



Prosiding

Seminar Nasional Inovasi pendidikan dan Pembelajaran
Fakultas Pendidikan Bahasa dan Seni
IKIP PGRI Bojonegoro

Tema "Inovasi pendidikan dan Pembelajaran di era digital untuk Pengalaman Belajar
Imersif"



The Effect of Drilling Repetition Method on Students' Vocabulary Mastery

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Abstract – Vocabulary is a collection of words that form a language system. However, limited vocabulary mastery remains a common problem among students. One method considered relevant to implement is drilling repetition, which optimizes memory through a process of repeated and systematic practice. The objective of this research was to determine whether the drilling repetition method significantly improves English vocabulary mastery. This research used a quantitative method with 64 seventh-grade students from SMPN 1 Malo, who were divided equally into two groups: an experimental group using the drilling repetition method and a control group using the lecture method. Both groups took pre-test and post-test to measure their vocabulary development before and after the learning process. The results showed that the experimental group achieved an average score of 83, while students in the control group achieved an average score of 54. This 29-point difference confirms that the drilling repetition method is far superior in improving students' memory, comprehension, and mastery of new vocabulary. In short, the drilling repetition method has the potential to be a more effective and engaging alternative learning strategy than the lecture method in the context of English learning, especially for improving vocabulary mastery in seventh-grade students.

Keyword – Drilling repetition method, Lecture method, Vocabulary mastery

Abstrak – Kosakata adalah kumpulan kata yang membentuk suatu sistem bahasa. Namun, penguasaan kosakata yang terbatas masih menjadi masalah umum di kalangan siswa. Salah satu metode yang dianggap relevan untuk diterapkan adalah latihan berulang (drilling repetition), yang mengoptimalkan daya ingat melalui proses latihan yang berulang dan sistematis. Tujuan penelitian ini adalah untuk mengetahui apakah metode latihan berulang secara signifikan meningkatkan penguasaan kosakata bahasa Inggris. Metode kuantitatif digunakan dalam penelitian ini dengan 64 siswa kelas tujuh dari SMPN 1 Malo, yang dibagi rata menjadi dua kelompok: kelompok eksperimen menggunakan metode latihan berulang dan kelompok kontrol menggunakan metode ceramah. Kedua kelompok mengikuti pre-test dan post-test untuk mengukur perkembangan kosakata mereka sebelum dan sesudah proses pembelajaran. Hasil penelitian menunjukkan bahwa kelompok eksperimen mencapai skor rata-rata 83, sedangkan siswa di kelompok kontrol mencapai skor rata-rata 54. Perbedaan 29 poin ini menegaskan bahwa metode latihan berulang jauh lebih unggul dalam meningkatkan daya ingat, pemahaman, dan penguasaan kosakata baru siswa. Singkatnya, metode latihan berulang berpotensi menjadi strategi pembelajaran alternatif yang lebih efektif dan menarik daripada metode ceramah dalam konteks pembelajaran bahasa Inggris, terutama untuk meningkatkan penguasaan kosakata pada siswa kelas tujuh.

Kata Kunci – Metode latihan berulang, Metode ceramah, Penguasaan kosakata

INTRODUCTION

English consists of four language skills: reading, speaking, listening, and writing. Stated by Munir et al. (2025) achieving academic and professional success is becoming progressively dependent on a person's mastery of English. In addition to these four skills, according to Fransiska (2014) in Sektiarti (2024) English also has various elements that facilitate its use, such as vocabulary, grammar, and others, depending on the topic and purpose. Among these three linguistic components, vocabulary is fundamental and must be mastered before mastering other components. Students can learn new English skills and components if they have a strong vocabulary foundation. Vocabulary is the first step that English learners must understand (Anggara, 2023). As Fachrozi et al. (2021) indicated, vocabulary encompasses all the words known and used by individuals in their language use, consisting of a set of words and meanings primarily used for interpersonal interaction. On the other hand, according to Richard (2001) in Yudha & Mandasari (2021) vocabulary is a crucial element of language skills and provides an important foundation for students' speaking, listening, reading, and writing skills. Supported by Nisa et al. (2025) Students who have a strong vocabulary are better able to comprehend directions, communicate their ideas, and contribute effectively to class activities. Vocabulary is a set of words that humans use in language or communication.

There are many methods and media that can facilitate English learning. One of them is the drilling repetition method. The drilling repetition method is a learning technique that emphasizes repetition and consistent practice to master a particular skill or material. This method can be applied in various learning areas. In English learning, this method is used for vocabulary mastery. This method helps students better understand new language material learned in class (Siahaan et al., 2024). Drilling repetition is an effective technique for vocabulary learning. Students are encouraged to practice new words repeatedly until they have firmly memorized them and can use them naturally. According to Setiyadi (2006) in Siahaan et al. (2024) drilling methods can be classified into various types, including drilling repetition, drilling substitution, drilling transformation, drilling response, drilling signal

response, drilling replacement, drilling response, drilling completion, expansion drill, contraction drill, integration drill, and translation drill. In this research, the type of training applied was repetition training, with the aim of making it easier for students to master and pronounce new vocabulary.

The results of initial observations and interviews with English teachers at SMPN 1 Malo showed that students' vocabulary mastery was relatively low, with around 70% of students considered to have not yet mastered much vocabulary. Although English is a compulsory subject, the learning process still faces various challenges. Teachers revealed that most students experience significant difficulties in understanding and mastering English vocabulary. This difficulty is primarily due to fundamental differences between English and Indonesian, the students' native language, in terms of structure, format, and system. This often hinders comprehension of the subject matter. In addition to these linguistic barriers, the limited availability of learning resources that each student can access or own independently is also a problem. This condition results in less interactive learning and is unable to support optimal foreign language skill development.

Based on the description above, it can be concluded that low vocabulary mastery is a core problem that needs to be addressed immediately. This research began with the gap between the importance of vocabulary mastery and the actual conditions of students at SMP 1 Malo, which are still very limited in this regard. The repetition practice method is seen as a potential solution to this problem, but there is no empirical evidence proving its effectiveness, especially for seventh-grade students at the school. Therefore, this study aims to examine the extent to which this method is effectively implemented. Furthermore, educators also need a learning approach that has been proven to significantly improve students' vocabulary mastery. Given the limited research on the application of the drilling repetition method in vocabulary learning at the junior high school level, the results of this study are expected to fill the existing literature gap and make a positive contribution to the development of English vocabulary learning.

This research aligns with the findings of Siahaan et al. (2024) who conducted experimental research on 30 eighth-grade students at HKBP Kompas Indah Sunday

School by dividing the participants into two groups: a control group and an experimental group. The results showed that the experimental group showed a significant increase in scores, from an average of 74 in the pre-test to 89 in the post-test. In contrast, the control group experienced a decrease in scores from 89.5 to 67.5. These findings suggest that the Christian hymn-based training method, which combines repetition, substitution, and transformation techniques, is effective in improving students' vocabulary mastery. Although research has proven the effectiveness of this drilling method, this research used songs as the medium. Meanwhile, the application of drilling repetition at SMP 1 Malo has never been implemented.

In conclusion, this research aimed to ascertain if using the lecture method or the drilling repetition method significantly improved vocabulary mastery, particularly for seventh-grade pupils at SMPN 1 Malo. Through this experiment, it is hoped that this research can provide educators with a clearer picture of how the drilling repetition method can be used to improve students' vocabulary skills.

RESEARCH METHOD

This research uses a quantitative method, with a quasi-experimental design. As Sugiyono (2022) indicated, rooted in the philosophy of positivism, quantitative research serves as an empirical approach designed to investigate a specific target population or sample. The subjects involved 64 students from SMPN 1 Malo, divided into two classes: an experimental class using the drilling repetition method and a control class using the lecture method. Without involving random sampling, this method is still aimed at identifying differences between 2 learning methods by relying on existing subjects or classes. Multiple-choice questions were used to gather data both before and after the treatment. The significance of variations in learning outcomes was then ascertained by statistically analyzing the data using SPSS version 26 to determine the significance of differences in learning outcomes between the two groups. This research focuses on how effective drilling repetition method is on seventh grade students at SMPN 1 Malo.

RESULT AND DISCUSSION

According to the researcher finding, there is a significant difference in the increase in vocabulary mastery between students who are taught using the drilling repetition method and students who are taught using the lecture method. As seen in Table 1, the control class (lecture method) saw a score rise of 17 points, from 37 to 54. In contrast, the experimental class (drilling repetition method) showed a much more progressive performance jump with an increase of 42 points, namely from 41 to 83. The difference in increase of 25 points indicates that the drilling repetition method applied to the experimental class has a higher level of effectiveness in enhancing students' vocabulary mastery compared to the lecture method applied in the control class.

Table 1. Average Pre-test and Post-test Scores

Class	Pre-Test score	Post-Test Score	Score Increase
Class Control	37	54	+17
Class Experiment	41	83	+42

The higher percentage of improvement in the class using the drilling repetition method supports the idea that the drilling repetition method creates a more active and repetitive learning experience, giving students greater opportunities to practice, remember, and internalize newly learned vocabulary. Unlike the lecture method, which tends to be one-way and positions students as passive recipients of information, the drilling repetition method encourages direct student involvement through systematic and structured practice. Anggraeni et al. (2025) said that vocabulary growth is one of the most important aspects of becoming proficient in English. Furthermore according to Na'imah et al. (2025) only a few words can be communicated without a strong vocabulary. Therefore, it can be concluded that the application of the drilling repetition method in vocabulary learning provides a more

optimal contribution to improving student learning outcomes compared to the lecture method.

This is consistent with the research findings of Halimah et al. (2022) which showed that teachers use the drilling repetition method as a learning strategy that can encourage student engagement in vocabulary acquisition. Similarly, Fransiska (2016) revealed that the application of the drilling repetition method contributed to improving students' vocabulary mastery. This statement is supported by Rofi'ah & Huda (2019) who found significant differences in student learning outcomes, particularly in vocabulary mastery, between groups that implemented the drilling repetition method and those that did not.

Overall, these results reinforce the conclusion that the drilling repetition method is not only effective in practical subjects but also plays a crucial role in improving language skills, particularly vocabulary acquisition. Students need interactive learning methods to avoid boredom. However, the lecture method is still needed as a means of conveying basic concepts. Therefore, these two methods should not be viewed as contradictory or substitutes for each other, but rather as complementary strategies to create a more impactful learning experience.

In summary, this research concluded that the drilling repetition method resulted in significant improvements in students' vocabulary mastery compared to the lecture method. This suggests that educators should consider the drilling repetition method as a method used in classroom vocabulary instruction to optimize student learning outcomes.

CONCLUSION

Based on the results of a research conducted on seventh-grade students using a control and experimental class design with pre-test and post-test instruments, it can be concluded that there is a significant difference in vocabulary mastery between students taught using the drilling repetition method and those taught using the lecture method. The experimental class using the drilling repetition method showed a significant increase of 42 points from pre-test to post-test. Meanwhile, the control class using the lecture method only achieved a 17-point increase. This 25-point

difference between the two classes is clear evidence that the choice of learning method has a significant impact on student learning outcomes, particularly in vocabulary mastery.

The success of the drilling repetition method in improving students' vocabulary mastery is inseparable from the characteristics of the method itself. The drilling repetition method encourages students to repeat vocabulary learned in a structured and consistent manner, thereby strengthening its long-term memory. This repetition process helps students not only passively recognize vocabulary but also actively use it in everyday communication contexts. Unlike the lecture method, which tends to be one-way and positions students as passive recipients of information, the drilling repetition method has been shown to encourage more active student engagement in the learning process.

In summary, the drilling repetition method is quite effective and suitable for use in teaching English vocabulary in seventh-grade junior high school. Therefore, this method can be an alternative for English teachers to enhance vocabulary mastery, particularly for junior high school pupils who are just beginning to study English language.

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

The researcher like to extend their profound appreciation to SMPN 1 Malo for providing the authorization to gather data for this research. Particular gratitude is also directed to the academic advisors, Fitri Nurdianingsih and Ima Isnaini Taufiqur Rohmah, as well as the national seminar organizers for their ongoing assistance and direction. Furthermore, recognition is given to the 7th-grade students of SMPN 1 Malo who took part in and dedicated themselves to the accomplishment of this research.

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