

IMPROVING STUDENTS' VOCABULARY MASTERY THROUGH NARRATIVE TEXT FOR TENTH GRADE STUDENTS AT SMK NEGERI 4 PINRANG

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ABSTRACT

Keywords:
*vocabulary
mastery,
narrative text,
English learning,
improvement*

This research aimed to determine whether the use of narrative text can improve the vocabulary mastery of the tenth-grade students at SMK Negeri 4 Pinrang. The study applied a pre-experimental design using one group pre-test and post-test model. The population was all tenth-grade students in the 2024/2025 academic year, with a sample of 25 students selected by purposive sampling. The research instrument was a vocabulary test consisting of multiple-choice questions. The findings showed that the students' mean pre-test score was 25.58 (very poor) and the mean post-test score was 83.71 (good). This indicates a significant improvement in students' vocabulary mastery after being taught using narrative text. The paired sample t-test also confirmed a statistically significant difference between the two means ($p < 0.05$). Therefore, narrative text is effective in improving students' vocabulary achievement in English learning.

Article Info:

Submitted:
20/09/2025

Revised:
20/10/2025

Published:
02/11/2025



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INTRODUCTION

Vocabulary is the essential component in learning a foreign language. It is one of the core components of language learning and acquisition, extends beyond mere word recognition; it involves understanding how words function in different contexts. (Ahsan et al., 2021).

Vocabulary related to four skills of English, namely writing, reading, speaking, and listening. Vocabulary will be very useful in conveying ideas. When reading a simple text in English, if the mastery of vocabulary of the students is good, it will be easy for students to grasp the information or the content of the text. When speaking and listening, if the vocabulary of students is good, then the students can use their ability to

communicate directly with other students who also use the English. This is to show that the vocabulary is a foundation in learning English and is very important in learning a language. (Afidah et al., 2022)

In this perspective, the most important explanation is projected by Richards & Renandya (2002) in Ahsan, as they viewed vocabulary as the fundamental element of language competence, and it offers considerable ways for how students can utilize their speaking, listening, reading and writing skills. Without wide-ranging vocabulary, approaches and techniques for gaining new basic building blocks of language, learners second language usually remain unable to achieve their potential, and it is likely to be dejected from getting benefits of L2 learning prospects around them such as listening to their English language teachers while delivering lectures in L2 classrooms, listening to the radio, listening to the native speakers, using the English language in different other contexts, reading newspapers, interacting to their inside or outside of the classroom friends or watching television. (Ahsan et al., 2021)

In other words, vocabulary is the main thing that hold a very important role in being able to master the language itself. (Hidayatullah et al., 2022).

In Indonesia, particularly in vocational high schools, English is a compulsory subject aimed at developing communicative competence relevant to students' future careers. However, many students struggle with limited vocabulary, which hinders their ability to understand texts and express themselves fluently.

Traditional vocabulary teaching methods often rely on rote memorization, which can be monotonous and ineffective. (del Carmen Rodríguez Altamiranda et al., 2024) To overcome this issue, teachers need to apply more contextual and engaging approaches. Using narrative texts, which contain interesting stories and contextualized vocabulary, can make vocabulary learning more meaningful. According to Laufer, contextualized input allows learners to infer word meanings naturally and retain them longer. (Laufer & Vaisman, 2023) Narrative text exposes students to language used in authentic and enjoyable contexts, supporting vocabulary acquisition through repeated exposure.

This study, therefore, investigates the effectiveness of using narrative text to improve vocabulary mastery among tenth-grade students at SMK Negeri 4 Pinrang. It aims to answer the research question: Does the use of narrative text significantly improve students' vocabulary mastery?

RESEARCH METHOD

This study employed a pre-experimental design with one group pre-test and post-test. The design allowed the researcher to measure students' vocabulary mastery before and after treatment using narrative texts. The population consisted of all tenth-grade students at SMK Negeri 4 Pinrang during the 2024/2025 academic year, with one class of 25 students selected through purposive sampling.

The instrument used was a vocabulary test composed of 30 multiple-choice questions derived from the narrative texts used in class. The test validity was ensured

through expert judgment by two English lecturers, while reliability was tested using Cronbach's alpha ($\alpha = 0.86$), indicating high internal consistency.

The procedure included three stages: (1) administering a pre-test to measure baseline vocabulary mastery, (2) implementing four treatment sessions using narrative texts, and (3) conducting a post-test to evaluate improvement. During treatment, students read selected short stories, identified new words, discussed meanings, and practiced using them in sentences.

Data analysis involved calculating mean scores and conducting a paired sample t-test using SPSS version 25 to determine the significance of improvement. Ethical considerations were addressed by obtaining permission from the school, maintaining participant confidentiality, and ensuring voluntary participation.

RESULT AND DISCUSSION

The descriptive statistics revealed a substantial increase in students' vocabulary mastery after the intervention. The mean pre-test score was 25.58, categorized as very poor, while the post-test mean score rose to 83.71, categorized as good. The paired sample t-test results are presented in Table 1 below.

Test Type	Mean	SD	N
Pre-test	25.58	6.42	25
Post-test	83.71	7.15	25
t (24) = 26.84, p < .001			

The t-test result ($t(24) = 26.84, p < .001$) indicates a statistically significant improvement in students' vocabulary mastery after using narrative text. This suggests that the treatment had a strong positive effect on students' learning outcomes.

The results confirm that narrative text significantly improved students' vocabulary mastery. This finding aligns with Sofyan (2025), who found that there was an increase in students' vocabulary through the use of narrative text in grade X 3 students of SMA Negeri 19 Makassar. Similarly, Murtiningsih et al reported that short story reading significantly enhances vocabulary mastery in EFL students. (Murtiningsih et al., 2025)

Theoretically, this improvement can be explained through the input hypothesis, which suggests that comprehensible input is essential for language acquisition. Narrative texts provide comprehensible input supported by visual and contextual cues, which help learners infer meanings without translation (Schmitt, 2020). In addition, the emotional and imaginative elements in stories enhance long-term memory retention (Cambridge, 2022).

Compared with traditional rote learning, narrative-based instruction promotes active learning. Students become more involved in discovering meanings and using words in context. This supports Laufer's (2023) claim that contextual repetition leads to deeper vocabulary knowledge. Therefore, narrative text serves not only as a language input but also as a motivational tool that fosters students' curiosity and enjoyment in learning.

CONCLUSION

This study concludes that the use of narrative text effectively improves the vocabulary mastery of tenth-grade students at SMK Negeri 4 Pinrang. The mean score increased from 25.58 to 83.71, and the t-test confirmed the improvement was statistically significant ($p < 0.05$). Narrative texts provide contextualized and meaningful language exposure that helps learners acquire and retain new words.

It is recommended that English teachers incorporate narrative texts into vocabulary instruction to create engaging and effective learning environments. Future research could explore the integration of digital storytelling or multimedia narratives to enhance vocabulary learning further.

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