

# IMPROVING STUDENTS VOCABULARY THROUGH GROUP CHAT DISCUSSION ON WHATSAPP IN LEARNING ENGLISH THIRD GRADE STUDENTS AT SMP NEGERI BUKIT KEMUNING

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**Abstrak.** Penelitian ini bertujuan untuk meneliti apakah terdapat peningkatan yang signifikan pada *vocabulary* siswa dan untuk mengetahui aspek *vocabulary* yang paling meningkat setelah diterapkannya teknik *group chat discussion*. Pendekatan penelitian ini adalah kuantitatif. Penelitian ini menggunakan kelompok pre-test dan post-test. Subjek penelitian ini adalah 28 siswa kelas ketiga SMP. Data dikumpulkan menggunakan *vocabulary test*. Data dianalisis dengan menggunakan *Paired Sample t-test*. Hasil penelitian menunjukkan bahwa adanya peningkatan dari *vocabulary* siswa dengan tingkat signifikan  $0,00 < 0,05$ . Hal ini menunjukkan bahwa penerapan *vocabulary* menggunakan *group chat discussion* dapat membantu siswa untuk menemukan makna dari teks dengan mudah.

**Abstract.** The objectives of this research were to find out whether i) there was a statistically significant improvement of students' vocabulary ii) which aspects of vocabulary improve the most after the students were taught through group chat discussion. The approach of the research was quantitative. This study employed one group pre-test and post-test design. The subjects were 28 students of the third grade of SMP. The data were collected using the vocabulary test. The data were analysed using Paired Sample t-test. The result showed that there was a statistically significant improvement of the students' vocabulary achievement with the significant level  $0.00 < 0.05$ . This suggests that teaching vocabulary using group chat discussion facilities the students to find meaning from the text easily.

**Keywords:** Group Chat Discussion, Vocabulary, WhatsApp.

## INTRODUCTION

Vocabulary is the basic language aspect which must be mastered before mastering the language, especially in the English language. According to Hatch and Brown (1995: 1) “vocabulary is a list or set of words for a particular language or a list or set of word that individual speakers of language might use”. Furthermore, Lehr, Osborn, and Hiebert (in Kamil and Hiebert, 2005: 2-3) define vocabulary as knowledge of words and word meaning in both oral and written language and in productive and receptive forms. It means that vocabulary is a set of word which can be used in all skills of language. Therefore, vocabulary is important for the students in order to master English language. This idea is in line with Richards’ and Renandya’s (2002: 255) who say that vocabulary is the core component of language proficiency and provides much of the basis for how well learners speak, listen, read, and write. Mastery of vocabulary would be affected to the use of the four language skills, namely listening, speaking, reading, and writing, because language component will influence in acquiring language skills.

There are some important vocabularies according to Putra (2011). First, Vocabulary can increase students’ knowledge. Second, the word is known help to organize the learning. Third, the creation of labels (words) is a tool for increasing learning. With vocabulary, the students can increase their learning. Thus, vocabulary has the important role in learning language, it can increase all of skills in English; listening, speaking, reading and writing and it can also increase students’ learning achievement. However, Indonesian students still have low of vocabulary. According to Nurweni and Read (1999: 162), in junior high school (SMP) the students are expected to learn 1,500 words based on the update of 1975 curriculum, while in senior high school (SMA) students based on updates of 1984 curriculum, students should figure of 4,000 words which includes the 1,500 learned in junior high school (SMP). On the contrary, Indonesian students’ vocabulary mastery is not considered high. They still have limited vocabulary and they have difficulty in remembering the vocabulary (Nurweni: 2017). Therefore, English teacher should improve their vocabulary teaching.

Osguthorpe and Graham (2003: 227) define a blended course as one which is taught by combining traditional face-to-face instruction with online learning components and online course management tools. Thus, we can say that blended learning is a kind of learning activity that combines online and face-to-face learning due to the high usage of the internet today. E-Learning could be a good solution because there is no time space constraints, the participants could determine their own speed in learning, and the reduction of operational cost. The underlying assumptions of blended learning approaches are to find a harmonious balance between online access to knowledge and face-to-face human interaction.

There are some researchers who have been proved the advantages of using blended learning. Djwandono (2013) found the effectiveness of blended learning on EFL learners' mastery of vocabulary. An intact a class of 21 students was taught vocabulary lessons, which amounted to 100 minutes of class time every week. Questionnaires were used to elicit their opinions on this teaching method. At the end of the 16-week semester, a post-test was administered to determine the gains in their vocabulary mastery. The result shows that the students can achieve 5000-level words after being taught by blended learning. Vasbieva et al. (2016) investigated the effect of the blended learning approach to teach English vocabulary to ESL learners. The study has been carrying out at Financial University under the government of the Russian Federation in 2014–2015 academic years. Twenty-two third-year students majoring in International Finance were trained in the training program. A pre-test and a post-test were the main instrument used for the purpose of data collection. The results of T-Test for correlated data and Sandler's A-Test suggest that the blended learning produced a positive effect on the ESL learners result. Blended learning, when well implemented, has the potential to support vocabulary learning process since it in increasing the amount of learning compared to that in-class learning.

The writer chose WhatsApp as the social media because WhatsApp is one of the largest social media platforms most used to communicate in the present. Thus, with some features in WhatsApp like sending pictures and voicemails, it can make it easier for students to interact with teacher. Not only that, but the group chat on WhatsApp is also very easy to understand and use, thus, it can make it easier for students to communicate with each other, or with teacher.

Based on the background above, the group chat discussion is needed to improve students' vocabulary. Group chat discussion can be used as an alternative to teaching students in improving their vocabulary. Thus, the researcher will try to find out whether group chat discussion can be effective for teaching vocabulary or not.

## **METHODS**

The approach of the research was quantitative. The design was one group pre-test and post-test design. The population of the research was students of the third grade of SMP Negeri 1 Bukit Kemuning and the sample of the research was class IX.1 consisting of 28 students. The activities were started from administering pre-test, doing treatment, and administering post-test.

The instruments used were vocabulary test. The vocabulary test was administered twice: the first was pre-test and the second was post-test. Pre-test was conducted to know the students' vocabulary before being given the treatment and post-test was given to know the students' vocabulary after treatment. In analyzing the data, paired sample t-test was used to prove the hypothesis and to know whether this research was significant or not by looking at the results of pre-test and post-test. According to Hatch and Farhady (1982:281) there are two basic types of validity; content validity

and construct validity. This research, the test in this research has content validity because the researcher makes this test based on the course objectives in syllabus of third graders students at SMP Negeri 1 Bukit Kemuning. The writer measures vocabulary referring to the aspects of vocabulary which are form, meaning, and use (Nation, 2001) as construct validity for this research. Reliability concerns with the consistency of the gained score from a test or instrument (Setiyadi, 2006). In order to achieve the reliability of the vocabulary of the students, *split-half reliability* was used in this study. The result of reliability score of pre-test was 0.45 (average reliability), and the result of reliability score of post-test was 0.43 (average reliability).

## RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

### Results

Based on data analysis, it can be concluded that there is a statistically significant improvement of students' vocabulary. It can be seen on the following table.

**Table 1. The Difference of Students' Vocabulary Score in the Pre-Test and Post-Test**

Mean Score of Pretest	Mean Score of Posttest	Gain
60.39	72.18	11.79

Table 1 shows that there is an increase score of students' vocabulary after implementing group chat discussion technique. It proves that the hypothesis proposed by the researcher is accepted. The researcher used Paired Sample T-Test to test the hypothesis and the following was the result of the test.

**Table 2. T-Test Result of Pretest and Posttest**

Paired Samples Statistics				
	Mean	N	Std. Deviation	Std. Error Mean
Pair 1 pretest	60.39	28	10.35	1.95
posttest	72.18	28	8.89	1.68

**Paired Samples Test**

	Paired Differences					t	df	Sig. (2-tailed)
	Mean	Std. Deviation	Std. Error Mean	95% Confidence Interval of the Difference				
				Lower	Upper			
Pair 1 posttest - pretest	11.78	2.97	0.56	12.93	10.63	20.97	27	0.00

Null hypothesis is rejected if  $t\text{-value} > t\text{-table}$  with the level of significance at  $<0.05$ . From the data in Table 2 it could be seen that  $20.974 > 2.045$  and  $0.00 < 0.05$ . Therefore, for the hypothesis, the null hypothesis was rejected and the research hypothesis was accepted. It means that there was an improvement of students' vocabulary after implementing group chat discussion technique in teaching vocabulary.

The researcher also found out that through group chat discussion, students improved each aspect of vocabulary. The researcher scored the students' vocabulary based on the vocabulary aspect. The differences of students' achievements are presented bellowed:

**Table 3. The Increase of Students' Vocabulary**

Aspects of Vocabulary	Mean Score of Pretest	Mean Score of Posttest	Increase
<b>Form</b>	25.40	26.30	0.90
<b>Use</b>	11.90	14.80	2.90
<b>Meaning</b>	10.50	15.70	5.20
<b>Total</b>	<b>47.80</b>	<b>56.80</b>	<b>9.00</b>

Based on Table 3, it can be seen that there was an improvement in each aspects of vocabulary after implementing group chat discussion in teaching vocabulary for three times in offline class and four times in online class where the highest improvement was on the aspect of meaning.

Finally, according to the results above, it is concluded that the group chat discussion technique can improve students' vocabulary. In other words, the result of the research proved that group chat discussion gave improvement to the students' vocabulary especially in terms of meaning.

## **Discussion**

After being taught by group chat discussion, students could improve students' vocabulary. This findings support the previous research, for example, Jafari and Chalak (2016) who conducted a research and found the fact that the use of group chat discussion on Whatsapp can increase the students' vocabulary and help the language learners find the implementation of the words, remember words for longer time, and practice the words after learning. The major improvement can be seen significantly on meaning aspect, because when the students doing a group chatting they should find the meaning about the words that provided by the teacher.

In the research process, pre-test was the first activity conducted by the researcher. The aim of the pre-test is to see how far the ability of the students in vocabulary knowledge. In the pre-test the researcher found out many students did not have a good knowledge of vocabulary. This condition made the writer want to teach them vocabulary. Furthermore, in this research there is an interesting phenomenon. The students can easily re-arrange the words into the correct form but not all can be understood. After they re-arrange the word, they did not know how it means and how to use the word in the correct sentence. The students still doubt to answer the meaning when the teacher asked for the meaning to the students. That is the reason that the students have lowest improvement in form aspect but highest improvement in meaning aspect.

There are several previous studies about the group chat discussion in teaching vocabulary. Bensalem (2018) also found that uses of Whatsapp as a media for group chat is recommended consider using that media in teaching vocabulary may allow instructor to teach large number of vocabulary so the students may have many vocabulary that they may not have in class. Group chat can obviously improve the students' motivation in learning; because it helps them especially for shy students who may not participate in face-to-face interaction to communicate with teacher or other students.

In a group chat the students feel free to express their opinion; asking help or giving help each other in discussing the materials given by the teacher. The teacher still gave restrictions or rules to them so they were not to get out of the material being discussed.

The highest improvement is meaning aspect. During the activity using group chat discussion the students directly check their dictionary on their mobile phone. Besides, the task given by the teacher consist of procedure text and if they do not understand the meaning, they can guess it contextually and it might be stay longer in their mind.

## **CONCLUSION AND SUGGESTIONS**

In line with the data analysis and discussion, the conclusion can be drawn as follows: (1) there is an improvement of the students' vocabulary after they were taught using

Group Chat Discussion. Group chatting is the efficient way to learn the material anywhere and anytime. It is easy for students to remember the words because they can re-open the material from their group chat in their phone when they are forget about the words. The improvement which happened to the students is because they have more time to learn about the material, so that they get more chance to practice English more. (2) Meaning is the aspect that improves the most among the other aspects since the students doing a group chatting they should find the meaning of the words that they do not understand. The suggestions for both English teacher and further researcher can be drawn as follows: (1) after having research, the researcher suggests the English teacher apply Group Chat Discussion in teaching vocabulary because there is as an extra time for the students to learn English in their home or other places. The teacher should prepare the material before he/she teaches in group chat. The teacher also makes the group chat for evaluation after teaching the material or provide initial material before the class start in the following morning. (2) This research is limited only to see whether group chat discussion can improve the students' vocabulary. Therefore, the writer expects the other researchers to conduct a similar research using other instruments in order to see the students' perceptions about the learning process using group chat discussion.

Those are the conclusion of this study during the research using group chat discussion technique, also the suggestions for both English teachers and further research in using group chat discussion.

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