

THE INFLUENCE OF THE DRILL AND PRACTICE METHOD IN LEARNING ENGLISH VOCABULARY AT SMAS GKPI PADANG BULAN MEDAN

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ABSTRACT

Mastering vocabulary is essential in learning English as it serves as the foundation for developing students' language skills such as speaking, reading, and writing. However, many students still struggle to expand and retain English vocabulary due to limited practice and lack of effective learning strategies. This discrepancy between theoretical understanding and classroom practice highlights the need for more efficient teaching methods. Therefore, this study aims to examine the effect of the Drill and Practice method on students' mastery of English vocabulary. The research employed a quantitative experimental design involving two groups of tenth-grade students at SMAS GKPI Padang Bulan Medan. Vocabulary mastery was measured through pre-tests and post-tests consisting of 25 multiple-choice items assessing students' ability to recognize, comprehend, and apply vocabulary in context. The experimental group received treatment through structured Drill and Practice activities—including choral, individual, and spelling drills—while the control group was taught using conventional methods. The results showed a significant improvement in the experimental group's post-test mean score (52.6 to 64.8) compared to the control group (52.2 to 58.6). Statistical analysis using an independent t-test indicated that the obtained t-value (3.558) exceeded the critical value (2.024) at the 0.05 significance level. The findings suggest that the Drill and Practice method effectively improves students' vocabulary retention, accuracy, and fluency. It is recommended that English teachers integrate this method into vocabulary instruction to enhance students' engagement and confidence in learning English.

Keywords: *Drill and Practice Method, Vocabulary Mastery, English Language Teaching*

INTRODUCTION

English holds a pivotal role as a global lingua franca, particularly in education, science, technology, commerce, and international communication. In Indonesia,

English is formally taught as a foreign language from primary school through higher education. Mastery of English has become an essential competency for students to remain competitive in the globalized era of the twenty first century. Among the four basic skills which are listening, speaking, reading, and writing, speaking is often emphasized as the most crucial, as it enables learners to express ideas, opinions, and feelings in real time.

Speaking proficiency, however, relies heavily on vocabulary mastery. Thornbury (2002) as cited in (Sitompul, 2013) points out that while grammar provides structure, it is vocabulary that conveys meaning. Learners with limited vocabulary often face difficulties in expressing themselves clearly. (Harmer, 2007) also highlights that fluency in speaking is largely determined by the size and quality of learners' vocabulary. In this regard, vocabulary becomes the foundation for developing oral communication skills. Yet, vocabulary acquisition is one of the most challenging aspects of language learning. Many learners struggle to retain words and use them actively, especially when the learning process relies on rote memorization. (Brown, 2007) emphasizes that vocabulary learning should involve meaningful engagement, repeated practice, and reinforcement to ensure long-term retention.

In response to these challenges, teachers are encouraged to adopt methods that strengthen vocabulary mastery through repeated exposure and active use. One such method is Drill and Practice, which is rooted in the behaviorist theory of language learning. This approach emphasizes habit formation through structured and repetitive exercises, enabling learners to internalize vocabulary and recall it more automatically in communication as explained by (Daulay & Nurmnalina, 2023). Empirical studies have also supported its effectiveness. (Daulay & Nurmnalina, 2023) found that students taught with drills gained confidence and accuracy in speaking.

At SMAS GKPI Padang Bulan Medan, preliminary observations and interviews with teachers revealed that many students face serious difficulties in vocabulary mastery. The average score of tenth-grade students in the latest vocabulary test was only 58 out of 100, which is below the school's minimum

competency standard. This lack of vocabulary mastery impacts students' speaking ability, as they often hesitate, switch to their first language, or struggle to find appropriate words during speaking tasks. Such challenges affect not only their fluency but also their confidence in oral communication.

Therefore, the application of the Drill and Practice method is expected to address these issues by providing structured and engaging repetition of vocabulary items. Through consistent practice, students will have more opportunities to internalize words and apply them in speaking contexts. (Dharma, 2024) also emphasized that many students fail to master English vocabulary because of poor retention and lack of active repetition, which ultimately hinders their speaking ability. By using Drill and Practice, students are encouraged to repeatedly engage with new vocabulary until it becomes automatic, thus enhancing both their vocabulary mastery and speaking performance.

In summary, vocabulary mastery is a key foundation of speaking skills, and effective strategies that promote active engagement and repetition are essential for supporting oral communication. Considering the importance of vocabulary in speaking proficiency and the potential benefits of Drill and Practice, this study seeks to examine its effect on students' vocabulary mastery and speaking achievement at SMAS GKPI Padang Bulan Medan.

LITERATURE REVIEW

Definition of Vocabulary

Vocabulary refers to the collection of words that learners must acquire to communicate effectively. (Hornby, 2015) defines vocabulary as "all the words that a person knows or uses," highlighting its role as a fundamental aspect of language knowledge. Beyond individual words, vocabulary also encompasses fixed expressions, phrases, and collocations that convey particular meanings depending on the context in which they are used.

(Nation, 2022) asserts that vocabulary constitutes a core element of language competence, as it serves as the primary foundation upon which communication is built. Similarly, Thornbury (2002) as cited in (Sitompul, 2013)

underscores the centrality of vocabulary in language use, noting that a limited lexical repertoire can significantly hinder a learner's ability to express thoughts and comprehend messages in both spoken and written forms.

Vocabulary Achievement in Speaking

Vocabulary achievement in speaking refers to learners' ability to use and recall appropriate words during oral communication. Thornbury (2002) as cited in (Sitompul, 2013) notes that vocabulary achievement is demonstrated when learners can access and apply their vocabulary knowledge fluently during speech.

Vocabulary achievement in speaking is not only about knowing many words, but also about selecting the right words quickly and accurately in real-time communication. This ability enables learners to express their thoughts, feelings, and intentions clearly and appropriately in various situations. As (Harmer, 2007) points out, the success of spoken communication often depends on how effectively learners can retrieve and use vocabulary under the pressure of spontaneous interaction. Therefore, vocabulary achievement plays a crucial role in developing fluency and confidence in speaking English.

Kinds of Vocabulary for Speaking

Vocabulary knowledge is generally categorized into two main types: receptive vocabulary and productive vocabulary. Receptive vocabulary refers to the set of words that learners can recognize and comprehend when encountered in listening or reading contexts. This type of vocabulary plays a crucial role in facilitating learners' understanding of information and ideas communicated by others. In contrast, productive vocabulary encompasses the words that learners are able to actively produce and use in speaking or writing to convey their own thoughts (Nation, 2022).

In the context of oral communication, productive vocabulary holds particular importance, as it enables learners to select and apply appropriate lexical items when expressing themselves. A well-developed, productive vocabulary supports learners in speaking with greater fluency, accuracy, and contextual appropriateness across a

variety of communicative situations (Thornbury, 2002) as cited in (Sitompul, 2013).

Definition of Drill and Practice

Drill and practice is a teaching method that involves repetitive, structured practice of language items to promote accuracy and automaticity (Richards & Rodgers, 2024). (Harmer, 2007) describes drilling as a technique where students repeat words or phrases until they can produce them confidently and accurately.

RESEARCH METHOD

This study applied an experimental quantitative research design using a pre-test and post-test control group model. As (Arikunto, 2013) explains, experimental research is used to determine whether a particular method or treatment produces a significant effect on the outcome. The design was chosen to measure the effect of the Drill and Practice method on students' vocabulary mastery, particularly in speaking, by comparing the performance of an experimental group and a control group before and after the treatment. The population consisted of 40 eleventh-grade students at SMAS GKPI Padang Bulan Medan, divided into two classes: XI-1 (20 students) and XI-2 (20 students). Following (Arikunto, 2013) guideline that populations under 100 should be taken entirely as samples, both classes were included. Class XI-1 was designated as the experimental group and taught through the Drill and Practice method, while Class XI-2 served as the control group and received conventional instruction.

The instrument used to collect data was a vocabulary test consisting of 25 items in multiple-choice, matching, and fill-in-the-blank formats. Each correct answer was scored at four points, with a maximum score of 100. The test was administered in two stages: a pre-test to assess students' baseline vocabulary knowledge and a post-test to measure their improvement after the treatment. Test items were adapted from the school syllabus and validated by English teachers to ensure content relevance and appropriate difficulty.

The procedure of the study was conducted in three stages. First, the pre-test was given to both groups to determine their initial vocabulary achievement. Second,

the treatment was applied: the experimental group received systematic vocabulary drills and practice activities designed to strengthen speaking ability, while the control group was taught through traditional methods without structured repetition. Finally, the post-test was administered to both groups to evaluate the effect of the treatment.

Students' scores were calculated using (Arikunto, 2013) formula, where the score equals the number of correct answers divided by the total items, multiplied by 100. Achievement levels were categorized into five groups: Very Good (80–100), Good (66–79), Enough (56–65), Low (40–55), and Fail (0–39). To ensure validity, the test items were aligned with the syllabus and lesson objectives, while reliability was established through a pilot test and internal consistency analysis. Statistical analysis, including descriptive statistics and an independent samples t-test using SPSS, was employed to examine whether the Drill and Practice method had a significant effect on students' vocabulary mastery in speaking.

FINDINGS AND DISCUSSION

The Scores of the Pre-test and Post-test

Table 1: The Means of Pre-Test and Post-Test Control Group

Group	Pre-Test	Post-Test
Control	52.2	58.6

The pre-test results in the control class showed a total score of 1044 with an average score of 52.2. The lowest score was 32, while the highest score reached 76. After the post-test, there was an increase with a total score of 1172 and an average score of 58.6. The lowest score rose to 36, while the highest score increased to 80.

Table 2: The Means of Pre-Test and Post-Test Experimental Group

Group	Pre-Test	Post-Test
Experimental	52.6	64.8

In contrast, the experimental group showed a more notable improvement. The pre-test data showed a total score of 1052 with an average score of 52.6. The minimum score was 36, while the maximum score was 76. Meanwhile, the post-test analysis revealed a total score of 1296 with an average score of 64.8. The lowest

score was 40, whereas the highest score was 84. However, the improvement was not considerably high. Several factors may explain this condition. First, although the Drill and Practice method helps students practice vocabulary repetitively, some students still struggle to recall and apply new vocabulary. Second, the limited duration of the study reduced students' opportunities to practice and strengthen their vocabulary mastery.

Additionally, the post-test data revealed that several students achieved the same score. This similarity may have occurred because of their relatively equal abilities as well as their tendency to provide similar responses to questions with the same level of difficulty. Another influencing factor is students' motivation and interest in learning. Some students demonstrated a lack of interest in English, which resulted in less active participation during the learning process. Consequently, their test results tended to stagnate and did not show significant improvement.

Therefore, even though there was an increase in the scores of the experimental class, the results did not indicate a substantial difference. This suggests that the Drill and Practice method is fairly effective in enhancing students' vocabulary mastery, but its application was not yet optimal since time limitations, differences in ability, and the low motivation of some students still influenced it.

Comparison Score

To determine whether the use of Pinterest media had a significant effect on students' writing ability, the t-test formula was used.

The t-test calculation was carried out as follows:

$$t = \frac{Mx - My}{\sqrt{\left[\frac{Dx^2 + Dy^2}{Nx + Ny - 2} \right] \left[\frac{1}{Nx} + \frac{1}{Ny} \right]}}$$

$$t = \frac{12.2 - 6.4}{\sqrt{\left[\frac{495.2 + 524.8}{20 + 20 - 2} \right] \left[\frac{1}{20} + \frac{1}{20} \right]}}$$

$$t = \frac{5.8}{\sqrt{\left[\frac{1020}{38} \right] \left[\frac{1}{10} \right]}}$$

$$t = \frac{5.8}{\sqrt{[26.84][0.1]}}$$

$$t = \frac{5.8}{\sqrt{2.68}}$$

$$t = \frac{5.8}{1.63}$$

$$t = 3.558$$

Hypotheses Testing

Hypothesis testing was carried out using the t-test formula to determine whether the hypothesis would be accepted or rejected. This study employed the t-test calculation with a degree of freedom ($df = N_x + N_y - 2 = 20 + 20 - 2 = 38$) at the 0.05 significance level. The results of the t-test showed that the calculated t-value was higher than the critical t-table value.

$$t\text{-count} > t\text{-table} (p = 0.05) \text{ with } df \ 38$$

$$3.558 > 2.024 (p = 0.05) \text{ with } df \ 38$$

Since the calculated t-value was greater than the critical t-value, it can be concluded that the alternative hypothesis (H_a) was accepted while the null hypothesis (H_0) was rejected. This finding indicates that the use of the Drill and Practice method had a significant effect on the vocabulary mastery of the tenth-grade students at SMAS GKPI Padang Bulan.

Testing Hypothesis and Reliability

Table 3: Validity

No.	r-count	r-table	Finding
1.	.679**	0.444	VALID
2.	.681**	0.444	VALID
3.	.681**	0.444	VALID
4.	.698**	0.444	VALID
5.	-.661**	0.444	VALID
6.	.617**	0.444	VALID
7.	.615**	0.444	INVALID
8.	.581**	0.444	VALID
9.	.542*	0.444	VALID
10.	0.064	0.444	INVALID
11.	.506*	0.444	VALID
12.	-.643**	0.444	VALID

No.	r-count	r-table	Finding
13.	.543*	0.444	VALID
14.	.457*	0.444	VALID
15.	.558*	0.444	VALID
16.	.553*	0.444	VALID
17.	.451*	0.444	VALID
18.	0,227	0.444	INVALID
19.	0,370	0.444	INVALID
20.	0,111	0.444	INVALID
21.	.453*	0.444	VALID
22.	.544*	0.444	VALID
23.	.505*	0.444	VALID
24.	0,350	0.444	INVALID
25.	.560*	0.444	VALID
26.	.679**	0.444	VALID
27.	.681**	0.444	VALID
28.	.681**	0.444	VALID
29.	.698**	0.444	VALID
30.	-.661**	0.444	VALID

According to (Sugiyono, 2013), a valid research instrument is a measuring tool used to collect data in research that produces valid results. In other words, the instrument measures what it is intended to measure in accordance with the objectives of the study. In this research, the type of validity applied by the writer is construct validity.

This study developed a vocabulary assessment instrument consisting of 30 multiple-choice questions. The validity test was conducted using the Pearson Product-Moment correlation with the latest version of SPSS, involving 20 students as respondents. The validity of the items was determined based on the r-table value at a 5% significance level, with 20 respondents, resulting in an r-table value of 0.444.

The validity analysis was carried out by comparing the r-count of each item with the r-table value. An item was considered valid if $r\text{-count} \geq 0.444$, whereas items with $r\text{-count} < 0.444$ were considered invalid. Several items were found valid as their r-count values were higher than the r-table. A total of 25 items were valid, while 5 items (numbers 10, 18, 19, 20, and 24) were invalid. This result indicates that 90% of the total items met the validity criteria, while the remaining 10% need further evaluation.

At the final stage, the researcher selected 30 valid items as the main instrument in this study. The selection was based on the validity analysis, in which only items with r-count values greater than the r-table were retained to ensure accurate measurement of students' vocabulary mastery. The use of SPSS in the validity analysis ensured a systematic and precise process, thereby enhancing the reliability of the research instrument.

Table 4: Reliability

Cronbach's Alpha	N of Items
.826	30

Reliability analysis was employed to test the consistency and dependability of the research instrument in measuring the investigated variable. In this study, the researcher applied Cronbach's Alpha, calculated using the Statistical Package for Social Sciences (SPSS), to obtain more accurate and reliable results. The analysis involved 20 respondents with 30 test items in the research instrument. The results showed that the obtained reliability score was 0.82, which falls into the category of very high reliability. According to the reliability classification, a coefficient value above 0.81 indicates that the research instrument has very strong internal consistency.

In other words, the instrument developed in this study is highly reliable in measuring students' vocabulary mastery. This very high level of reliability demonstrates that the test items used in this research are consistent and trustworthy in assessing students' vocabulary ability. Therefore, the instrument can be regarded as a dependable measurement tool in this study.

CONCLUSION

Based on the data analysis, the use of the Drill and Practice method has been proven to have a significant effect on the vocabulary skills of tenth-grade students at SMAS GKPI Padang Bulan. This was evidenced by the statistical calculation using the t-test, where the t-obtained value (3.558) was greater than the t-table value (2.024), which means that the Alternative Hypothesis (H_a) was accepted. Therefore, it can be concluded that the Drill and Practice method is effective in

improving students' vocabulary mastery compared to conventional teaching methods.

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