

THE IMPLEMENTATION OF THE SILENT WAY METHOD TO INCREASE STUDENTS' ENGLISH VOCABULARY IN SMPN 3 SUKOHARJO

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Abstract

This study aimed to improve the vocabulary skills of 8th-grade students at SMP Negeri 3 Sukoharjo using the Silent Way method. The research adopted a Classroom Action Research (CAR) design, conducted over two cycles during the 2023/2024 academic year. The sample consisted of one randomly selected class from the 8th grade, and data were collected using a mixed-method approach, including interviews, observations, field notes, and tests. The pre-test and post-test scores were used to measure the effectiveness of the intervention. The study concluded that the Silent Way method effectively enhances vocabulary acquisition by engaging students and fostering active participation. These findings suggest that innovative, student-centered teaching methods can significantly improve language learning outcomes. Further research is recommended to explore the long-term effects of such methods on vocabulary retention and overall language proficiency.

Keywords: effectiveness, vocabulary skills, silent way

Introduction

English language competency is necessary for efficient communication and information access in the globalized world of today. In the Indonesian educational system, English is taught as a required subject from elementary school through high school. The four essential skills for mastering English are speaking, writing, listening, and reading. One essential element supporting these abilities is a strong vocabulary. The basis of language is vocabulary, which enables people to communicate ideas, understand written materials, and have meaningful conversations.

Since English is a foreign language to Indonesian students, expanding their vocabulary might be especially difficult. Numerous variables, such as insufficient interactive and engaging teaching methods and little exposure to the language outside of the classroom, exacerbate this difficulty. Conventional approaches

frequently fall short of engaging pupils and meeting their unique learning demands.

The Silent Way technique is a novel approach to vocabulary instruction that places a strong emphasis on student autonomy and active engagement. This approach, which was created by Caleb Gattegno, uses silence as a tool to empower students to take ownership of their education. To help students discover the language on their own, the teacher guides them using gestures and visual aids like color-coded charts. Through active participation and self-correction, this approach develops a thorough comprehension of terminology and enhances retention. The application of the Silent Way approach at SMPN 3 Sukoharjo is the subject of this investigation.

The objective of the study is to assess its efficacy in augmenting students' vocabulary in English and to pinpoint the obstacles faced during its implementation. This study aims to offer insights and useful recommendations for educators to enhance English language instruction and, ultimately, student outcomes by analyzing this method in a genuine classroom context.

Literary Review

Conceptualization of Vocabulary

Vocabulary is a fundamental aspect of language learning, essential for mastering English skills. It encompasses a collection of words and phrases, crucial for communication and expressing ideas. ALQAHTANI (2015) defines vocabulary as the total number of words necessary for conveying meaning. Alizadeh (2016) adds that vocabulary is complex, existing in both oral (listening and speaking) and print forms (reading and writing). Increasing vocabulary is vital for language learning, as it aids in developing communication skills and achieving learning goals. Mastery of vocabulary facilitates easier English learning and effective communication. Literature is an important element for interacting with someone through writing, whether in the form of novels, poetry, short stories, songs, or even films. According to Wellek and Warren (1949), knowing the psychology of literature allows the reader to understand the psychology of the writer as well as the psychology of the character in a literary work, which then has an impact on the reader. Walgito (2004:10) states that psychology is a science that researches and studies behavior or activities which are seen as manifestations of human psychic life. Psychology seems attached to the human psyche, reaction of the psyche through behaviors and its causes will be analyzed deeply in this science, human's problems also can be solved by the appearance of this study.

The Importance of Vocabulary

Vocabulary is crucial for English language learning as it forms the foundation for proficiency in speaking, writing, listening, and reading skills.

According to ALQAHTANI (2015), vocabulary mastery involves the effective use of language based on personal interests, needs, and motivation. This mastery plays a significant role in all language skills, highlighting its essential nature in language acquisition.

For students, a strong vocabulary enables effective communication and expression in English. Insufficient vocabulary often leads to hesitancy or difficulty in speaking, as students may struggle to convey their thoughts accurately. In writing, vocabulary proficiency is equally vital, influencing the clarity and precision of written communication. Moreover, comprehension in listening and reading relies heavily on vocabulary knowledge, enabling individuals to understand spoken conversations and written texts more comprehensively.

In essence, mastery of vocabulary is fundamental for developing proficiency across all aspects of the English language, underscoring its critical importance in language learning and communication.

The Effectiveness of Learning Method

Choosing effective learning strategies and methods is crucial for enhancing students' motivation and creativity in education. Andrini (2016) emphasizes that the professionalism of teachers in delivering lessons significantly influences the effectiveness of learning models. Teachers need comprehensive insights into teaching and learning processes to execute their duties proficiently.

The selection of appropriate learning models is pivotal as ineffective methods can lead to student disengagement, boredom, and reduced conceptual understanding. For instance, the inquiry learning model promotes student engagement by encouraging them to solve problems through investigative activities. This approach fosters autonomy, improves skills, and deepens knowledge, ensuring that educational objectives are met effectively.

Silent Way Method

The Silent Way, developed by Caleb Gattegno, is a language-teaching approach characterized by its innovative use of silence as a method of instruction. According to Nurnalisa (2020), while not strictly stemming from the cognitive approach, the Silent Way incorporates certain principles from it, notably the idea that teaching should be guided by learning. This method promotes student interdependence and cooperation, fostering autonomy and reducing reliance on the teacher. Çelik (2014) emphasizes that the Silent Way facilitates early mastery of vocabulary through interactive methods such as games. In essence, the Silent Way encourages students to explore their own abilities, with the teacher remaining silent to maximize student potential.

Method

This study employs the Classroom Action Research (CAR) method. According to Khasinah (2013), Classroom Action Research is a technique used by teachers to identify the most effective aspects of their classroom to improve student learning. It is more informal and personal than formal educational research but more systematic than personal reflection.

The research was conducted at SMP Negeri 3 Sukoharjo, specifically in class 8 during the 2023/2024 academic year. The school is located in Pucungwetan, Sukoharjo, Wonosobo Regency, Central Java

The population in this study comprises all 8th-grade students at SMP Negeri 3 Sukoharjo. The sample was selected using random sampling, choosing one class from the 8th-grade students at SMP Negeri 3 Sukoharjo

The researcher used a mixed-method approach to collect data, which included interviews, observations, field notes, and tests. Interviews were conducted to gather information about the English teacher's experiences with classroom action research and to understand the methods used to improve students' vocabulary. Observations were carried out before and after the implementation of the method to assess the initial vocabulary ability of the students. Qualitative notes were taken during or after observations to provide context and insights. Tests were administered before (pre-test) and after (post-test) the intervention to measure the improvement in students' vocabulary.

The instruments used in this study include pre-tests and post-tests to measure the improvement in students' vocabulary after implementing the Silent Way method. Student scores were calculated based on the number of correct answers divided by the total number of items, then multiplied by 100. The scores were then classified into several categories according to the vocabulary assessment table.

The formula used to calculate the scores is as follows:

$$Score = \frac{\text{Students' correct answer}}{\text{The number of item}} \times 100\%$$

The following table shows the classification of scores of the assessment sheet:

No	Score	Mark
1.	Score 96-100	Excellent
2.	Score 86-95	Very good
3.	Score 76-85	Good
4.	Score 66-75	Fairly good
5.	Score 56-65	Fairly
6.	Score 36-55	Poor
7.	Score 0-35	Very poor

Finding and Discussion

The research began with an initial assessment of the student's vocabulary skills in class 8D at SMPN 3 Sukoharjo, consisting of 35 students. This assessment included interviews with English teachers and a pre-test to gauge the students' vocabulary abilities. The results revealed that the students had significant difficulties with vocabulary, particularly with pronunciation. The pre-test scores showed that the average vocabulary ability was poor, with a mean score of only 41.78%

Pre-test Result

The pre-test results indicate a generally low level of vocabulary proficiency among the students. The majority of the students (60%) fell into the "Poor" category with scores ranging from 36-55, while 23.33% were in the "Very Poor" category, scoring between 0-35. Only a small number of students scored higher, with 6.67% in the "Fairly Good" category (66-75) and 10% in the "Fairly" category (56-65). Notably, there were no students in the "Excellent," "Very Good," or "Good" categories, highlighting a significant area for improvement in vocabulary proficiency

Table 1. The Pre-test scores

No.	Classification	Score Range	Frequency	Percentage
1	Excellent	96-100	0	0%
2	Very Good	86-95	0	0%
3	Good	76-85	0	0%
4	Fairly Good	66-75	2	6.67%
5	Fairly	56-65	3	10.00%
6	Poor	36-55	18	60.00%
7	Very Poor	0-35	7	23.33%
	Total		30	100%

These results indicate a pressing need for comprehensive and targeted vocabulary instruction. Tailored strategies, such as focused vocabulary lessons, increased exposure to new words in context, and frequent practice opportunities, are essential to address the specific needs of students in the lower proficiency categories.

The research employed the Silent Way method through two cycles, each including stages of planning, action, observation, and reflection.

Post-Test Result for Cycle 1

- Planning: The researcher developed an action plan focusing on improving vocabulary using the Silent Way method. This included creating materials, observing student activities, and preparing a post-test

- Action: The Silent Way method was implemented, involving minimal teacher speech and the use of visual aids to facilitate vocabulary learning. Students practiced vocabulary through this method in two sessions
- Observation: Observations and field notes indicated that students were initially passive but gradually became more engaged in the learning process
- Reflection: Post-test results showed some improvement, but many students still struggled with vocabulary. The average score for Cycle 1 was lower than expected, with a majority of students scoring in the "Very Poor" category (87%)

The post-test results for Cycle 1 reveal a significant shift in the distribution of scores. While the majority of students (87%) remained in the "Very Poor" category, scoring between 0-35, there was a slight improvement as 13% of students moved to the "Poor" category (36-55). However, no students scored in the "Excellent," "Very Good," or "Good" categories, and none moved into the "Fairly" or "Fairly Good" categories.

Table 2. Post-test Result for Cycle 1

No.	Classification	Score Range	Frequency	Percentage
1	Excellent	96-100	0	0%
2	Very Good	86-95	0	0%
3	Good	76-85	0	0%
4	Fairly Good	66-75	0	0%
5	Fairly	56-65	0	0%
6	Poor	36-55	4	13.00%
7	Very Poor	0-35	26	87.00%
	Total		30	100%

The post-test results suggest that while there was some improvement, the overall vocabulary proficiency remained low. The high concentration of students in the lower proficiency categories underscores the need for continued and enhanced vocabulary instruction.

Post-Test Result Cycle 2

- Planning: Adjustments were made to the action plan, including the addition of new media to enhance learning. The focus remained on practicing vocabulary using the Silent Way method
- Action: Similar to Cycle 1, the Silent Way method was applied, with increased emphasis on visual aids and interactive activities
- Observation: Continued observations showed increased student participation and improved engagement.

Reflection: Post-test results for Cycle 2 indicated significant improvement. The percentage of students scoring in the "Very Poor" category dropped from 87% to 17%, while those in the "Very Good" category increased to 20%.

Table 3. The Post-Test Score of Cycle 2

No.	Classification	Score Range	Frequency	Percentage (%)
1	Excellent	96-100	0	0%
2	Very Good	86-95	6	20%
3	Good	76-85	4	13%
4	Fairly Good	66-75	8	27%
5	Fairly	56-65	4	13%
6	Poor	36-55	3	10%
7	Very Poor	0-35	5	17%
Total	-	-	30	100%

Overall Improvement and Effectiveness

Table 4. Individual Scores over Time

No.	Name	Pre-Cycle Score	Cycle 1 Score	Cycle 2 Score
1	AW	53%	20%	73%
2	DAS	47%	30%	80%
3	EV	60%	40%	73%
4	FIM	53%	30%	73%
5	FPF	40%	30%	47%
6	FF	60%	30%	73%
7	HA	53%	30%	87%
8	IS	40%	20%	53%
9	IN	53%	30%	87%
10	LK	53%	30%	60%
11	MRA	0%	0%	0%
12	MFIM	53%	20%	80%
13	NMD	53%	30%	60%
14	PA	53%	30%	67%
15	RIP	53%	50%	73%
16	RDS	0%	0%	0%
17	RW	53%	30%	60%
18	RNA	0%	0%	0%
19	RK	60%	30%	67%
20	RAR	0%	30%	87%
21	RS	47%	30%	87%
22	RR	0%	0%	0%
23	RA	53%	30%	67%
24	SA	40%	30%	53%

25	SFK	53%	30%	60%
26	S	47%	50%	80%
27	SRN	67%	30%	87%
28	TNH	47%	20%	80%
29	T	0%	0%	0%
30	UY	67%	40%	93%

This table illustrates the varied progress of students, with some showing significant improvement and others remaining at lower proficiency levels.

The findings indicate a need for continued and enhanced vocabulary instruction. The high concentration of students in lower proficiency categories highlights the importance of tailored instructional strategies to address these deficiencies and promote higher levels of vocabulary competence among all students.

Table 5. Students Increasing Scores from Pre-Cycle Until Cycle 2

No.	Classification	Score Range	Pre-Test (%)	Cycle 1 (%)	Cycle 2 (%)
1	Excellent	96-100	0%	0%	0%
2	Very Good	86-95	0%	0%	20%
3	Good	76-85	0%	0%	13%
4	Fairly Good	66-75	6.67%	0%	27%
5	Fairly	56-65	13.33%	0%	13%
6	Poor	36-55	60.00%	13.00%	10%
7	Very Poor	0-35	23.33%	87.00%	17%
Total	-	-	100%	100%	100%

The results from Cycle 2 post-test show a significant improvement in students' vocabulary skills. Notably, the percentage of students in the "Very Poor" category decreased dramatically from 87% to 17%. This indicates that the interventions, including the use of the Silent Way method, were effective in enhancing students' vocabulary acquisition. The majority of students began to achieve scores in the "Fairly Good," "Good," and "Very Good" categories, demonstrating progress in their learning outcomes.

The study demonstrated that the Silent Way method significantly enhanced students' vocabulary skills. The iterative process of planning, action, observation, and reflection in each cycle contributed to continuous improvement. By the end of Cycle 2, there was a notable increase in vocabulary scores, validating the effectiveness of the Silent Way method in this context.

Conclusion

The study aimed to enhance the vocabulary skills of 8th-grade students at SMP Negeri 3 Sukoharjo using the Silent Way method, and the findings revealed significant improvements. Initially, most students fell into the "Poor" and "Very Poor" categories in vocabulary proficiency, demonstrating a clear need for effective instructional strategies. The Silent Way method, with its minimal teacher speech and use of visual aids, effectively engaged students and facilitated learning. Although Cycle 1 showed limited progress, adjustments in Cycle 2 led to a dramatic decrease in the percentage of students in the "Very Poor" category and an increase in higher proficiency categories. The iterative process of planning, action, observation, and reflection contributed to continuous improvement in vocabulary skills. Students became more engaged and active in their learning, which increased their motivation and learning outcomes. The study concludes that the Silent Way method is an effective approach to improving vocabulary skills, and it recommends further research on innovative, student-centered teaching methods to enhance language learning in other contexts.

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