



# Using “Engage, Study, Activate” (ESA) Method in Improving Students’ Vocabulary

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Received: 2022-06-20 Accepted: 2022-12-31

DOI: 10.24256/ideas.v10i2.2814

## Abstract

The researcher discovered that the second-grade students at SMPN 1 Watopute struggled with vocabulary mastering. The teacher reported that several words were not understood by the students during teaching-learning exercises. They were also unable to communicate in English, both orally and in writing, due to a lack of vocabulary competence. As a result, the researcher advised working with the instructor to fix the problem using the Engage, Study, Activate (ESA) strategy. The research topic was "How can the ESA (Engage, Stimulate, Action) strategy increase students' vocabulary acquisition in the second grade of SMPN 2 Ranteangin?" This was a classroom action research that included the following steps: basic research, planning, action, observing, analyzing, and reflecting in each cycle. The goal of this study is to help students enhance their vocabulary mastery. This study was divided into two rounds. The first cycle was a failure since only 60.8 percent of the students achieved the required score (75). After the second round, 86.9 percent of the students were able to pass the minimal score, indicating that the research was effective. Furthermore, the students demonstrated behavioral gains. They were more engaged in learning and ready to inquire and answer to the teacher. Consequently, the researcher decided to end the research.

Keywords: ESA method; Improving; vocabulary

## **Introduction**

Vocabulary mastery is an important part of the learning process for creating and understanding the language. People cannot state their thoughts and ideas in English even if they have a strong vocabulary. They are often unable to express themselves properly due to the lack of vocabulary mastery. Vocabulary mastery is a continuous process whereby someone must understand, recall, correctly pronounce, read, and use sentences. Students should correctly recognize, remember, pronounce, and spell the words (Aqahtani, 2015). One of the most important language components in learning English is vocabulary. It was necessary because words were the fundamental building blocks of language, the unit of meaning from which larger structures such as sentences, paragraphs, and entire texts were formed. If people have a limited vocabulary, they were not only unable to understand others, but they were also unable to form sentences to convey their messages to them. Furthermore, Hiebert (2020) defines vocabulary as the awareness of words and their meanings in both spoken and written language, which was important in the development of a language. They may recognize a word in written or spoken form and believe they "know the word," but they may be unable to use the word correctly in different contexts.

There are several reasons why learning vocabulary is important. A language's vocabulary is extremely important. We learn language words when we learn a language like English. Furthermore, vocabulary is required to master the four English skills. Similarly, Hawken (2010) contends that expanding one's vocabulary necessitates both recognition of word meanings and learning to paraphrase. When students improved their vocabulary, it helped them master the fundamentals of English. In other words, they gained confidence in speaking by using the vocabulary they had learned. The problems were discovered during an interview with the English teacher at SMP N 1 Watopute. The second-grade students have poor vocabulary mastery. For example, when they came across the words "bold" and "underline" in a test question, they still asked the teacher what they meant. However, when the teacher asked them to translate the word into Indonesian, they were also unable to respond. Almost all of the students in that class received scores that were lower than the minimum score. It always required the teacher to conduct media testing.

There have been some previous studies on teaching vocabulary using the ESA method. Herdi conducted the first study in 2018, titled "Improving Students' Vocabulary Mastery by Using ESA (Engage, Study, Activate) Method for the Students'

of Eighth Grade at MTs Negeri 02 Pekanbaru." The students' average vocabulary test core score increased from 66.67 (poor) to 78.66 (excellent) (good). The study was deemed successful because it improved students' vocabulary mastery significantly. St. Nurjannah Yunus Tekeng conducted the second study, "Engage Study and Active Method at The Second Grade of SMP 3 Lembang Pinrang Regency," in 2016. This was a classroom action research project. The findings of this study revealed that the ESA method was extremely effective. The result of this research showed that ESA method was very effective increasing students' vocabulary mastery because students' vocabulary mastery completeness increased from 64% in the first cycle to 82% in the second cycle because the completion rate was set at 75%, the study was deemed a success.

The gap between this research and previous research can be found in the research setting. This study was conducted at SMPN 1 Watopute, whereas previous studies were conducted at various schools. Meanwhile The similarities between this research and previous ones can be seen in the research objectives. Specifically, the ESA method is used to improve students' vocabulary mastery.

Based on the previous findings, the researcher planned to address this issue by implementing the ESA method to improve the students' vocabulary mastery. The researcher chose the ESA method as a medium for teaching English because it had several advantages. Students, for example, can improve their vocabulary mastery and try to remember the vocabularies as soon as possible by paying attention to the teacher after the teacher stimulates the students to keep them engaged in the lesson. Students can also learn vocabulary in a fun and non-boring way. Furthermore, this method can help students focus because it requires them to concentrate and understand the materials quickly.

## Method

The researcher used classroom action research as the research design. CAR for English Learning's goal is to develop a specific instructional strategy to solve practical instructional problems in the English classroom. The classroom action research was carried out using the CAR model, which was adapted from Kemmis, McTaggart, and Nixon (2013). It consisted of five steps: First, preliminary research was conducted by the researcher to determine the true state of the students' and teachers' problems in the teaching and learning process, particularly in teaching vocabulary. Second, make a plan (The researcher planned many things in this step, such as preparing the materials for the students, as well as the teaching medias, namely pictures, videos, or riddles for each meeting). Third, Action (The teacher taught the materials in this step by implementing Engage, Study, and Activate) (ESA). The action was split into three parts. They were divided into three categories: pre-teaching activities, while-teaching activities, and post-teaching activities. Fourth, observe (two observation sheets were filled out in this step, namely the teacher's activity sheet and the student's activity sheet). Finally, reflecting (reflection was done by looking at the results of the observation to determine whether or not the teaching and learning process vocabulary through ESA method was successful).

## Results

### *Preliminary Research*

Following an interview, the researcher discovered that the eighth-grade students at SMPN 1 Watopute lacked language proficiency. They had trouble understanding English language, whether spoken or written. As a result, the researcher wished to address this issue by employing the Engage, Study, Activate (ESA) strategy.

#### *Planning*

The researcher developed the lesson plans, materials, and instruments to be utilized in this research at this phase. The lesson plans were utilized to ensure the success of the teaching and learning processes. The tools included observation papers for herself and the kids, as well as vocabulary assessments to see whether or not the pupils' language knowledge had improved. The researcher also produced three separate themes that were taught in the first cycle, such as animal vocabulary, transportation vocabulary, and profession vocabulary.

#### *Implementing*

The researcher then began the engage phase by asking the kids questions

about animals. The researcher then showed the pupils images of animals and asked them to name the animals they knew in English, but most of them couldn't. Following that, the researcher began the research phase by splitting the students into groups. Then, each group was handed a worksheet with numerous passages that they had to fill out based on the context. During this phase, students must not open the dictionary. The kids had not answered all of the questions after 30 minutes. As a result, the researcher eventually allowed students 10 minutes to look up the words in their dictionaries. After all of the species had been guessed, the researcher began the activating phase by instructing each group to select an animal to describe in front of the class. Finally, the researcher used the remaining time to teach the terms' pronunciation as well as how to employ them in phrases. Finally, the researcher encouraged the students to study harder in order to enhance their vocabulary knowledge and English abilities in general.

### ***Observing***

The researcher observed the students' performance in the classroom while implementing the ESA method. Students were observed in several areas, including engagement, courage, and cooperation. The researcher completed this observation sheet. Furthermore, the English teacher observed the researcher's teaching performance. This phase was carried out to keep the students' performances on track.

### ***Data Analysis before treatment ESA***

*Table 1. Result of Students' Observation of Cycle 1*

Cycle	M1	M2	M3	Average
I	30.4% (Poor)	32.6% (Poor)	42.3% (Enough)	46.3% (Enough)

The students only managed an average score of 30.4 percent in the first meeting. It indicated that the students' performance in class was subpar. Unfortunately, their score only improved marginally at the next meeting, where they only received 32.6 percent (poor). Fortunately, in the final meeting of the first cycle, they were able to obtain a significant increase of 42.3 percent, which was deemed sufficient. Overall, they were only able to obtain an average score of 46.3 percent in the first cycle, implying that the students' performance in three meetings was sufficient.

In the fourth meeting, the researcher and collaborative teacher analyzed the students' vocabulary test to determine the students' progress. The table below describes the number of subjects, the minimum score and completion for the research, the number of students who passed and failed the test, and the percentage of success for the first cycle. All of this was tabulated to help readers better understand the results of the vocabulary tests.

*Table 2. Result of the Students' Vocabulary Tests of Cycle 1*

No.	Name	Score
1.	Number of Students	23
2.	KKM	75
3.	Minimum Completeness	80%
4.	Number of Students who Passed	14
5.	Number of Students who Failed	9
6.	Achieved Completeness	60,8%
7.	Conclusion	Failed

This study included 23 participants. Only 14 (60,8 percent) of them were able to pass the minimum score (75) set by the researcher and the English teacher. As a result, the first cycle was deemed a failure because the minimum completeness (80%) was not met. As a result, the research was carried forward to the next cycle.

*Reflecting*

The research was deemed a failure based on the findings of the first cycle because the minimum completeness was not met. Furthermore, the students performed poorly in terms of engagement, courage, and cooperation throughout the first cycle. The majority of the students were inactive. They also demonstrated reluctance to question the researcher. As a result, the researcher decided to proceed to the next cycle in order to improve on the failure of the first cycle.

**Data Analysis after treatment ESA**

**Table 3. Analysis of the Students' Observation Sheets in Cycle 2**

Cycle	M1	M2	M3	Average
II	59.7% (Enough)	73.9% (Good)	82.6% (V.Good)	72% (Good)

The students achieved an average score of 59.7 percent in the first meeting. It meant that the students' performance in class was sufficient. Then, by the second meeting, their average score had increased significantly to 73.9 percent (good). The third meeting saw only a minor improvement, raising their score to 82.6 percent (very good). To summarize, their performance in this phase in terms of engagement, courage, and cooperation was good, with an average score of 73.1, indicating that the students performed fairly well in this cycle.

In the second cycle, the researcher examined the results of the students' vocabulary tests. When compared to the first cycle's vocabulary tests, the students improved significantly. The table below shows how the number of students, KKM, minimum completeness, number of students who passed and failed the vocabulary test, achieved completeness, and conclusion were calculated.

*Table 4. Result of the Students' Vocabulary Tests of Cycle 2*

No.	Name	Score
1.	Number of Students	23
2.	KKM	75
3.	Minimum Completeness	80%
4.	Number of Students who Passed	20
5.	Number of Students who Failed	3
6.	Achieved Completeness	86.9%
7.	Conclusion	Success

This study included 23 participants. Twenty of them passed the test, while three of them did not. In other words, the research was 86.9 percent complete. The research was completed in 80 percent of the cases. This means that the cycle's completion met the minimum requirement. As a result, the researcher declared the study a success. Based on the results of the vocabulary tests in this cycle, it was determined that teaching vocabularies using the Engage, Study, Activate (ESA) method was effective in improving students' vocabulary mastery.

### **Discussion**

The improvements in this study could be seen in two ways: improvements in the students' vocabulary mastery and improvements in the students' performance. The students' vocabulary mastery improved significantly. Only 14 out of 23 students passed the minimum score in the first cycle (75). It means that the cycle's completion rate was 60.8 percent, indicating that the cycle was deemed a failure. This changed in the second cycle, when 20 of the 23 candidates passed the minimum score. The cycle's completion rate was 86.9 percent. As a result, the research was deemed successful and could be terminated because it had reached the minimum level of completion (80 percent ).

In terms of performance, the students demonstrated increased engagement during teaching and learning activities. The students became more interested in the researcher's lessons. They also became more confident in asking questions and responding to teachers. Furthermore, the students were able to collaborate with their peers and the researcher.



According to Harmer (2019), ESA (engage, study, and activate) is one of the teaching methods that stands for Engage, Study, and Activate. Tomlinson (2016) expresses a similar viewpoint in his statement, stating that Engage, Study, Active was a method to pique students' interest in a topic and help them learn about it. According to Harmer (2019), if students were engaged or genuinely interested and

### **Conclusion**

Based on the findings and discussion in the previous chapter, it can be concluded that the Engage, Study, Activate (ESA) method can improve the vocabulary mastery of SMPN 1 Watopute eighth-grade students. This is because ESA is a very structured method that consists of three effective phases: engage, study, and activate. Engage means that teachers try to engage students by showing pictures or playing riddles; study means that students are expected to discuss the words that are being taught, which is a critical aspect of this method because students are expected to use critical thinking; and finally activate means that students are expected to be able to express themselves. Based on the findings of this study, the researcher would like to recommend that English teachers employ advanced methods of teaching English, especially vocabulary. One exciting way is to teach English vocabulary using the Engage, Study, Activate (ESA) method.

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