary based on their interests, promoting engagement and personal relevance in the learning process. A qualitative approach was used, with data collected through semi-structured interviews with nine students. The findings show that most students had positive experiences with VSS, reporting that the strategy helped improve their vocabulary retention and increased their motivation. Students found that being able to choose words they found meaningful made it easier to remember and apply these words in both academic and everyday contexts. The collaborative nature of the strategy, which included group discussions, further enhanced their learning by providing opportunities for peer interaction and knowledge sharing. However, some challenges were identified. Students mentioned difficulties with maintaining consistency in applying the strategy, as well as the time-consuming nature of the multiple steps involved in selecting, defining, and using new vocabulary. These challenges led to feelings of frustration and fatigue for some students. Despite these difficulties, VSS was generally viewed as a valuable tool for improving vocabulary learning. The study concludes that while the VSS method has significant benefits, it also requires adequate support and adaptations to address the issues of consistency and time management. Future research should explore ways to streamline the strategy and provide more structured guidance to maximize its effectiveness in classroom settings.

Keywords: *Vocabulary Self-Collection Strategy, vocabulary learning, student experiences, qualitative research, English language learning*

1. INTRODUCTION

Vocabulary plays a crucial role in language learning, serving as the foundation for all four language skills—listening, speaking, reading, and writing. Without a solid vocabulary base, learners often struggle to communicate effectively, limiting their ability to express thoughts or comprehend information. In English as a Foreign Language (EFL) contexts, vocabulary acquisition presents additional challenges, as students often find traditional learning methods, such as rote memorization, unengaging and ineffective.

However the challenges in learning English vocabulary are closely tied to various obstacles, much like those encountered when learning English itself. One of the difficulties that make it hard for students to learn English is mastering vocabulary. (Krisnayanti, 2021). Traditionally, the teaching of words in school tends to follow a monotonous approach. Students are instructed to memorize lists of words from the textbook and discern their meanings using a dictionary.

Furthermore, the teaching process heavily relies on teacher-led presentations, where new words are introduced to the class, and students are then tasked with writing them down in their notebooks for memorization at home. When questioned about the meanings of these new words

in subsequent lessons, many students often remain silent because they struggle to comprehend the meanings. This unengaging method contributes to a lack of interest and motivation among students. On the flip side, students must comprehend their reading materials, requiring a solid vocabulary foundation. However, Students have difficulty learning new vocabulary; they have trouble identifying and occasionally misunderstand word usage, including whether a word is a noun or a verb and what context it is used in. Rather than deeply exploring the words, students often resort to simply looking up the meanings in the dictionary without attempting to truly understand them. Despite their desire to expand their vocabulary, they lack the interest or motivation to delve deeper into the nuances of these words (Juwita, 2013).

Given these challenges, educators are increasingly exploring innovative strategies that promote active learning and student engagement. One such strategy is the Vocabulary Self-Collection Strategy (VSS), developed by Ruddell and Shearer (2002). This strategy empowers students to take charge of their vocabulary learning by selecting words they find meaningful, thus making the learning process more personalized and relevant. Unlike traditional approaches where teachers provide predefined word lists, VSS encourages students to engage with authentic texts, choose important vocabulary, and work collaboratively to analyze and discuss their word choices. This student-centered approach aims to foster deeper vocabulary retention and enhance students' critical thinking skills.

Despite its potential benefits, there remains a gap in research on how students experience the implementation of VSS in real classroom settings, particularly in Indonesian high schools. To address this gap, the present study aims to explore the experiences of students at SMA Islam Hizbul Wathan in using VSS for vocabulary learning. Specifically, it seeks to understand how VSS affects their vocabulary retention, engagement, and motivation, as well as the challenges they face in applying this strategy consistently.

Based on the discussion above, the researcher formulates the research question as follows: How do the students' experience in using the Vocabulary Self-Collection Strategy (VSS) for learning vocabulary at SMA Islam Hizbul Wathan?

The study aims to find out the students' experiences in using the Vocabulary Self-Collection Strategy (VSS) for vocabulary learning at SMA Islam Hizbul Wathan. This research can offer valuable insights into the effectiveness of VSS for student autonomy, vocabulary retention, and potential implementation challenges within a high school setting, and the results of this research can be used as a basis for developing teaching materials that suit students' experiences in using VSS. This study contributes to the growing body of literature on innovative vocabulary teaching strategies by offering insights into the practical application of VSS in an EFL context. By examining both the benefits and limitations of the strategy, this research aims to inform future teaching practices and learning method development.

2. METHODS

This research used a qualitative descriptive research method. In this research, a non-probability sampling technique was employed. Specifically, purposive sampling was used, a method in which researchers select participants or cases based on specific criteria related to the research objectives. The data source in this research is grade 10 students at SMA Islam Hizbul Wathan. The researcher chose nine students who had studied English using the VSS, including 3 students with the highest scores, 3 students with medium scores, and 3 students with the lowest scores.

3. RESULTS

The findings from this study revealed several insights into the experiences of 10th-grade students at SMA Islam Hizbul Wathan using the Vocabulary Self-Collection Strategy (VSS) for vocabulary learning. Most students expressed positive feedback, indicating that the VSS method significantly improved their vocabulary retention. The act of personally selecting words they found meaningful allowed students to engage more deeply with the learning process. Many participants

mentioned that this personalized approach helped them retain words longer and apply them more effectively in various contexts, both inside and outside the classroom. By choosing words that were relevant to their interests or needs, students were more motivated to understand and remember these terms.

Additionally, the collaborative aspect of VSS, which includes group discussions, was noted as a positive influence on student engagement. Students felt that working in groups, sharing their word selections, and discussing the meanings and uses of these words in different contexts helped them learn more effectively. This interactive component not only supported individual learning but also fostered a cooperative learning environment where students could benefit from their peers' knowledge. Many students mentioned that hearing other students' perspectives on certain words enhanced their understanding and solidified their vocabulary acquisition.

Despite these positive experiences, students also faced notable challenges while using VSS. One of the most frequently cited difficulties was maintaining consistency in applying the strategy. Several students reported that while they found the strategy beneficial, they struggled to consistently follow the steps required in VSS, such as regularly identifying and collecting new words, analyzing their meanings, and incorporating them into daily use. The process, which requires students to choose, discuss, and analyze words over multiple steps, was often described as time-consuming. As a result, some students experienced frustration and fatigue, particularly when they were unable to keep up with the workload or felt overwhelmed by the demands of the strategy.

Another challenge identified was related to time management. Many students indicated that the VSS process took longer than expected, particularly the stages of selecting, defining, and contextualizing words. This extended time requirement led some students to feel that they were not able to keep pace with the rest of their coursework, which added additional stress. In certain cases, this caused a decline in motivation, as students felt burdened by the time commitment required for consistent use of VSS. Nevertheless, despite these challenges, students generally recognized the value of the strategy in enhancing their vocabulary skills.

4. DISCUSSION

The VSS appears to provide a positive learning experience for students. Many respondents reported increased engagement and enthusiasm in their English learning process. In addition, the personalization strategy approach allows students to choose words that are relevant and interesting to them, so that the learning process becomes more enjoyable and tailored to their individual needs.

A key aspect of the student experience is a sense of progress and accomplishment. Many respondents, expressed satisfaction in seeing their vocabulary lists increase every day, which is a real representation of their learning progress. This strategy also seems to increase students' confidence in using English. Several respondents reported feeling more confident in speaking and performing, indicating that VSS not only improves vocabulary but also contributes to overall language proficiency and communication skills.

Vocabulary Collection Strategies (VSS) offer several important benefits. First, encourage active learning and student independence. Bright (2021) in his article "Vocabulary Self-Collection Strategy (VSS) encourages students to take an active role in their learning, increases their motivation to learn new words, and helps them make personal connections with these words while reading". By allowing students to choose their own vocabulary, it increases their involvement in the learning process and helps them take control of their language development.

Second, this strategy helps students use words according to their context. interviewer (S3) noted that VSS helped them not only learn new words but also understand how to use them in appropriate contexts. Juwita (2013) in her article explains that "Vocabulary Self-collection (VSS) strategy can enable students to determine the meaning of many words based on context and decide

which words are more important than other words. ' understanding of the words and texts they have read". This contextual understanding is important for effective language use.

Third, VSS appears to increase motivation and self-confidence. As said by. Ruddel and Shearer (2002) in their book "The Vocabulary Self-Collection Strategy (VSS) is an effective approach to teaching vocabulary through collaboration. This strategy involves students working together to learn new words from a text, which helps increase their motivation and engagement in the learning process." Many students report that they feel more enthusiastic about learning and more confident in using English, which is a key factor in successful language acquisition.

Despite the benefits, a number of significant challenges face students in using Vocabulary Self-Collection Strategy (VSS). One of the main challenges is the difficulty in analyzing the selected vocabulary, where in VSS there are several stages in analyzing words as stated by Tierney (2005), the steps for using VSS consist of choosing words, defining words, reasons for choosing words, then using them. word in the sentence. Many students report that they have difficulty understanding the meaning of words, using them in appropriate sentences, and explaining the reasons behind their choice of words. This problem highlights the need for good analytical skills, which all students may not yet have. Without a deep understanding of the words they choose, the benefits of this strategy can be less than optimal.

Apart from that, confusion in choosing new words to collect is also a problem. Some students find it difficult because many of the words in the reading seem new and unfamiliar. This can hinder the learning process because students may not be sure which words are important to learn. This difficulty is caused by the students' lack of vocabulary. As said by Yohana (2017) Lack of vocabulary can cause difficulties in recognizing, understanding and using English because students do not have sufficient vocabulary to communicate effectively. Therefore, clear guidelines or criteria are needed to help students choose relevant vocabulary. Another frequently reported problem is fatigue and boredom. The process of collecting vocabulary, which involves many stages and takes a long time, often makes students feel tired and bored. When this process becomes too complicated or time-consuming, students can lose their interest and motivation. As Waro (2019) said, one of the weaknesses of VSS is that it requires a long time because it takes a long time to complete the planned activities. So, simplifying the process or adding elements that make learning more interesting could be a solution to this problem.

Apart from that, there are also focus problems faced by some students. Their unfamiliarity with this strategy causes them to feel disengaged and have difficulty remaining consistent. The inability to focus can reduce the effectiveness of strategies, so it is important to increase students' attention and involvement in the learning process.

Overall, these challenges indicate that although VSS has great potential to improve vocabulary learning, this strategy requires adaptation to overcome the difficulties students face. By providing additional support and adjusting the approach based on student feedback, the effectiveness of VSS can be improved, and the vocabulary learning process can become more effective and enjoyable.

5. CONCLUSION

Vocabulary Self-Collection Strategy (VSS) generally provides a positive learning experience for the majority of students. Many students report increased engagement, enthusiasm, and motivation in the English learning process. Visualization of progress through growing vocabulary lists is a key factor in maintaining students' enthusiasm for learning. VSS has been proven to have several significant benefits. This strategy encourages active learning and student autonomy, increases contextual understanding in the use of new vocabulary, and strengthens the relevance of learning to everyday life. Although useful, implementing the VSS also faces several challenges. Consistency and long-term motivation are the main issues for some students. Some students have difficulty maintaining a study routine and feel less motivated over time. Additionally, this strategy

requires a significant commitment of time and effort, which can be an additional burden for students with other academic commitments.

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