



English Language Learning: Visual Arts to Improve the Seventh Graders' Vocabulary of UPTD SMP Negeri 2 Gunungsitoli Alo'oa

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Abstract: This study investigates the use of visual arts to enhance vocabulary mastery among 20 seventh-grade students at UPTD SMP Negeri 2 Gunungsitoli Alo'oa. The problem identified is students' limited vocabulary caused by monotonous, text-based teaching methods that reduce motivation and engagement in English learning. This Classroom Action Research (CAR) employed a qualitative approach over two cycles, each involving planning, action, observation, and reflection. Visual art media used included an animated video and a thematic image titled "Home Sweet Home," both designed to present vocabulary contextually and engagingly. Data collection tools included observation sheets, field notes, and evaluation tests using multiple-choice questions with visual cues. The minimum passing criterion was set at 70%. Results showed improvement in students' vocabulary mastery, with average scores increasing from 84.83 in Cycle I to 92.00 in Cycle II. Students displayed greater understanding, enthusiasm, and participation when learning with visual media. The integration of both video and image media proved more effective than using a single medium, helping students connect vocabulary to visual contexts. These findings suggest that teachers can effectively integrate visual arts into English lessons to make vocabulary learning more engaging and meaningful. In conclusion, visual arts are effective tools for vocabulary instruction, enhancing comprehension, memory retention, and student motivation in English learning.

Keywords: visual arts, vocabulary mastery, English learning, visual media, classroom action research

Introduction

English is the language that is most commonly used for communication on a global scale by these individuals, Sukri et al., (2024). According to Octaviana, (2017), learning English is vital skill that will help children achieve their full potential in later life. English is one of the most important subjects in the Indonesian education curriculum, especially at the junior high school level, as it lays the foundation for mastering vocabulary. A strong vocabulary is essential for developing key language skills, including listening, speaking, presenting, reading, viewing, and writing.

Vocabulary is a crucial component in learning a foreign language, Suseno, et al., (2024). Vocabulary represents one of the most important skills necessary for teaching and learning a foreign language (Taha et al, 2023). Vocabulary refers to a collection of words that carry meaning, are comprehensible to an individual, and can be used for interaction with others (Sahnan & Daulay, 2025). Vocabulary becomes the main tool for students in their attempt to use English effectively. Vocabulary is a fundamental component of English; without sufficient vocabulary, a person is unable to communicate effectively in the language. Vieira, (2024). Nabilah, (2024) emphasizing that vocabulary is the first

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dimension in learning a foreign language, which serves as the foundation for achieving language proficiency.

In the researcher's view, presenting serves as an important part of language learning since it enables students to practice vocabulary use in meaningful contexts. A strong vocabulary base supports effective presentation skills, enabling learners to express thoughts, ideas, and emotions clearly in front of an audience. Vocabulary plays an important role in supporting speaking skills, enabling learners to express their thoughts, ideas, and emotions effectively in English (Nargiza, 2024).

In presentations, learners need to master topic-specific vocabulary and use discourse markers that help them organize their speech. Furthermore, effective presentations require not only vocabulary knowledge but also skills such as intonation, body language, and clear articulation to engage the audience.

In conclusion, presenting plays a significant role in language learning, as it involves not only a solid foundation of vocabulary but also the ability to apply it effectively in real-life or simulated classroom contexts. Vocabulary serves as a vital tool that enables learners to convey ideas, express opinions, and communicate messages clearly during presentations.

Based on observations and interviews with researchers at the UPTD of SMP Negeri 2 Gunungsitoli Alo'oa, several challenges were found, especially in students' vocabulary mastery. When researchers asked students the meaning of several familiar words, many students did not know, there were some students who wanted to try to answer, but did not have the courage to provide an answer. After that, researchers provided seventh-grade English material entitled Home sweet home, and asked students to memorize easy vocabulary that researchers had previously explained to students. However, many students had difficulty understanding and remembering new words, which impacted their ability to communicate effectively in English. This observation began when researchers participated in the Campus Teaching Batch 8 program at the school, which took place from September 10, 2024 to December 15, 2024. During this period, researchers closely observed how students learned English in class and noted the various challenges they faced, especially in acquiring and remembering new vocabulary.

One of the main causes of this problem is the use of learning methods that were still less varied. Predominantly text-based or lecture-based learning methods often failed to attract students' attention, causing them to feel bored and less motivated.

Visual art is an art form that expresses creativity, emotion, and communication through visual means. One important branch of visual art is visual

media, which includes images, videos, and other visual materials that convey meaning through sight. Visual media serves not only as a tool for artistic expression but also as an effective learning aid in the classroom. (Li, 2024). According to Utami (2019), using visual media such as pictures can make students more active in learning, clarify the connection between learning materials and the real world, and help them stay focused when listening to and observing the teacher during the lesson. This shows that visual media effectively supports students' understanding by engaging their attention and imagination. So, in this context, visual art—particularly its branch of visual media can be effectively used in language learning to teach vocabulary. Through visual media, students can explore their creativity and express emotions while learning new words. It also facilitates communication and interaction, making vocabulary learning more engaging and meaningful (Garcia, 2025). Therefore, visual media acts as a bridge between artistic expression and language learning, enabling students to develop vocabulary through creative and expressive experiences (Habibi & Rahmanpanah, 2020).

The integration of visual media in language learning can help students build associations between new words and images, thus strengthening their memory of the vocabulary (Gayathri & Vijayalakshmi, 2025). By using this approach, students are not only more motivated to learn but also able to remember and use English vocabulary more effectively. The use of visual media in teaching English vocabulary has proven to be effective in improving students' learning outcomes (Tahir et al., 2020).

Art has long served as a valuable medium in the teaching and learning process across diverse groups. When integrated with the four language skills—reading, writing, speaking, and listening—it fosters deeper analysis and encourages students to reflect on themselves and their environment. This approach leads to enriched understanding and more meaningful communication. Engaging students with art is not only enjoyable but also forms a key part of authentic learning. It nurtures the heart and spirit alongside the mind and body, acting as a holistic force that supports learners' social, emotional, creative, intellectual, and physical development (Simanjuntak et al., 2019).

This study aims to integrate visual arts into English language learning to enhance the vocabulary learning of seventh-grade students at UPTD SMP Negeri 2 Gunungsitoli Alo'oa. Through this approach, students are expected to develop greater motivation for learning while improving their ability to remember and master English vocabulary. While visual media have

been widely used in language instruction, most applications tend to focus on a single type of media either video or image used separately. Furthermore, many of these implementations are conducted in higher education contexts or in more developed school environments (Ramos et al., 2015). The integration of visual media in learning can enhance students' interest and motivation, as well as expand their understanding of the subject matter (Husni, et al., 2024).

Through the implementation of English Language Learning: Visual Arts to Improve the Seventh Graders' Vocabulary of UPTD SMP Negeri 2 Gunungsitoli Alo'oa, this research aims to provide a practical and innovative method that can increase student engagement and vocabulary retention, which will ultimately contribute to better language skills and a more enjoyable learning experience. In addition, the learning objective achievement criteria is 70% for students' mastery of English vocabulary after the application of the visual arts method in learning. This standard is used as a reference to assess the success of the application of the method in improving students' vocabulary skills at UPTD SMP Negeri 2 Gunungsitoli Alo'oa.

Method

A research method is an organized and methodical process for gathering, analyzing, and interpreting data within a study. It outlines the instruments, strategies, and steps utilized to explore a research issue, address questions, or evaluate hypotheses.

Research method is an empirical enquiry that investigates a contemporary phenomenon within its real-life context when the boundaries between phenomenon and context are not clearly evident, Budiyanto (2016). Firdaus et al., (2021) state that research method is the systemic way that researchers use in the collection of data necessary in the process of identifying and explaining social phenomena that are being investigated. According to Osuagwu (2020) research methods, generally include designing studies, collecting data, analyzing collected data, testing for relevant relationships/differences between/among variables, making sense out of research findings, and reporting the findings to the relevant audience in the appropriate format.

Moreover, this research employed a Classroom Action Research (CAR) approach to investigate the effectiveness of using visual arts in improving vocabulary mastery among seventh-grade students at UPTD SMP Negeri 2 Gunungsitoli Alo'oa. Classroom Action Research is a method used to solve problems

encountered in teaching and learning processes within the classroom (Napitupulu, 2021). Classroom Action Research is an organized approach that enables teachers to investigate their own teaching environment with the aim of enhancing instructional practices and students' learning achievement, Yusron et al., (2023). Classroom Action Research is a medium for enhancing teacher and professional abilities for increasing student learning success, Rasuan, (2019). Yatim et al., (2023) add states that Classroom Action Research (PTK) is a tool that teachers can use to address problems in learning, as a means of promoting the improvement of education quality. Classroom Action Research aims to improve the quality of teaching by upgrading learning materials, inputs and outputs, processes, and objectives. On the other hand, it is also intended to foster a culture of research among educators to motivate them to actively seek solutions to classroom problems, Sunata, (2019). In beside that, Classroom action research must conduct by teachers in order to solve problems in the classroom and use it to improve teaching or to maximize the development of teacher and learners (Meesuk et al., 2020).

The cycle design of the classroom action research conducted from start to finish can be seen in Figure 1.

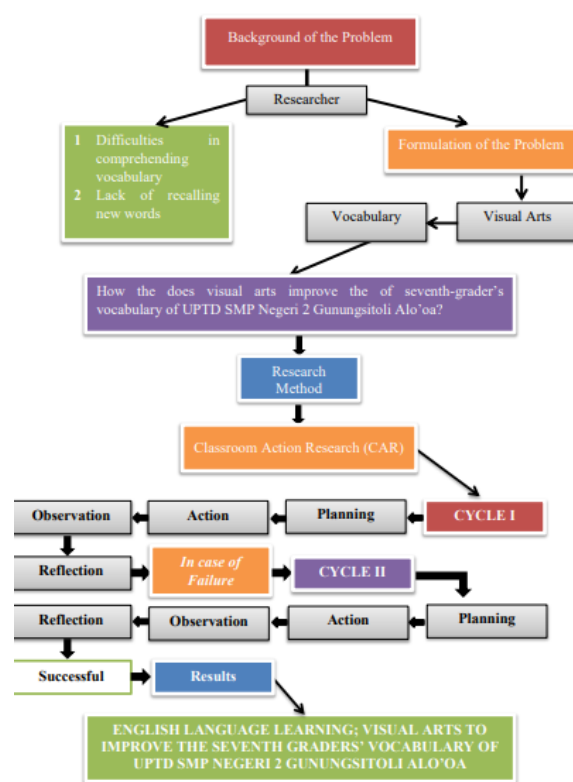


Figure 1. Action Research Cycle Design Class

This research employed a Classroom Action Research (CAR) design with a qualitative approach.

The study was conducted by the researchers at UPTD SMP Negeri 2 Gunungsitoli Alo'oa in the second semester of the 2024/2025 academic year, focusing on the seventh-grade students. The CAR procedure followed the model proposed by Kemmis and McTaggart, which involves four stages: planning, action, observation, and reflection.

The research was carried out in two cycles. In Cycle I, the first meeting involved the use of visual art media in the form of an animated video titled "Home Sweet Home," which presented vocabulary related to the parts and objects of a house. In the second meeting of Cycle I, the media used was a thematic visual image with the same theme, "Home Sweet Home." The same pattern was applied in Cycle II.

Data collection techniques included observation, field notes, and written tests. The evaluation was conducted at the end of each cycle using 15 multiple-choice questions supported by visual stimuli to assess students' vocabulary comprehension. The minimum passing criterion was set at 70%. The data obtained were analyzed to assess students' vocabulary improvement, classroom interaction, and engagement during the learning process.

Result and Discussion

The results of the research and discussion will be explained as follows:

Cycle I

The first cycle consisted of two meetings. In the first meeting, the researchers used a visual art medium in the form of an animated video titled "Home Sweet Home." After watching the video, students were invited to participate in a discussion to share which vocabulary they understood and which ones they found unfamiliar. This strategy aimed to help students identify new words in context while keeping them engaged with visual content. The learning process ran smoothly, with the researchers managing the class effectively and encouraging student participation.

In the second meeting, the researchers used a visual image with the same theme, "Home Sweet Home." Students were asked to observe the image, describe what they saw, and respond to vocabulary-based questions related to objects in the image. While the class generally responded well, some students appeared passive during the second meeting.

At the end of Cycle I, a written evaluation was administered using 15 multiple-choice questions accompanied by visual cues. The results showed that the average score of students was 86.47. Although there was a significant improvement in vocabulary mastery, a few students had not yet reached the minimum

passing criterion, prompting the need to continue to Cycle II.

Cycle II

To ensure consistency and stability of the results, the researchers proceeded with Cycle II using the same structure and media. In the first meeting, the animated video was used again. Students showed increased familiarity and confidence in identifying vocabulary items from the video.

In the second meeting, the visual image was used once more. Compared to Cycle I, students were more active and engaged in class discussions. Their participation improved, and fewer students remained passive.

The final evaluation was administered using another set of 15 multiple-choice questions. The results showed that all students successfully passed the minimum criterion, with an average score of 98.42. Students demonstrated higher enthusiasm, improved comprehension, and better retention of vocabulary items.

This improvement from Cycle I to Cycle II highlights the effectiveness of using multiple visual art media—both video and images—in enhancing students' vocabulary mastery. The integration of visual arts provided contextual learning, encouraged participation, and helped students connect words to concrete representations, which supported long-term memory and understanding.

Conclusion

The integration of visual arts through the use of a short video titled "Home Sweet Home" and image-based materials across two classroom action research cycles effectively enhanced students' vocabulary mastery. In Cycle I, students showed improvement with an average score of 84.83, though some did not meet the mastery criterion. In Cycle II, with improved classroom management, all students passed the standard with an increased average score of 98.42, showing better engagement, confidence, and motivation. These results confirm that visual arts are a successful medium for improving vocabulary, promoting understanding, memory retention, and active learning in a more enjoyable, student-centered environment.

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