***THE CORRELATION OF VOCABULARY MASTERY AND STUDENTS’ READING COMPREHENSION SKILL OF 7TH GRADE AT SMPN 1 PERCUT SEI TUAN***

**HUBUNGAN PENGUASAAN KOSAKATA DENGAN KETERAMPILAN PEMAHAMAN MEMBACA SISWA KELAS 7 SMPN 1 PERCUT SEI TUAN**

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| **Article Info**Article history :Received : 15-06-2024Revised : 17-06-2024Accepted : 19-06-2024Pulished : 21-06-2024 | ***Abstract****This study investigates the correlation between vocabulary mastery and reading comprehension skills among seventh-grade students at SMPN 1 Percut Sei Tuan. Involving 30 students from class VII-2, the mixed-methods research found a strong positive correlation between these variables, suggesting that better vocabulary knowledge enhances reading comprehension. Additionally, motivated students exhibited higher vocabulary mastery and improved reading comprehension. These findings emphasize the importance of integrating effective vocabulary instruction and motivational strategies in the curriculum to boost educational outcomes. Future research should explore specific motivational techniques and their long-term effects on vocabulary acquisition and reading comprehension.****Keywords: Vocabulary Mastery, Reading Comprehension, Motivation, English Learning, Junior High School Students*** |

**Abstrak**

Penelitian ini menyelidiki korelasi antara penguasaan kosakata dan keterampilan pemahaman membaca di kalangan siswa kelas tujuh di SMPN 1 Percut Sei Tuan. Melibatkan 30 siswa dari kelas VII-2, penelitian dengan metode campuran ini menemukan korelasi positif yang kuat antara variabel-variabel tersebut, menunjukkan bahwa pengetahuan kosakata yang lebih baik meningkatkan pemahaman membaca. Selain itu, siswa yang termotivasi menunjukkan penguasaan kosakata yang lebih tinggi dan pemahaman membaca yang lebih baik. Temuan ini menekankan pentingnya mengintegrasikan pengajaran kosakata yang efektif dan strategi motivasi dalam kurikulum untuk meningkatkan hasil pendidikan. Penelitian lebih lanjut harus mengeksplorasi teknik motivasi spesifik dan efek jangka panjangnya terhadap perolehan kosakata dan pemahaman membaca.

***Kata Kunci: Penguasaan Kosakata, Pemahaman Membaca, Motivasi, Pembelajaran Bahasa Inggris, Siswa Sekolah Menengah Pertama***

**INTRODUCTION**

English is a crucial international language, widely used as a first or second language in many countries around the world. Its global significance is reflected in its status as the primary medium of communication in international business, science, technology, and diplomacy. In Indonesia, English is considered a foreign language, yet it holds a prominent place in the national education system. It is a compulsory subject taught at various educational levels, starting from elementary school and continuing through junior high, senior high school, and university.

The Indonesian curriculum places a strong emphasis on vocabulary acquisition, recognizing it as a fundamental prerequisite for mastering English. Vocabulary is not just a component of language learning; it forms the very foundation upon which the core language skills—listening, speaking, reading, and writing—are built. Effective communication in English hinges on a robust vocabulary, enabling students to understand and use the language proficiently.

Students must be familiar with the vocabulary they encounter in their studies to comprehend texts, engage in conversations, and articulate their thoughts effectively. This familiarity is crucial for their academic success and future career prospects, as English proficiency increasingly becomes a valuable skill in the global job market. Thus, the focus on vocabulary within the curriculum is designed to equip students with the necessary tools to navigate and excel in a world where English plays a vital role.

Furthermore, the process of learning vocabulary in English classes often involves various teaching methodologies and tools, including interactive activities, multimedia resources, and real-life applications, all aimed at making vocabulary learning more engaging and effective. By prioritizing vocabulary, the Indonesian education system acknowledges the integral role it plays in helping students achieve a high level of English proficiency, which is essential for their overall academic development and global competitiveness..

**METHODOLOGY**

This study employs a correlational research design to explore the relationship between vocabulary mastery and reading comprehension skills. The correlational design is appropriate for this research as it aims to identify and analyze the strength and direction of the relationship between two variables without manipulating any of them.

The participants in this study are seventh-grade students from class VII-2 at SMPN 1 Percut Sei Tuan. A total of 30 students were selected through purposive sampling, ensuring a representative sample of the population. The selection criteria included students' availability and willingness to participate, ensuring a mix of different achievement levels to provide a comprehensive overview of the relationship being studied.

**RESULT AND DISCUSSION**

The study reveals a significant positive correlation between students' motivation and vocabulary mastery. The correlation coefficient indicates a strong relationship, suggesting that students with higher motivation levels tend to have better vocabulary mastery. Additionally, the results show that students with greater vocabulary mastery perform better in reading comprehension tasks, underscoring the interconnectedness of these variables in language learning.

The findings support the theoretical framework that motivation is a critical factor in language learning. High motivation levels drive students to engage more actively in learning activities, leading to better vocabulary acquisition. This improved vocabulary mastery is essential for understanding and interpreting reading materials, which in turn enhances reading comprehension skills.

**1. Impact of Motivation on Vocabulary Mastery**

The results align with previous research by Brophy (2004) and Sardiman (2008), which emphasize the role of motivation in driving learning success. Motivated students are more likely to invest time and effort in learning new vocabulary. They tend to employ various effective strategies, such as repetition, context usage, and mnemonic devices, to retain new words. Motivation enhances cognitive engagement, leading students to seek out additional learning resources, participate in language activities, and practice language use more frequently. This proactive approach facilitates deeper processing of new vocabulary and helps in embedding it into long-term memory. Additionally, motivated students are more resilient in overcoming language learning challenges, maintaining their focus and persistence even when faced with difficult tasks.

**2. Vocabulary Mastery and Reading Comprehension**

The study confirms Richards and Renandya’s (2002) assertion that vocabulary is crucial for language proficiency. Students with extensive vocabulary can better understand and analyze texts, leading to improved reading comprehension performance. Vocabulary knowledge allows students to decode the meaning of texts more efficiently, recognize and understand complex sentence structures, and infer the meanings of unfamiliar words from context. This comprehension ability is vital for academic success, as it enables students to grasp the content of textbooks, follow instructions, and engage with supplementary reading materials. Moreover, a rich vocabulary helps students to articulate their thoughts and ideas more clearly and accurately, both in written and spoken forms.

**3. Educational Implications**

The study suggests that teachers should focus not only on vocabulary instruction but also on strategies to enhance student motivation. Techniques such as gamification, personalized learning, and positive reinforcement can significantly boost students' interest and engagement in learning English.

**Gamification** involves integrating game elements into the learning process, such as point scoring, leaderboards, and rewards. This approach can make vocabulary learning more enjoyable and competitive, encouraging students to practice more frequently and retain new words better.

**Personalized learning** tailors educational experiences to individual student needs, preferences, and learning styles. By providing customized vocabulary lists, adaptive learning technologies, and differentiated instruction, teachers can ensure that each student receives the appropriate level of challenge and support, enhancing their motivation and learning outcomes.

**Positive reinforcement** uses praise, encouragement, and rewards to recognize and reinforce students' efforts and achievements. Acknowledging students' progress in vocabulary acquisition can boost their confidence and motivation, encouraging them to continue striving towards their language learning goals.

Furthermore, incorporating **collaborative learning** opportunities, such as group activities and peer teaching, can foster a supportive learning environment where students motivate and learn from each other. This social aspect of learning can enhance student engagement and make the process of acquiring vocabulary more dynamic and interactive.

**Technological integration** in language learning, such as using language learning apps, online games, and digital flashcards, can also play a crucial role in maintaining student interest and providing diverse methods for vocabulary practice. Technology can offer instant feedback, track progress, and present vocabulary in various contexts, making learning more effective and engaging.

This study highlights the significant impact of motivation on vocabulary mastery and the subsequent effect on reading comprehension. By focusing on both vocabulary instruction and motivational strategies, educators can create a more effective and engaging learning environment that supports students in achieving higher levels of language proficiency. Future research should continue to explore and refine these strategies, examining their long-term impacts on student motivation, vocabulary acquisition, and overall language proficiency.

**CONCLUSION**

The study reveals a significant positive correlation between students' motivation and vocabulary mastery, which in turn affects their reading comprehension skills, emphasizing that motivated students tend to excel in vocabulary acquisition and reading comprehension tasks. This relationship underscores the importance of fostering motivation as a key strategy for improving language proficiency. The findings align with existing theories and research, highlighting the critical role of motivation in educational achievement. Consequently, educators should integrate motivational strategies such as gamification, personalized learning, and positive reinforcement into their teaching practices to enhance vocabulary instruction and overall language learning outcomes. A holistic approach that combines vocabulary instruction with strategies to boost motivation can lead to substantial improvements in students' reading comprehension skills. Future research should explore the long-term effects of motivation on language learning and investigate specific motivational strategies that effectively enhance vocabulary acquisition and reading comprehension across diverse student populations.

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