

Exploring the Effectiveness of Personal Vocabulary Note in Enhancing English Vocabulary Mastery at SMPN 1 Baranti

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ABSTRACT

This study aims to Exploring the effectiveness of the Personal Vocabulary Note (PVN) technique in enhancing the English vocabulary mastery of seventhgrade students at SMPN 1 Baranti. A quantitative method with a quasi-experimental design was employed, involving two groups: an experimental group taught using the PVN technique and a control group taught using conventional methods. The research instrument was a multiple-choice vocabulary test administered before (pre-test) and after (post-test) the treatment. The results showed an increase in the average score from 54.69 in the pretest to 81.88 in the post-test. Data analysis using the Independent Samples t-Test revealed a significance value of less than 0.001, indicating a statistically significant difference between the two groups. Thus, the PVN technique proved effective in improving students' vocabulary mastery. Additionally, it encouraged students to study independently and actively develop their English language skills. Therefore, the PVN technique can be considered an alternative teaching strategy recommended for vocabulary instruction at the junior high school level.

Keywords: Personal Vocabulary Note; Vocabulary Mastery; Learning Technique

INTRODUCTION

Language is a vital medium of communication used by individuals and societies to interact, express ideas, and share information. Without language, it would be difficult for people to express what they want or communicate effectively. Among various languages in the world, English holds a prominent status as a global language. It functions as a lingua franca for people from different linguistic backgrounds and plays a crucial role in global communication, education, technology, and international relations. In the era of globalization, mastering English has become increasingly important. Proficiency in English, especially

vocabulary mastery, significantly contributes to academic success and personal development. Vocabulary serves as the foundation for all language skills—listening, speaking, reading, and writing. Without a sufficient vocabulary, learners will struggle to understand texts, construct sentences, and engage in meaningful communication.

Vocabulary is not merely a list of words, but a system of oral and written units that students must understand and apply in context. It is divided into receptive vocabulary (words recognized when heard or read) and productive vocabulary (words used in speaking or writing). Developing both aspects is essential for language learners. However, many students face challenges in learning and retaining new vocabulary, especially when teaching methods do not match their learning needs.

At SMPN 1 Baranti, these challenges are also evident. Preliminary observations revealed that teachers often rely on conventional teaching methods such as textbook-based instruction and assignments, which fail to engage students actively in the vocabulary learning process. Many students find it hard to memorize new words or apply them in context, which affects their performance in both oral and written English. To address this issue, it is necessary to implement innovative and student-centered techniques. One promising approach is the use of Personal Vocabulary Note (PVN), which encourages learners to take ownership of their learning. PVN involves students creating and managing their own vocabulary records in personalized notebooks, helping them to identify, retain, and use new words meaningfully.

Personal Vocabulary Note fosters learner autonomy, personalization, and motivation. When students create their own word lists based on their needs and experiences, they are more likely to remember and use the vocabulary effectively. Moreover, the process of writing, reviewing, and revisiting vocabulary entries enhances memory retention and deepens understanding of word usage in various contexts. Several studies have shown that PVN can significantly improve students' vocabulary mastery. By integrating PVN into the teaching process, students are more engaged and active in their learning. Teachers can also use PVN as a diagnostic tool to track students' vocabulary development and tailor instruction accordingly. Therefore, this research aims to explore the effectiveness of the Personal Vocabulary Note technique in enhancing English vocabulary mastery among seventh-grade students at SMPN 1 Baranti. It is expected that the findings will contribute to the development of more effective vocabulary teaching strategies and provide valuable insights for teachers, students, and researchers in the field of English language education.

LITERATURE REVIEW

In the field of education, the concept of effectiveness refers to the degree to which learning objectives are successfully achieved. Effective learning does not only

emphasize the delivery of material, but also how that material impacts students' understanding and performance. In measuring effectiveness, elements such as human resources (teachers and students), learning tools, and measurable learning outcomes are important factors. In the context of this research, effectiveness relates to how well the Personal Vocabulary Note (PVN) technique helps students improve their vocabulary mastery compared to traditional teaching methods.

Vocabulary is a fundamental component of language learning. It refers to the total number of words that a person understands and uses in speaking, writing, listening, and reading. Without sufficient vocabulary, students will find it difficult to comprehend texts, express ideas, or engage in meaningful conversations. Vocabulary knowledge includes both receptive vocabulary (recognized in reading and listening) and productive vocabulary (used in speaking and writing). Therefore, vocabulary mastery is crucial for acquiring other language skills.

Vocabulary mastery refers to the students' ability to understand, memorize, and use words appropriately in various contexts. Mastery includes knowing word forms, meanings, usage in context, part of speech, synonyms, antonyms, and pronunciation. It also involves applying vocabulary in both oral and written communication. According to some researchers, students with strong vocabulary mastery tend to perform better in reading comprehension, writing fluency, and spoken communication.

Despite its importance, many students struggle with vocabulary learning. They often face difficulties in remembering new words, using them correctly, and retaining them over time. These problems may result from lack of effective strategies, insufficient exposure to vocabulary in context, or the use of conventional teaching methods that do not engage students actively. Therefore, teachers need to adopt techniques that can motivate students and support independent vocabulary learning.

One such strategy is the Personal Vocabulary Note (PVN) technique. This method allows students to create their own vocabulary records in notebooks or digital formats, where they write down new words, meanings, part of speech, example sentences, and personal notes. By organizing vocabulary personally, students become more engaged in the learning process. PVN encourages autonomy, self-reflection, and deeper processing of vocabulary. The PVN technique has been supported by various studies as an effective method in improving vocabulary retention and promoting learner autonomy. According to Schmitt and Nation, personalized vocabulary notebooks help students internalize new words better because the learning process is meaningful and active. Students not only write down vocabulary but also interact with it repeatedly through review and application, which supports long-term retention.

In addition, vocabulary notebooks can serve as personalized dictionaries that reflect each student's learning progress. They can include pronunciation guides, collocations, and contextual sentences, enabling students to use words more accurately. Research also suggests that students who use vocabulary notes are more likely to be motivated

and take ownership of their learning, which is critical for academic success in language learning. Considering the benefits of PVN in language instruction, this study seeks to investigate its effectiveness in a real classroom setting among junior high school students. It aims to provide empirical evidence on whether PVN can significantly improve students' vocabulary mastery and offer recommendations for its integration into English language teaching. Thus, the literature supports the hypothesis that Personal Vocabulary Note is a valuable strategy in English vocabulary learning.

METHOD

Design and Sample

This research employed a quantitative approach with a quasi-experimental design. The purpose was to determine the effectiveness of the Personal Vocabulary Note (PVN) technique in improving students' vocabulary mastery. The quasi-experimental design allowed comparison between two groups experimental and control even though random assignment was not possible. Both groups were given a pre-test and post-test to measure the impact of the treatment. The population in this study consisted of all seventh-grade students at SMPN 1 Baranti during the 2024/2025 academic year, totaling 33 students. The students were from two classes: VII.1 and VII.2. For sampling, random sampling was applied to ensure that each student had an equal chance to be selected. The sample was taken from class VII.1, which consisted of 16 students. This class was further divided randomly into two groups: experimental group and control group, each containing 8 students. The experimental group received vocabulary instruction using the PVN technique, while the control group was taught using conventional methods typically applied by the English teacher.

Instruments and Procedures

The primary instrument in this study was a vocabulary test composed of 20 multiple-choice items, designed to match the vocabulary level of seventh-grade students. This test was administered as a pre-test and post-test to both the experimental and control groups. The test was chosen due to its objectivity, ease of scoring, and ability to assess vocabulary knowledge at various cognitive levels. Three data collection techniques were used:

1. Tests. To assess students' vocabulary knowledge before and after the treatment.
2. Observation. To monitor student engagement and the implementation of the PVN technique during the treatment.
3. Documentation. To collect supporting materials such as lesson plans and classroom activity records to ensure consistency in teaching practices.

During the treatment phase, the experimental group was introduced to the PVN technique over two class meetings. Students were instructed to create personal vocabulary notes where they recorded unfamiliar words, their meanings, and example sentences. Meanwhile, the control group received instruction through traditional

methods, primarily textbook-based explanation and written exercises, without any specific note-taking strategy.

Data Analysis

The data were analyzed using descriptive and inferential statistical methods. First, the mean scores of the pre-test and post-test were calculated to identify general trends in vocabulary improvement. Before conducting hypothesis testing, normality and homogeneity tests were performed using SPSS software to ensure that the data met the assumptions required for parametric testing. After confirming that the data were normally distributed and homogeneous, an independent samples t-test was conducted to compare the post-test scores of the experimental and control groups. The hypothesis testing was carried out at a significance level of 0.05:

- Null hypothesis (H_0): There is no significant difference in vocabulary mastery between students taught using PVN and those taught with conventional methods.
- Alternative hypothesis (H_a): There is a significant difference in vocabulary mastery between the two groups.

If the Sig. (2-tailed) value was found to be less than 0.05, the null hypothesis was rejected, indicating that the PVN technique was effective in improving students' vocabulary mastery.

RESULT AND DISCUSSION

This study involved 16 students from SMPN 1 Baranti, divided into two groups: the experimental group, which was taught using the Personal Vocabulary Note (PVN) technique, and the control group, which was taught using conventional methods. A pre-test was conducted before the treatment to assess students' initial vocabulary mastery, followed by a post-test after the treatment to measure their progress.

The pre-test results showed that students' vocabulary mastery was relatively low. The average score was 54.69, with the highest score being 95 and the lowest 25. Most students fell into the "Average" and "Very Poor" categories. This indicates that, prior to the treatment, students had difficulties in vocabulary learning and retention. After the treatment, the post-test results revealed a significant improvement in the vocabulary mastery of the experimental group. The average score increased to 81.88, with the lowest score being 60 and the highest a perfect 100. Students in the experimental group showed greater consistency in achieving higher scores compared to the control group. The table below summarizes the comparison of pre-test and post-test scores:

Test Type	Minimum	Maximum	Mean	Std. Deviation
Pre-test	25	95	54.69	17.46
Post-test	60	100	81.88	14.00

To ensure the data's reliability, a normality test using the Shapiro-Wilk test was conducted. The significance values for both the pre-test and post-test were greater than 0.05 (0.290 and 0.097 respectively), indicating that the data were normally distributed and suitable for parametric analysis. A homogeneity test was also conducted using Levene's Test. The significance values for both pre-test and post-test were above 0.05 (0.319 and 1.000 respectively), indicating that the data from both groups had homogeneous variances and could be compared using an independent samples t-test. The t-test analysis revealed a significance value of less than 0.001, indicating a statistically significant difference between the experimental and control groups' post-test scores. This result confirms that the improvement observed in the experimental group was not due to chance but to the application of the PVN technique. Thus, the quantitative data analysis clearly demonstrates that the use of Personal Vocabulary Note significantly enhanced students' vocabulary mastery. The treatment not only improved scores but also minimized the gap between high- and low-performing students in the experimental group.

The findings of this study show that the use of the Personal Vocabulary Note (PVN) technique significantly improved students' vocabulary mastery. The improvement in post-test scores indicates that PVN is an effective strategy for helping students understand, remember, and use new vocabulary more effectively in context. One of the contributing factors to this success is the personalization element of PVN. When students select and record vocabulary that is meaningful to them, they are more motivated to review and use these words. This aligns with Kurzweil (2002), who emphasized that personalization enhances memory retention and learner engagement. Additionally, the repetition and review involved in creating and using PVNs helps consolidate vocabulary into long-term memory. As students write, organize, and revisit their vocabulary notes, they develop a stronger connection with the words, which supports sustained vocabulary growth, especially when compared to passive exposure in conventional methods. PVN also promotes learner autonomy. When students take ownership of their vocabulary learning, they become more responsible and proactive. This shift from teacher-centered to student-centered learning is essential in 21st-century education, where independent learning skills are highly valued.

The data analysis supports these claims. The average post-test score in the experimental group increased by over 27 points, compared to the control group, which showed only minimal progress. This suggests that PVN is more effective than traditional vocabulary teaching methods, especially for junior high school learners who need engaging and structured techniques. The findings are consistent with previous research. Aprilianty (2019) and Ahadiyah (2017) also found that using vocabulary notebooks significantly increased students' vocabulary retention. However, this study adds value by applying PVN in a public junior high school context, thus extending the evidence base to new educational settings.

Moreover, PVN was shown to be flexible and integrative, allowing the teacher to combine it with other language skills such as pronunciation and grammar. This

integrative use enhances the overall language learning process and can be customized based on curriculum goals and student needs. the discussion confirms that the Personal Vocabulary Note technique is not only effective in boosting vocabulary mastery but also promotes good learning habits. It fosters independence, increases motivation, and provides a concrete tool for vocabulary development that can be replicated across diverse educational settings.

CONCLUSION

Based on the results of the study, it can be concluded that the Personal Vocabulary Note (PVN) technique is effective in enhancing English vocabulary mastery among seventh-grade students at SMPN 1 Baranti. This is evidenced by the significant increase in students' scores from the pre-test to the post-test, with the average score rising from 54.69 to 81.88. The t-test analysis further confirmed that the improvement was statistically significant, indicating that PVN had a meaningful impact on students' vocabulary learning outcomes. The effectiveness of PVN lies in its ability to promote personalized and autonomous learning, where students actively engage with new vocabulary, record it in their own words, and revisit the material through regular review. This method helps improve memory retention and encourages learners to become more responsible and motivated in mastering vocabulary. PVN also supports multiple aspects of language learning, including pronunciation, spelling, and contextual usage. Therefore, the Personal Vocabulary Note technique can be considered a recommended alternative strategy for English teachers, especially at the junior high school level. It not only improves vocabulary outcomes but also fosters positive learning habits that benefit students in the long term. Teachers are encouraged to integrate PVN into their instructional practices to support more effective and engaging vocabulary learning.

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