



Exploring Eight Grade Students' Practices and Challenges in Telegram-Assisted Vocabulary Learning with Vocabulary Self-Collection Strategy (Vss): Action Research

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Abstract

The objective of this study was to investigate eight grade students' practices and challenges in Telegram-assisted Vocabulary Self-collection Strategy (VSS) in learning vocabulary. This research provides two research questions: (1) In what ways Telegram-assisted vocabulary self-collection strategy facilitates students in learning vocabulary? (2) What are the constraints of the students in learning vocabulary using Telegram-assisted vocabulary self-collection strategy? With a classroom action research (CAR) as the research design, the researcher employed a qualitative research methodology. Participants in this study were junior high school students in Indonesia's Bekasi region who were in their second year of eighth grade. In this study, the researcher's instruments included a VSS chart and a semi-structured interview. From this research, two key themes were found: (1) The students' engagement in learning vocabulary through Telegram-assisted Vocabulary Self-collection Strategy and (2) The challenges of Telegram-assisted Vocabulary Self-collection Strategy in learning vocabulary. The results imply that Telegram-assisted VSS helps students to comprehend the text and improve their vocabulary knowledge.

Keywords: *EFL classroom, Telegram, Vocabulary self-collection strategy (VSS), vocabulary*

Introduction

Students still have challenging in the vocabulary classroom. Learning activities in the vocabulary class are only limited to writing, taking notes, and remembering. However, after learning vocabulary is finished, they will quickly forget the vocabulary they have just learned. Students are used to writing and recording new terms or vocabulary that they did not know before (Motlagh et al., 2020). They only remember the vocabulary and that makes them easily forget it. They are limited to learn vocabulary in conventional method. Learning English vocabulary by only relying on students' memory is an issue that must be considered. Vocabulary learning should not only be remembered, but students must also practice it in their daily lives. Education Technology or Edu-Tech is modern education system which refers to the use of hardware and software designed to enhance learning activities in classrooms and improve student educational outcomes. Learning by using technological advances such as social networks offer many advantages and conveniences to students and teachers, especially in ELT.

One of recommended social network media is Telegram. Mobile platform such as Telegram app make it simple to learn English as a second language (Almansour, 2022). Providing opportunities for students to improve their skills and knowledge by interacting with one another, exchanging ideas, and discussing lessons, concepts, and vocabulary is one way to encourage language learning (August et al., 2019). According to a study by Tabrizi and Onvani (2018), learning vocabulary through the social network was more successful than learning it the traditional way after comparing the results of words taught using Telegram and the scores of lexical items taught in the traditional way. This is also proven by Almansour (2022), that most of the students thought the Telegram application was effective as an English language learning tool.

Therefore, in order for students to learn English successfully, educators need to use methods that both encourage student participation in class activities and make it easier for students to understand the subject. Vocabulary Self-collection Strategy is a strategy where students choose or classify unfamiliar words, new words, words that are difficult to understand, then discuss in groups and write them down in a table called the VSS chart. By having each student choose words to be discussed in the group, Vocabulary self-collection strategy can help students learn to be more active (Hutauruk, D. R., Sakti, G., Syahrul, S., & Syafitri, W., 2023). In line with that, Agustina, R. K., & Fajarina, M. (2023) in their research concluded there was an increase in the average value of students (first cycle 67, while the second cycle was 94.3) after students were taught using the VSS strategy, this proves that the Vocabulary Self-collection Strategy can be applied to improve vocabulary understanding in students.

There were previous studies that doing research about Vocabulary Self-Collection Strategy, first was by Hutaaruk., et al (2023) conduct a study entitled "*The Effect of Using Vocabulary Self-Collection Strategy (VSS) on Students' Vocabulary Mastery.*" This research focuses on the significant effect of using vocabulary self-collection strategy on student vocabulary mastery. It was pre-experimental design with one group pre-test and post-test. The instrument is used to gathered the data is vocabulary test. From this study, the researcher found that there is a significant effect of using vocabulary self-collection strategy on student vocabulary mastery at eight grade level.

The second previous research was conducted by Sameen and Ayaz (2022) with the title "*Selecting, Speaking, and Saving: Applying Vocabulary Self-Collection Strategy in ESL Classroom at Intermediate Level at NUML.*" This study aimed to enhance the active usage of English vocabulary in English second language (ESL) learners with the help of VSS. The controlled group and the vocabulary self-collection group both took a diagnostic pre-test in this study. The two groups were enrolled in two parts of the diploma course, each with the same reading and writing requirements. The results showed that the vocabulary self-collection group outperformed the controlled group after two weeks of practice. The writer discovered some improvements from the application of VSS, namely, an increase in the number of learners' vocabulary and the vocabulary becoming part of their active memory, VSS assisted learners in properly defining words that were previously unknown to them, group discussions activity improved student-student interaction and student-teacher interaction in the classroom.

The third previous study entitled "*The Effect of Vocabulary Self-Collection Strategy on Thai EFL Undergraduate Students' Vocabulary Knowledge and Perceptions*" was conducted by Raungsawat and Chumworatayee (2021). Students' perceptions of the impact of instruction in the vocabulary self-collection strategy are examined in this previous study. In the study, 38 Thai EFL undergraduate English majors from Thai universities participated. A pre- and post-test on vocabulary, a questionnaire on perceptions, and a semi-structured interview were used to collect the data. The results of this linked study showed that VSS strategy helped kids learn new words, memorize word meanings, have the freedom to choose the words they wanted to learn, exchange words with classmates, work in groups, and comprehend the value of learning new words.

This study was done by the researcher in order to better understand how to facilitate the learning of contextual vocabulary in a setting that supports mobile devices, the previous research only focused on perceptions and effects on teaching English vocabulary using VSS (Hutaaruk et al., 2023; Agustina & Fajarina, 2023; Verawati et al., 2021). Meanwhile, this research focus on exploring students' practices and challenges in learning vocabulary with VSS assisted Telegram.

Therefore, this research sought to answer the following questions: In what ways Telegram-assisted vocabulary self-collection strategy facilitates students in

learning vocabulary? What are the constraints of the students in learning vocabulary using Telegram-assisted vocabulary self-collection strategy?

Method

This research uses qualitative method focused on the classroom action research design. Qualitative methods allow us to fully consider and fully understand information about participants' experiences, including their activities, products, ideas, perceptions, difficulties and solutions can be well-explored and comprehensively understood. To identify problematic situations or issues considered by the participants, the researcher uses Classroom Action Research (CAR) as the research design (see TABLE 1). According to Cohen et al. (2007: 304), classroom action research is used to investigate, and the benefits of this type of research include changing learning attitudes, increasing teacher competency, generating self-confidence, and developing research subject knowledge. The researcher used this method because it relevant with the problem that being investigated, which aims at examining students' learning practices and students' difficulties in vocabulary classes based on the Telegram-assisted VSS.

The research conducted in one of the junior high schools at Bekasi. The subjects of this study are EFL students in one of the junior high schools at Bekasi, Indonesia for the academic year 2023. The subjects are public school students who were in their second year of junior high school, aged around 13-14 years. Participants are EFL students who can speak Indonesian, Sundanese, and English with different abilities in understanding English lesson especially, vocabulary. Participants have used the Telegram application in daily life.

The data were collected through two research instruments, including student VSS chart and semi-structure interview questions. VSS chart used to measure the extent of students' understanding of the vocabulary being studied by giving instructions to students to choose interesting vocabulary or vocabulary that they think is important to learn. The researcher will do face-to-face interview and use semi-structured (open-ended) interview that the researcher will know the information deeply and opened.

Data analysis technique in this research refer to Braun & Clark (2013) model analysis techniques consisting of familiarizing, coding, searching for themes, reviewing themes, and defining and naming themes. Here are the steps' explanations: (1) familiarizing: until the researcher became familiar with the data to be evaluated, the researcher read carefully and paid close attention to the data; (2) Coding: The researcher coded each piece of data, gathered all the codes, and extracted the pertinent information. The data were handled by the researcher in a way that eliminated all ambiguities and minimized unimportant data; (3) Looking for themes: The researcher gathered all the information and noted each theme's associated coded data. From all the data (semi-structured interview and VSS chart)

gathered in this step, the researcher identified and separated two themes; (4) Reviewing the themes: The researcher read the themes again and double checked them to make sure they addressed the study questions and the coded information. The researcher starts to discuss the connections between the concepts; (5) Defining and naming themes: The researcher determines the "essence" of each theme and arranges them by giving them succinct, instructive names. The researcher concentrated on outlining and summarizing each topic found; (6) Writing up: The researcher developed the themes from the findings into a more comprehensive explanation, along with documented data proofs, to support the findings.

Results

The students' engagement in learning vocabulary through Vocabulary Self-collection Strategy

Student responses during the vocabulary learning process using Telegram-assisted VSS were very positive. VSS provided an engaging teaching and learning environment through active and independent learning. The student vignette that follow detail a selection of VSS activities that they particularly like.

Student Vignette 1

This VSS strategy can make students learn more actively and independently, because what I felt earlier is that usually in vocabulary learning classes the teacher has provided material for students to memorize, whereas when I learn to use VSS I become more active and independent in choosing which words do I want to learn. (Isan)

Student Vignette 2

VSS made it easier for me to understand the text given earlier, with this strategy my understanding of vocabulary increased and I became more understanding of the meaning of words because in the VSS chart students were told to explain the reasons for choosing words and definitions according to students.

Student Vignette 3

VSS strategy really helps me because students can understand more deeply the meaning of the words they want to learn. In my opinion learning vocabulary using VSS can be done anywhere independently without having have a companion (teacher).

Student Vignette 4

I think learning vocabulary using VSS is better than memorizing, because we (students) are required to learn actively and independently choose which words to learn and discuss its meaning with friends in group. And also, this makes the learning atmosphere in class not boring because we (students) are asked to discuss and present in front of class.

The student's vignettes show students' engagement in learning vocabulary through Telegram-assisted VSS. The students became active and independent in the learning process. The students actively discuss with other members of the same group and independently choose the vocabulary they need to learn. One of the students also admitted that this VSS strategy was not only limited to being carried out in the classroom, but they could use this strategy in daily English learning. Students feel that learning in class becomes more active and they don't get bored quickly because group discussion activities help them to discuss the topic and fill the VSS group chart and to comprehend the recount text given by the teacher.

The VSS activity also inspires students to present their VSS group chart and a quick review of their reading in front of the class. This activity can also practice students' public speaking skills and self-confidence. In addition, the Vocabulary Self-Collection Strategy also encourages students to think critically in explaining definitions of vocabulary using their own language.

1. The challenges of Telegram-assisted Vocabulary Self-collection Strategy in learning vocabulary

During the process of learning using the combination of Telegram application and VSS, most students admitted that they had difficulty rewriting the definitions of the words they were learning using their own language. Students also admitted that there were deficiencies in the Telegram application which made it difficult for them to search for the meaning of the words. The students' constraints are explained below:

Student Vignette 5

The difficulty that I experienced was that when I filled out the VSS chart, there were several words that I did not understand and it was difficult to explain in my own language, for example the word "fortunate".

Student Vignette 6

When I chose the word and wanted to find the definition of the word in the online bot dictionary in Telegram application, it turned out that there was one word that had no meaning in the dictionary bot. Yes, the lack of the Telegram dictionary bot made it difficult for me to find the meaning of the word I wanted to learn.

Student Vignette 7

The weakness of the Telegram application is that the dictionary bot is incomplete, so there are words that I was looking for but have no meaning.

The constraint faced by students based on their experience in learning vocabulary using Telegram-assisted VSS is that they have difficulty rewriting the definitions of words they learn using their own language. This is due to the lack of students' ability to think critically by paraphrasing a sentence causing students difficulties in working on the VSS chart. Students also admitted that the deficiencies found in the Telegram dictionary bot made it difficult for them to translate the meaning of words from English into Indonesian. One of the weaknesses of Telegram

is the online dictionary bot which is still incomplete and must be added more vocabulary collection

Discussion

Ways that Telegram-assisted Vocabulary Self-collection Strategy facilitates students in learning vocabulary

The students' engagement in learning vocabulary through Telegram-assisted Vocabulary Self-collection Strategy

This study aims to investigate the way Telegram-assisted Vocabulary Self-collection strategy facilitates students in learning vocabulary and the constraints they have during learning practice using this strategy. The findings revealed the students' engagement and the constraints they have had in learning vocabulary using Telegram-assisted VSS. The participants were reported that social media applications such as Telegram helped them to find the meaning of the vocabulary they wanted to learn and accelerated them in filling out VSS charts. According to them, using an online dictionary bot on Telegram is more efficient and practical than using a dictionary in the form of a thick book. Using social media (Telegram) as a learning medium is more effective than the traditional methods (Address et al., 2018). The students also admitted that they didn't get bored quickly because learning vocabulary in class using Telegram became more fun and enjoyable.

Vocabulary Self-collection Strategy is an effective tool that focuses on students' creativity in choosing the interested words they will learn in order to increase their vocabulary knowledge (Ruddel & Shearer, 2002). During the implementation, the students engaged several activities such as reading texts, discussing, critical thinking, and group presentations. They actively choose words that they think are important to learn, look for word definitions in online dictionary bots on Telegram, and fill in the VSS chart by giving the reasons for selecting those words, then rewriting the definitions in their own language. This enables students to learn new vocabulary and form an active and creative environment among students in learning vocabulary through the context being discussed (Antonacci & Callaghan, 2012).

The constraints of the students in learning vocabulary using Telegram-assisted Vocabulary Self-collection Strategy

The challenges of Telegram-assisted Vocabulary Self-collection Strategy in learning vocabulary

During the process of the strategy, most of the students have had challenges in using the online dictionary bot that is in the Telegram application. In the Telegram there is a kind of online dictionary bot feature that can make it easier for students to translate the vocabulary they want to know from English into Indonesian. Unfortunately, most of the students admitted that they had experienced difficulties using the online dictionary bot feature. They admit that the online dictionary bot feature has drawbacks, namely that there is a word they are looking for but the meaning is not in the online dictionary. The deficiencies found in this bot make it difficult for students to find the meaning of the words and also make students need a longer time in finding it.

Students have difficulty rewriting the definitions of words using their own language. On the VSS chart there is a "students' definitions" column in which students are required to rewrite the definition of the word they are looking for using their own language. Some students admit that they experience a little difficulty in paraphrasing the definitions, this occurs due to students' lack of vocabulary knowledge which is also caused by students' lack of reading habits. The more reading they do, the more words they learn, by doing reading habits can increase students' vocabulary acquisition (Santi, Kholipa, Putri, & Mujiono, 2021). Having critical thinking skills is also needed by students in paraphrasing the sentence. Critical thinking skills help students to process and arrange words into different sentences but with the same essence.

Conclusion

The present study discusses about students' practices and challenges in learning vocabulary through Telegram-assisted Vocabulary Self-collection strategy in junior high school levels. The findings of this study revealed that VSS helps students in comprehending the text and improving students' vocabulary knowledge. In line with that, Haggard (1986) states that VSS encourages long-term vocabulary retention in an academic setting and aids students in expanding their vocabulary so they can become better readers. This is because the strategy motivates and makes students actively and independently in choosing which words they want to learn. Additionally, this strategy calls for group instruction so that students can discuss their thoughts and ideas with their peers. Participating in group activities boosts students' self-assurance and enthusiasm.

There are two practical implications for vocabulary learning based on the results of this study. First, teachers can take advantage of today's social media such as Telegram in which there are many useful features that can be utilized for the English learning process, one of which is the online dictionary bot feature. Then, the teacher can apply the VSS strategy when learning vocabulary in the classroom

which can be accompanied by group activities and the teacher can also apply this strategy to students' assignments to do at home independently.

The authors are aware of the limits of this research, in addition to the conclusions taken from its findings. First off, the fact that there were so few participants in this study raises questions about its neutrality. This study cannot be used to draw broad conclusions. Additionally, because of the length of the research, data gathering was limited by time constraints.

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