

The Effectiveness of the Window-Shopping Method in Teaching Vocabulary to Senior High School Students

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ABSTRACT

This study aims to determine the effectiveness of the Window-Shopping Bag method in improving students' English vocabulary mastery. Conducted at SMAN 1 Fef, the research used a pre-experimental design with a one-group pretest-posttest approach. The sample consisted of 7 tenth-grade students selected from an original population of 19 students, chosen based on consistent attendance and willingness to participate. All participants had very limited English proficiency and struggled to recognize even basic vocabulary. The research involved a pretest to assess initial vocabulary knowledge, followed by treatment sessions using the Window-Shopping Bag method, which engaged students in interactive, contextual learning through simulated shopping activities with labeled items and role-play. A posttest was administered to evaluate vocabulary improvement. The results showed a significant increase in scores, with the average pretest score at 42.86 and the posttest average rising to 72.16. The N-Gain score was 0.51, which falls into the medium category. According to the decision rule, since the N-Gain score is greater than 0.3, the null hypothesis is rejected, indicating that the Window-Shopping Bag method is effective in enhancing students' vocabulary mastery. The method proved to be suitable for small groups with low proficiency, especially in remote areas with limited learning resources. It is recommended that future research involve a larger sample size and a longer period of implementation to better understand the method's long-term impact.

Keywords: Window Shopping Bag; Vocabulary Mastery; Effectiveness

INTRODUCTION

Speaking ability plays an essential role in mastering English, especially for Vocabulary plays a central role in English language learning because it forms the foundation for communication, comprehension, and overall language proficiency. Learners with limited vocabulary often struggle to understand texts, express ideas, and participate in classroom interaction. In the context of English as a Foreign Language (EFL), vocabulary knowledge has consistently been identified as a strong predictor of language achievement (Schmitt, 2019). However, for many EFL learners, especially those in rural and remote areas, vocabulary acquisition remains a persistent challenge due to limited exposure to English beyond the classroom.

In Indonesian senior high schools, vocabulary learning is frequently constrained by teacher-centered practices that emphasize memorization and translation. While these approaches may introduce new words, they often fail to support long-term retention or meaningful use. Webb and Nation (2017) argue that vocabulary learning is more effective when learners actively engage with words in varied and meaningful contexts rather than memorizing isolated lists. Without opportunities to interact with vocabulary through authentic tasks, students are more likely to forget newly learned words and lose motivation to learn English (Nurhayati et al., 2021). These challenges are more pronounced in rural schools with limited learning resources. At SMAN 1 Fef, Tambrauw Regency, students demonstrate very low English proficiency, with many unable to recognize or use basic vocabulary. Classroom observations and teacher reports indicate that students struggle with reading comprehension, sentence construction, and oral expression due to their limited vocabulary knowledge. This condition is exacerbated by the lack of engaging learning activities and minimal access to technology-based instructional media. As a result, students often show low confidence and passive participation during English lessons.

To address these issues, there is a need for instructional strategies that promote active participation, contextual learning, and student engagement without relying heavily on digital resources. One potential approach is the Window Shopping method, a movement-based and interactive learning strategy that encourages students to observe, discuss, and use learning materials displayed around the classroom. Through simulated real-life activities such as shopping, students are exposed to vocabulary in meaningful contexts while actively interacting with peers. Movement-based learning has been shown to enhance cognitive engagement and memory retention, particularly for learners with low proficiency levels (Mertens et al., 2018).

Several studies have highlighted the benefits of interactive and contextual vocabulary instruction. Rahmawati et al. (2020) found that students retained vocabulary more effectively when learning involved physical movement and peer interaction. Similarly, Kusumawati (2019) reported that contextual learning supports vocabulary development by linking words to familiar situations. However, most previous studies have focused on urban settings or technology-assisted instruction, leaving limited evidence on the effectiveness of movement-based strategies in rural schools with minimal resources.

Furthermore, many vocabulary studies emphasize test outcomes without sufficiently addressing learner engagement and motivation. Dörnyei (2020) stresses that students' attitudes and motivation significantly influence learning success, particularly in language classrooms. In low-proficiency contexts, instructional methods that reduce anxiety and increase participation are especially important. The Window-Shopping method offers a learning environment that is collaborative, interactive, and less intimidating, making it potentially suitable for students with very limited English ability.

Based on these considerations, this study investigates the effectiveness of the Window-Shopping method in teaching vocabulary to senior high school students at SMAN 1 Fef. By focusing on a rural context and learners with extremely low English proficiency, this research seeks to contribute empirical evidence on the use of movement-based vocabulary instruction in under-resourced EFL classrooms. The findings are expected to provide practical insights for teachers and inform alternative vocabulary teaching strategies that are feasible and effective in similar educational settings.

LITERATURE REVIEW

Vocabulary in EFL Learning

Vocabulary is a fundamental component of language learning because it enables learners to understand messages and express meaning effectively. In EFL contexts, vocabulary knowledge strongly influences learners' ability to develop other language skills such as reading, writing, listening, and speaking. Schmitt (2019) emphasizes that vocabulary mastery is one of the strongest indicators of overall language proficiency. Without sufficient vocabulary, learners struggle to comprehend texts and participate meaningfully in communication, even if they have basic grammatical knowledge.

Several scholars have defined vocabulary as the set of words that learners must recognize, understand, and use appropriately in context. Nappu (2017) describes vocabulary as the foundation of communication, while Karamoy (2018) highlights its role in facilitating both comprehension and expression in foreign language learning. Cameron (2001) further notes that vocabulary development is especially critical for beginner learners, as it supports the formation of meaningful sentences and early language confidence. These perspectives suggest that vocabulary instruction should be prioritized, particularly for learners with low proficiency.

Vocabulary knowledge is commonly divided into receptive and productive vocabulary. Receptive vocabulary refers to words that learners can recognize and understand in reading or listening, whereas productive vocabulary involves words that learners can actively use in speaking and writing (Biemiller, 2003). In many EFL classrooms, students tend to have larger receptive vocabularies than productive ones, indicating that exposure alone is insufficient for active language use. This gap highlights the need for instructional strategies that encourage learners to use vocabulary actively in meaningful contexts.

In addition to word quantity, vocabulary mastery involves several aspects, including pronunciation, spelling, grammatical usage, and meaning (Ur, 1996). Dewi (2017) explains that learners must understand both denotative and connotative meanings to use words accurately. Therefore, effective vocabulary instruction should address not only word recognition but also correct pronunciation, contextual usage, and grammatical function.

Challenges of Vocabulary Learning in Rural EFL Contexts

Vocabulary learning challenges are particularly evident in rural and under-resourced EFL contexts. Indonesian EFL students often have limited exposure to English outside the classroom, which restricts opportunities for vocabulary reinforcement. Nurhayati et al. (2021) found that many students forget newly learned vocabulary because they rarely encounter or use English in daily life. This issue is compounded in rural schools where access to learning media and technology is limited.

Traditional vocabulary instruction methods, such as memorization and translation, remain common in these settings. However, Webb and Nation (2017) argue that such methods are ineffective for long-term retention because they lack contextualized use. When vocabulary is taught in isolation, learners may recognize words during tests but struggle to apply them in real communication. This condition often leads to low motivation, passive classroom behavior, and poor learning outcomes.

Motivational factors also play a crucial role in vocabulary learning. Dörnyei (2020) stresses that learners' attitudes toward learning strategies significantly influence their engagement and success. In low-proficiency classrooms, students often experience anxiety and lack confidence when asked to use English. Teaching methods that reduce pressure and promote interaction are therefore essential, particularly for beginner learners.

Window Shopping Method as an Instructional Strategy

The Window Shopping method is an interactive and movement-based learning strategy that emphasizes student-centered and collaborative learning. Rahma (2017) defines this method as an activity in which students move around the classroom to observe and discuss learning materials displayed by other groups. Similarly, Istianingsih (2018) explains that the method encourages learners to explore information actively through observation, discussion, and peer interaction. In vocabulary instruction, the Window Shopping method allows students to encounter words in meaningful and contextualized situations. Learners take turns acting as "visitors" and "shop owners," enabling them to observe vocabulary items, ask questions, and explain meanings. This process supports active engagement and repeated exposure to target vocabulary, which are key factors in vocabulary retention. Movement-based learning has been shown to enhance cognitive engagement and memory. Mertens et al. (2018) argue that physical movement during learning activities activates multiple cognitive processes, making information easier to remember. For low-proficiency learners, this approach can reduce boredom and increase focus compared to static classroom instruction.

Effectiveness of Interactive and Movement-Based Vocabulary Learning

Previous studies have reported positive outcomes from using interactive and contextual learning strategies for vocabulary development. Putri (2020) found that elementary students showed significant improvement in vocabulary acquisition when taught using the Window-Shopping method. The study concluded that the method made learning more engaging and helped students remember words more effectively than traditional instruction. Rahmawati et al. (2020) also reported that interactive vocabulary strategies increased student motivation and retention because learners were actively involved in using words rather than memorizing them. Kusumawati (2019) similarly emphasized that vocabulary learning is more effective when words are presented in meaningful contexts connected to learners' daily experiences. However, most existing studies have been conducted in urban schools or technology-supported environments (Rahayu & Ananda, 2021). Research focusing on rural contexts with minimal resources remains limited. Moreover, many studies emphasize learning outcomes without adequately examining how teaching methods affect learner engagement and confidence, particularly among students with very low English proficiency.

Based on the reviewed literature, there is a clear need for further research on vocabulary teaching strategies that are practical, engaging, and suitable for rural EFL classrooms. While the Window-Shopping method has shown promise in improving engagement and learning outcomes, limited empirical evidence exists regarding its effectiveness for senior high school students with extremely low vocabulary mastery in remote areas. This study addresses that gap by examining the effectiveness of the Window-Shopping method in improving vocabulary learning among rural senior high school students, focusing on both learning outcomes and contextual suitability.

METHOD

Design and Samples

This study employed a quasi-experimental design involving two groups, namely an experimental group and a control group, both of which were given a pre-test and a post-test to measure changes in students' speaking performance. A quasi-experimental design was considered appropriate because the researcher worked with intact classroom groups that could not be randomly assigned, while still allowing comparison of learning outcomes between two instructional treatments. The experimental group was taught using role-play activities designed to simulate workplace communication, whereas the control group received conventional instruction based on textbooks and teacher explanations.

The population of this study consisted of vocational high school students at SMKN 1 Tenggarong who study English as a compulsory subject. The sample was selected purposively to ensure that participants had comparable academic backgrounds and

similar vocational communication needs. Two existing classes were selected: MPLB (Management Perkantoran dan Layanan Bisnis) and Marketing 2, each consisting of 36 students, resulting in a total of 72 participants. These classes were chosen because both programs require strong oral communication skills in professional contexts. Group equivalence was ensured by administering a pre-test to both groups and comparing their initial speaking performance before the treatment.

Instrument and Procedure

The instrument used in this research was a speaking performance test administered twice as a pre-test and a post-test. The test was designed to assess four components of speaking: fluency, pronunciation, grammar, and vocabulary. Each component was evaluated using a standardized scoring rubric with clear performance descriptors to ensure consistent assessment. Students performed speaking tasks in pairs within a limited time allocation to encourage spontaneous and interactive communication. All student performances were recorded using an audio recorder to maintain scoring accuracy and allow careful evaluation. The recordings were independently assessed by two English teachers acting as raters. The final speaking score for each student was obtained by averaging the scores from both raters to minimize subjectivity. Inter-rater reliability was strengthened through prior agreement on the scoring criteria and discussion of sample recordings before formal scoring.

The research procedure was conducted in three stages. First, a pre-test was administered to both the experimental and control groups to determine students' initial speaking ability. Second, the experimental group received treatment through structured and guided role-play activities integrated into speaking lessons, while the control group continued learning through regular instructional methods. The role-play activities focused on workplace-related scenarios to reflect vocational communication needs. Third, a post-test using similar task types and assessment criteria was administered to measure students' speaking improvement after the treatment.

Data Analysis

The data obtained from the pre-test and post-test were analyzed using the Wilcoxon Signed Ranks Test with the assistance of SPSS. This non-parametric statistical test was used to determine whether there was a significant improvement in students' speaking performance before and after the treatment. The Wilcoxon test was selected because the normality test indicated that the data were not fully normally distributed, making parametric testing unsuitable. A significance level of 0.05 was applied to determine statistical significance. Instrument validity was ensured by aligning the speaking tasks with the four assessed components: fluency, pronunciation, grammar, and vocabulary. Reliability was maintained through the

use of a standardized scoring rubric and multiple raters, with averaged scores used to reduce scoring bias and increase consistency in assessment.

RESULT AND DISUSSION

Students' Vocabulary Score Distribution

Students' vocabulary performance before and after the implementation of the Window-Shopping method was classified into five achievement categories: very good, good, fair, poor, and very poor. The distribution of scores for both the pre-test and post-test is presented in Table 1.

Table 1. Distribution of Students' Vocabulary Scores in Pre-Test and Post-Test

No	Classification	Range	Pretest		Posttest	
			F	P	F	P
1	Very Good	90-100	0	0	3	42
2	Good	70-89	2	29	0	0
3	Fair	50-69	0	0	3	42
4	Poor	30-49	2	29	1	8
5	Very Poor	10-29	3	42	0	0
Total			7	100	7	100

Table 1 shows that before the treatment, the majority of students demonstrated low vocabulary mastery. A total of five students (71%) were classified in the very poor and poor categories, indicating limited ability to recognize and apply basic English vocabulary. Only two students (29%) achieved scores in the good category, while none reached the fair or very good levels. In contrast, the post-test results indicate a substantial shift in score distribution. Six students (84%) moved into higher achievement categories, with three students (42%) reaching the very good level and another three students (42%) attaining the fair category. The very poor category was eliminated entirely in the post-test, and only one student (8%) remained in the poor category. This change reflects an overall improvement in vocabulary performance after the instructional treatment.

Comparison of Mean Scores

To provide a clearer overview of students' vocabulary improvement, the mean scores and dispersion values for the pre-test and post-test were calculated and are presented in Table 2.

Table 2. Mean Scores of Students' Vocabulary Performance

		Mean	N	Std. Deviation	Std. Error Mean
Pair 1	Pretest	42.86	7	26.90	10.17
	Posttest	72.16	7	22.52	8.51

As shown in Table 2, the average vocabulary score in the pre-test was 42.86, reflecting low initial vocabulary mastery among participants. After the implementation of the Window-Shopping method, the mean score increased to 72.16 in the post-test. This represents an improvement of 29.30 points between the two testing occasions. The standard deviation decreased from 26.90 in the pre-test to 22.52 in the post-test. This reduction suggests that students' vocabulary scores became more consistent after the treatment, indicating a narrowing of performance differences among participants.

N-Gain Analysis

To quantify the degree of improvement in students' vocabulary mastery, the N-Gain (Normalized Gain) score was calculated using the mean pre-test and post-test scores. The results of this analysis are presented in Table 3.

Table 3. N-Gain Score of Students' Vocabulary Improvement

Mean Pre-Test	Mean Post-Test	Maximum Score	N-Gain	Interpretation
42.86	72.16	100	0.51	Moderate

Table 3 indicates that the calculated N-Gain score was 0.51, which falls within the moderate improvement category based on standard N-Gain criteria. This value reflects a meaningful increase in students' vocabulary mastery from pre-test to post-test. The result confirms that measurable learning gains occurred following the implementation of the Window-Shopping method.

The findings of this study reveal that the Window Shopping method significantly improved students' vocabulary mastery, as indicated by the N-Gain score of 0.51, which falls into the medium category. This improvement is particularly notable considering the starting point of the participants students with extremely limited English proficiency. Prior to the intervention, many of them could not understand even the most basic English vocabulary. Their pretest scores averaged 42.86, categorized as poor or very poor. However, following the implementation of the method, the posttest average rose to 72.16, suggesting meaningful progress in their vocabulary acquisition.

This result aligns with the idea that contextual, visual, and interactive methods can greatly assist learners, especially those starting from a very low proficiency level

(Fitriana & Yusuf, 2021). The Window Shopping method provides students with direct interaction with visual aids (such as labeled items, pictures, and realia) and repeated exposure to vocabulary through a simulated “shopping” experience. This technique turns vocabulary learning into a meaningful and memorable activity, which is especially crucial for learners who struggle to retain abstract or decontextualized vocabulary.

The use of real-world simulation in vocabulary learning has been supported by several researchers. According to Nation and Webb (2017), vocabulary learning is most effective when it is embedded in a meaningful context and when learners can interact with the target words multiple times across various activities. Similarly, Arif and Safitri (2019) emphasized that vocabulary retention among EFL learners is stronger when learning is connected to a familiar situation, particularly in settings where students have limited access to English outside the classroom.

Another relevant study by Isnawati et al. (2020) demonstrated the effectiveness of activity-based and visual learning strategies for students in rural areas of Indonesia, where English exposure is minimal. In such cases, traditional textbook-based instruction often fails to engage learners or support vocabulary development. The Window Shopping method, by contrast, encourages movement, interaction, and the use of real or replica objects, all of which support the natural acquisition of new words through multiple senses.

The findings are also in line with Utami and Puspitasari (2018), who investigated the use of role-playing and task-based learning for vocabulary improvement in elementary students with basic English. They found that involving learners in real-life tasks, such as shopping or preparing food, created better engagement and more sustainable learning outcomes than rote memorization or flashcard drills. Furthermore, Setiawan and Marlina (2020) showed that learning methods incorporating storytelling or games had a significant positive effect on low-achieving students in Papua.

In the context of students with zero or near-zero English ability, the success of this method is especially promising. These learners often face a double challenge: they lack the linguistic foundation in English, and they may also have low motivation due to repeated academic failure or limited support at home (Samosir & Pratiwi, 2022). Many students in this study initially could not recognize or pronounce basic words such as “apple,” “book,” or “ball.” This reflects a critical need for remedial and engaging vocabulary instruction at the most fundamental level.

Using the Window Shopping method allowed these students to visualize and physically interact with vocabulary items. This experiential learning helped bridge the gap between unfamiliar English words and their real-life meanings. According to Sulistyono (2019), physical interaction with learning materials can enhance memory retention by activating multiple areas of the brain. The multisensory nature

of the method seeing, touching, hearing, and speaking provided much-needed reinforcement for learners starting from zero.

This study also supports the work of Widodo and Anugerahwati (2023), who advocate for differentiated instruction in multilingual and multicultural classrooms, particularly in Eastern Indonesia. Students from such backgrounds often come with varying levels of readiness, and applying a one-size-fits-all teaching method is rarely effective. The Window Shopping strategy inherently allows for differentiation: more advanced learners can take on roles such as shopkeepers or cashiers using simple dialogues, while beginners focus on vocabulary recognition and pronunciation.

Moreover, the social aspect of this method cannot be overlooked. As suggested by Hapsari and Fauziah (2016), cooperative learning in small group activities increases learner motivation and reduces anxiety, especially among beginners. In this study, shy students who typically hesitated to speak English became more willing to participate when the activity felt like a game rather than a test. This shift in classroom atmosphere from passive reception to active participation contributed significantly to their progress.

The findings of this study provide practical implications for English language teaching, especially in regions with limited access to quality English instruction such as remote or rural areas. First, teachers should consider integrating more activity-based and visual methods like the Window Shopping into their vocabulary instruction. These methods are especially suitable for beginner learners and can be implemented with minimal resources. Second, this study encourages teacher training programs to include alternative teaching strategies that focus on learner engagement and contextual learning. In many regions of Papua and Eastern Indonesia, teachers still rely on grammar-translation or lecture methods, which are not effective for students with zero-level English. Providing professional development on interactive teaching methods could greatly enhance student outcomes.

Third, policymakers and curriculum developers should recognize the importance of vocabulary development at the early stages of English learning. If students lack basic vocabulary, they will struggle with higher-level skills like reading comprehension, writing, and speaking. The inclusion of vocabulary-rich, interactive modules in early English education would help close the gap between urban and rural learners.

Despite the promising findings, this study has several limitations. The sample size was relatively small, and all participants came from one school with similar linguistic and cultural backgrounds. Therefore, the results may not be fully generalizable to other contexts. Further research should involve larger and more diverse samples from multiple regions. Another limitation is the short duration of the intervention. The Window Shopping method was applied in a limited number

of sessions, which might not reflect its long-term effectiveness. Future studies could explore the impact of the method over a full semester or academic year to see if the vocabulary gains are sustained. Additionally, the study focused solely on vocabulary development. It did not assess the method's effect on other language skills such as grammar, reading, or writing. Further research could explore how this method supports integrated language skills development. Lastly, some students might have improved not only due to the method but also due to repeated testing and teacher encouragement. Future research should include control groups or comparative methods to better isolate the effect of the Window Shopping method.

CONCLUSION

This study investigated the effectiveness of the Window Shopping method in improving English vocabulary mastery among senior high school students at SMAN 1 Fef. The results indicate that the implementation of this method led to a clear improvement in students' vocabulary performance. Students showed higher achievement levels in the post-test compared to the pre-test, with most participants moving from low to moderate or high score categories. The comparison of mean scores demonstrates a substantial increase in vocabulary mastery after the treatment, supported by the N-Gain score, which fell within the moderate improvement category. These findings suggest that the Window Shopping method provides meaningful learning gains for students with very limited English proficiency. By engaging students in movement-based, contextual, and interactive activities, the method supports active vocabulary use rather than passive memorization.

The results highlight the potential of the Window Shopping method as a practical instructional strategy for EFL classrooms, particularly in rural or under-resourced settings where access to digital learning tools is limited. The method allows students to interact directly with vocabulary in familiar contexts, which helps reduce learning anxiety and encourages participation. Despite these positive outcomes, this study was limited by its small sample size and the absence of a control group. Future research is recommended to involve larger samples, longer implementation periods, and comparative designs to further examine the effectiveness and sustainability of the Window Shopping method. Additionally, future studies may explore its impact on other language skills such as speaking or reading. This study provides evidence that the Window Shopping method can be an effective alternative for teaching vocabulary to students with low English proficiency and offers practical insights for English teachers working in similar educational contexts.

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