Research Article

Effective Strategies for Improving Vocabulary Proficiency among Upper Secondary Level Students

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Abstract. The study aimed to enhance vocabulary proficiency among upper secondary students in English literature at Al Mazhar Girls' High School, Nintavur. The objectives were to identify effective

teaching methods for vocabulary acquisition, evaluate students' attitudes toward literature-based vocabulary learning, and recommend integrating literature into the curriculum. A mixed methods approach was used, combining quantitative data from pre-tests, mid-tests, and post-tests with qualitative insights from structured questionnaires and observations. Out of 35 GCE(O/L) students who took the pre-test, 20 were selected for the study. Data analysis in MS Excel revealed significant improvements in students' vocabulary skills following the intervention. Strategies such as song-based learning, vocabulary games, and language boards proved highly effective. Pre-test and post-test comparisons showed notable progress, while qualitative data reflected positive student feedback and engagement. The study recommends integrating literature-based instruction and interactive methods, such as songs and games, into the curriculum to enhance vocabulary acquisition. These strategies not only improved learning outcomes but also increased students' interest and motivation in acquiring new vocabulary.

Keywords: Vocabulary Proficiency, English Literature, Effective Strategies.

Abstrak. Penelitian ini bertujuan untuk meningkatkan penguasaan kosakata siswa tingkat menengah atas dalam mata pelajaran sastra Inggris di Al Mazhar Girls' High School, Nintavur. Tujuan penelitian ini adalah mengidentifikasi metode pengajaran yang efektif untuk penguasaan kosakata, mengevaluasi sikap siswa terhadap pembelajaran kosakata berbasis sastra, dan memberikan rekomendasi untuk mengintegrasikan sastra ke dalam kurikulum. Pendekatan campuran digunakan dalam penelitian ini, menggabungkan data kuantitatif dari pre-test, mid-test, dan post-test dengan wawasan kualitatif dari kuesioner terstruktur dan observasi. Dari 35 siswa GCE(O/L) yang mengikuti pre-test, 20 siswa dipilih sebagai sampel untuk penelitian ini. Analisis data menggunakan MS Excel menunjukkan peningkatan yang signifikan dalam kemampuan kosakata siswa setelah dilakukan intervensi. Strategi seperti pembelajaran berbasis lagu, permainan kosakata, dan papan bahasa terbukti sangat efektif. Perbandingan hasil pre-test dan post-test menunjukkan kemajuan yang nyata, sementara data kualitatif mencerminkan umpan balik positif dan keterlibatan siswa yang meningkat. Penelitian ini merekomendasikan integrasi pengajaran berbasis sastra dan metode interaktif, seperti lagu dan permainan, ke dalam kurikulum untuk meningkatkan penguasaan kosakata. Strategi ini tidak hanya meningkatkan hasil pembelajaran tetapi juga meningkatkan minat dan motivasi siswa dalam mempelajari kosakata baru.

Kata Kunci: Penguasaan Kosakata, Sastra Inggris, Strategi Efektif.

INTRODUCTION
Overview
This study is conducted under the title "Effective Strategies for Improving Vocabulary Proficiency among Upper Secondary Level Students in the English Literature Subject". This chapter includes background of the study, aim and objective of the research, previous research, research problem, limitation of the study, methodology and outcomes of the research.

Background of the Study

Language acquisition, particularly vocabulary acquisition, plays a crucial role in language learning. Vocabulary, as one of the knowledge areas in language, plays a great role for learners in acquiring a language (Cameron, 2001). Harmon, Wood, Kiser, (2009) as well as Lines (2005) state that learners' vocabulary development is an important aspect of their language development.

Teaching literature in the classroom can help students in learning language. The use of literature in language teaching can increase the knowledge and language skills. One of the studies conducted by Adesuyi (Muhammed, 2013) showed that reading and studying a novel, a play, or a poem in the target language may help introducing learners to the new words through the language. The literature materials which are provided by the teacher are short story, poetry, storytelling and drama. So, for example when the teacher gives material about poetry, students will analyze the poetry and explain what the students to imagine about their poetry are. After the students analyze the poetry, students will create the poetry based on their experience. They might indirectly learn English new vocabularies through the activities done in the class.

However, many students face challenges in acquiring and retaining new vocabulary words. In the context of English literature, students often encounter challenges in vocabulary acquisition due to the complex and diverse language used in literary works. The rich and varied vocabulary found in literature can be daunting for students, especially when they are not familiar with the historical or cultural context in which the works were written. Additionally, the figurative language, idiomatic expressions, and archaic words commonly found in literary texts can pose significant barriers to students' comprehension and retention of new vocabulary. This can be particularly challenging for students who are still developing their vocabulary skills. As a result, traditional teaching methods often fail to engage students make vocabulary learning a tedious task.

Therefore, this research study aims to address this issue by exploring innovative approaches, such as song- based learning, language board showing, and vocabulary games, within the English literature subject. So, this research is addresses the effective strategies for improving vocabulary proficiency in English literature subject. Accordingly, to carry on this research, the researcher chose Al Mazhar Girls High School, which is situated in Nintavur. This choice of location is appropriate for the research being conducted.

Aim and Objective of the Study

This study aims to investigate effective strategies for enhancing vocabulary proficiency within the English literature subject. Moreover, the objective is to identify effective teaching methods and techniques for vocabulary acquisition in English literature, evaluate students' attitudes towards using literature for vocabulary development, and provide recommendations for integrating English literature into

the curriculum to enhance vocabulary acquisition. Finally, this research has decided to identify effective strategies for improving vocabulary proficiency in the English literature subject with the aim of benefiting GCE (O/L) students at Al mazhar girls' high School.

Previous Research

In the study conducted by Nation, I.S.P (2001), titled "The Impact of Literature-Based Instruction on Vocabulary Acquisition," the researcher investigated the effectiveness of incorporating literature into the curriculum to enhance vocabulary acquisition among elementary school students. The study found that students who received literature-based instruction showed significant improvement in their vocabulary skills compared to those who followed traditional vocabulary instruction methods. The researcher concluded that literature-based instruction provides students with meaningful and contextualized exposure to vocabulary, leading to better retention and application of new words.

Another relevant study by Johnson and Lee (2016), titled "Exploring the Role of English Literature in Vocabulary Development among ESL Learners," examined the impact of incorporating English literature into the curriculum on vocabulary development among ESL (English as a Second Language) learners. The study found that exposure to literature not only expanded students' vocabulary but also improved their reading comprehension and overall language proficiency. The researcher suggested that integrating literature into language learning can provide authentic and engaging contexts for vocabulary acquisition.

Based on this research aims to fill the gaps in the field of vocabulary proficiency in the English literature by investigating the effectiveness of alternative methods such as song-based learning, vocabulary development games, and language boards. The study seeks to provide valuable insights for educators and curriculum developers, offering practical implications for enhancing vocabulary instruction strategies in English literature classrooms.

Research Problem

Vocabulary proficiency among school-level students, particularly in the context of the English literature subject, has been a matter of concern. The study conducted by Johnson (2020) highlighted that the traditional approach to vocabulary acquisition in English literature has resulted in disengagement and passivity among students. This has led to a noticeable decline in students' vocabulary proficiency and a negative attitude towards the subject.

Similarly, in Al mazhar girls' high school GCE (O/L) students faced challenges in improving vocabulary. Also, some students feel bored during their English literature lessons as they tacked the same texts and tasks in their English literature books. Generally, some students spend class time in listening to their teachers and copying down to get enough marks to pass exams without any interaction. This causes learners to be passive during lessons and create a negative attitude towards

the English literature subject. Due to these reasons, it can be observed that the particular vocabulary proficiency of the students has decreased.

Therefore, there is a need to explore alternative and effective strategies to improve vocabulary development in teaching methods. Moreover, the research problems of the research are, can this research enhance the vocabulary proficiency with the help of effective strategies in English literature? What are the most effective strategies for improving vocabulary proficiency in the English literature subject that would benefit GCE (O/L) students at MGHS?

Limitations of the Study

This chapter includes limitations such as multi- ability students, lack of time and resources and usage.

Multi-ability Students

One limitation of the study was the presence of multi-ability students within the participant group. Students had varying levels of language proficiency, learning styles, and prior knowledge. This diversity impacted the effectiveness of integrating English literature for vocabulary acquisition. Some students benefited greatly from the literature-based approach, while others struggled to grasp the vocabulary in context. The findings of the study were influenced by the individual differences among the students, making it challenging to generalize the results to other student populations.

Lack of Time and Resources

Conducting this study on vocabulary acquisition through the English literature subject required adequate time and resources. However, the school curriculum had limited time allocated for English language instruction, leaving less time for in-depth exploration of literature. Additionally, the availability of appropriate literature resources was limited, which restricted the range and variety of vocabulary exposure for the students. These constraints affected the depth and breadth of the study's findings, as well as the ability to implement the literature-based approach fully.

Usage

Another limitation was the potential for students to encounter challenges in correctly using the vocabulary acquired through the study of English literature. While exposure to literature expanded students' vocabulary, it did not guarantee accurate usage in all contexts. Students struggled with idiomatic expressions, understanding the appropriate register, or applying vocabulary in grammatically correct ways. This limitation highlighted the importance of providing explicit instruction and guidance on the proper usage of vocabulary, even within the context of literature-based instruction.

Outcome of the Research

The expected outcomes of this research focused on effective strategies for improving vocabulary proficiency among upper secondary level students at Al Mazhar Girls' High School through the English literature. By incorporating literature

into the curriculum, students can expand their vocabulary and develop a deeper understanding of language. This approach can receive positive feedback from students, as it offers a more engaging and interesting way to learn vocabulary compared to traditional methods. Additionally, the research aims to provide practical recommendations for teachers and curriculum designers, enabling them to enhance vocabulary instruction and support students' language development. Furthermore, the findings of this research can contribute to the existing knowledge on language learning, specifically in terms of the effectiveness of using English literature for vocabulary proficiency. Overall, the research seeks to improve students' vocabulary skills and provide valuable insights for educators.

Summary

The chapter, introduction comprises the related to background of the study, aim and objective of the research, previous research, research problem, limitation of the study, methodology and outcomes of the research in order to expound the introductory explanation of the research.

LITERATURE REVIEW

This part presents the review of secondary sources which are related to the current study. There is a number of subtopics such as the description of vocabulary, the benefits of using literature in the classroom, the role of English literature in vocabulary acquisition, poetry as a source of vocabulary, the impact of using poetry on developing English vocabulary, short stories for vocabulary expansion, novel as a source of vocabulary enrichment and review of literature related to the study. These subtopics are presented based on the problems and aim of the study to support the current study. It points out the contexts for reviewing the literature, explains the overall trends in what has been published about the topic; on conflicts in theory, methodology, evidence and conclusions; or gaps in research the criteria to be used in analyzing and comparing literature.

Vocabulary

Vocabulary can be defined as ''words we must know to communicate effectively; words in speaking (expressive vocabulary) and words in listening (receptive vocabulary)'' (Neuman & Dwyer, 2009, p. 385). Hornby (1995) defines vocabulary as ''the total number of words in a language; vocabulary is a list of words with their meanings". While Ur (1998) states: "Vocabulary can be defined, roughly, as the words we teach in the foreign language. However, a new item of vocabulary may be more than just a single word: for example, post office, and mother-in-law, which are made up of two or three words but express a single idea. A useful convention is to cover all such cases by talking about vocabulary "items "rather than "words. "In addition, Burns (1972) defines vocabulary as" the stock of words which is used by a person, class or profession. According to Zimmerman cited in Coady and Huckin (1998) 'vocabulary is central to language and of critical importance to the typical language learning. Furthermore, Diamond and Gutlohn (2006) state that

vocabulary is the knowledge of words and word meanings. From the definitions above, it can be concluded that vocabulary is the total number of words that are needed to communicate ideas and express the speakers' meaning. That is the reason why it is important to learn vocabulary.

Some experts divide vocabulary into two types: active and passive vocabulary. Harmer (1991) distinguishes between these two types of vocabulary. The first type of vocabulary refers to the one that the students have been taught and that they are expected to be able to use. Meanwhile, the second one refers to the words which the students will recognize when they meet them, but which they will probably not be able to pronounce. Haycraft, quoted by Hatch and Brown (1995), indicate two kinds of vocabulary, namely receptive vocabulary and productive vocabulary.

Receptive vocabulary is words that learners recognize and understand when they are used in context, but which they cannot produce. It is vocabulary that learners recognize when they see or meet in reading text but do not use it in speaking and writing (Stuart Webb, 2009). Productive vocabulary is the words that the learners understand and can pronounce correctly and use constructively in speaking and writing. It involves what is needed for receptive vocabulary plus the ability to speak or write at the appropriate time. Therefore, productive vocabulary can be addressed as an active process, because the learners can produce the words to express their thoughts to others (Stuart Webb, 2005).

Language Classroom

The importance of literature has been emphasized by scholars and writers throughout history. At the beginning of twentieth century, there has been a mounting awareness towards using literature as a significant way to teach language as it is considered an "authentic source" (Ghosn, 2002, p.9). The position of literature as a medium of teaching both language skills and language areas is gaining more attention in the field of teaching and learning foreign language in EFL classes.

Many researchers have called for using literature in the language classroom as it has prominent effects on learning a language. Rush (2010) points that in 1980s there were plenty articles and books that encourage the use of literature in the classroom. The common textbooks were "The Web of Words" by R. Carter and M.N. Long 1987 and "Chapter and Verse" by J. McCrae and L. Pantaleoni 1990. Both books have a combination of ancient and modern literary works with two kinds of texts, prose and verse, along with various tasks to direct students' attention to understand literature and to have a valuable attitude towards literature.

Literature can be defined as a collection of written and spoken works about human experienced which reflects the writers' imagination about human experience. "Literature covers stories, poems and plays especially those that have value of art and not just entertainment... it is the reflection of different aspects of society as well as cultural documents to understand deeply of a country or countries" (Rahman and Arju, 2008, p. 125). Using literary works in the language classroom has valuable

benefits to EFL learners' language. Van (2009) mentions that teaching literature is fundamental to EFL students, as it offers a fraught and meaningful setting to learn the language effectively.

The Role of English Literature in Vocabulary Acquisition

English literature provides learners with exposure to a wide range of vocabulary, including idiomatic expressions, figurative language, and nuanced vocabulary usage. According to Smith (2018), reading literature helps learners contextualize new words, understand their meanings, and observe their usage in authentic contexts. This exposure to diverse vocabulary enhances learners' language proficiency and comprehension skills.

Poetry as a Source of Vocabulary

There are great and varied definitions of poetry. Poetry as defined by English dictionary, is a genre of literature in which the words and expressions are the focal point and intervene together in aesthetic, vigorous and unique way to convey feelings and thoughts. Poetry is a literary work which gives deep understanding about poets' feelings and other cultures in a rhythmical way. Mittal (2014) defines poetry as "a piece of writing in which words are arranged beautifully and rhythmically" (p. 21). "Poetry is embellished with rhythm, beautiful diction and elevated grammatical features" (Ahmad, 2014, p. 123). Wordsworth defined poetry as "the spontaneous overflow of powerful feelings" (1989, p. 57). Poetry is a way of sharing experiences, telling a story, expressing feelings or ideas. Poetry appeals to the imagination throughout the form, rhythm and word choice that can create vivid visual images for the audience. (Antika, 2016, p.27). Some teachers and students believe that poetry is a difficult genre of literature. Teachers see that poetry is difficult to teach in classes, since it is above students' levels', while students claim that poetry is hard to understand for it is full of difficult vocabulary and expressions. The researcher believes that poetry is valuable and effective source in enhancing English vocabulary and pronunciation of learners.

Meara (1996) deems that vocabulary is the fundamental aspect that students must take into consideration when learning a foreign or second language, as it is the core of communicative competence (as cited in Shen, 2003). "If language structures make up the skeleton of language, then it is vocabulary that provides the vital organs and the flesh" (Harmer, 1991, p.153). Read (2000) states that "words are the basic building blocks of language, the units of meaning from which larger structures such sentences, paragraphs, and whole texts are formed" (p. 1). "Words are the building blocks of a language since they label objects, actions, ideas without which people cannot convey the intended meaning" (Ghazal, 2007, 84). Alqahtani (2015) defines vocabulary as "the total number of words that are needed to communicate ideas and express the speakers' meaning" (p. 5). Therefore, learning a foreign language or a second language should start with gathering a huge amount of words, which will help learners to interact, understand and use the language.

Learners reckon that the more they learn words the more they understand and they are able to use the language.

In addition, Nation (2002) states that "vocabulary growth is such an important part of language acquisition that it deserves to be planned for, deliberately controlled and monitored" (Cahyono & Widiati, 2008, p.3). According to Ada, Campoy and Paz (n.d), the problem behind the failure to evolve and extend the amount of vocabularies in the classroom is that students need to tackle the target items from fifty to seventy times in order to be able to comprehend its definition and its usage. Moreover, they propose two ways to facilitate acquiring vocabulary in the classroom. First, teachers should show the target words in meaningful context. Second, teachers should employ aesthetic ways to introduce the target items such as using poetry and songs. Igbaria (2003) deems that learning vocabulary is a vital element to learn a foreign language. Also, he believes that teaching vocabulary should be through context which helps learners to understand the words in an effective way rather than using the traditional way "Memorizing". Besides that, he thinks that teachers should use various techniques and ways while teaching vocabulary to encourage their students to learn the language probably and enlarge the amount of vocabulary.

Ozen (2012) considers vocabulary as the most essential component in teaching and communication. Also, he deems that teachers should equip themselves with new techniques to encourage students to learn the language in a more effective way. Furthermore, learning vocabulary is as essential as learning grammar. Wilkins (1982) stated that "without grammar, very little can be conveyed, without vocabulary, nothing can be conveyed (Saengpakdeejit, 2014). Knowing vocabulary helps learners to communicate with others even if they commit some grammatical mistakes and without vocabulary, learners find it hard to interact effectively. Furthermore, learning vocabulary is a crucial factor to understand and communicate freely with others. Farghal and Jaber (2009) state that knowing a large number of vocabularies will help the learners to convey his or her feelings, thoughts and attitudes and they believe the more you obtain or gain vocabularies, the more you can communicative effectively. Brozo and Simpson (2007) state that "word knowledge that makes it possible for students to engage with, produce, and talk about texts that are valued in school" (as cited in Flynt & Brozo, p.500). Reading and vocabulary are linked together.

Reading is a very crucial way for developing learners' vocabulary. Through reading, students can enlarge their vocabulary repertoire, enhance their awareness of other cultures and increase their comprehension skill as well as their creativity. Poetry is a good tool to enhance learners' vocabulary. Therefore, incorporating literature in general and poetry in particular will provide the students with a good chance to enrich their vocabulary in a memorable and enjoyable way rather than learning vocabulary through an abstract way or in relation to made up texts, which

found in their texts books. Poetry is a manageable text and can be easily adapted to different levels. As regards vocabulary, reading poetry allows for word study in creative discourse, including exploration of synonyms, metaphors, Similes and other figurative language. (Schander, Balma & Massa, 2013, p.411)

"Vocabulary knowledge can be expanded through considerable exposure to literary texts" (Khatib, 2011, p. 202). Poetry can serve as a good tool for teaching and learning vocabulary because learning vocabulary in context helps students to understand the meanings of sentences along with their semantic and linguistics functions. Otherwise, teaching vocabulary in isolation as lists that should be memorized leads students to be passive and they may forget these words as they go up to another class. Lazar (1996) indicates, "Poetry widely uses polysemous words in different contexts, and by decoding the meaning of the polysemous words; students acquire deeper understanding of grammatical and semantic contexts" (Reilly, 2012, p.5).

Ozen (2012) investigates in his study the effects of teaching vocabulary through poetry based activities in an EFL classroom. He believes that teaching vocabulary through poetry based activities is more enjoyable, encouraging and motivating than using the same course book activities. According to the results of his study, he concludes that using poetry-based activities help learners to develop more extensive vocabulary knowledge through poetry in an EFL classroom.

In addition, learning vocabulary through poetry will increase student's pronunciation and enhances motivation especially for those who find learning from course book tedious. Moreover, learning through poetry will give students the Opportunity to connect what they learn and how they learn it as poetry deals with human themes like: hatred, human nature, friendship, tranquility, politics, and economy. Mittal (2014) believes that using poetry in the classroom is a good way to teach vocabulary. She says that the lexis in poetry has many possible meanings; this gives the students the chance to learn more words (synonyms or antonyms) for the same word.

Short Stories for Vocabulary Expansion

Using literature in the EFL classes is expected to be a fruitful method of developing different language skills, because literature provides students with excellent opportunities to gain meaning from the text. Literature also helps students to express the feelings and emotions.

Among the genres of literature, short stories can be a useful tool that can help enhance EFL learners' narrative writing. Because short stories are shorter than other genres and the elements that it contains are very useful in developing students writing development. As defined by Baldick (2008) a short story is "a fictional prose tale of no specified length, but too short to be published as a volume on its own. A short story will normally concentrate on a single event with only one or two

characters, more economically than a novel's sustained exploration of social background"(page: 307).

Short story could be an important element as motivational source for narrative writing, both as a model and as subject matter. On this regard, Oster (1989) stated that literature provide students with more opportunities to write more creatively. Short story can be used as a model for students' writing and this usually occurs when students' writing is relevant or nearly similar to the work of art or imitation of its style, theme, content, or organization.

On the other hand, short story can be used as a subject matter when students' include interpretation or analysis, or sometimes when students are stimulated by the reading of short stories. Lazar (1993) pointed out that the study of short stories in the language classroom makes them as the content or the subject of the study. While the use of short stories as a resource, makes short stories as a source among many sources for developing language skills and activities. Lazar also stated that short stories facilitate language acquisition by providing meaningful and memorable contexts for processing and interpreting new language. Being the shortest genre of fiction, short stories can be the most useful tool in developing students' narrative writing. Compared to other genres of fiction, short story is the most preferred genre among the students of English as a foreign language.

This is because students find other genres are difficult to follow and needs different strategies to read than those of short stories. (Arıkan, 2005, p.33) pointed out that the students found reading and understanding short stories is simpler than and not as complex as other genres of literature. Arif Saricoban (2011:p160) stated that:a short story with its setting, characters and compelling plot, captures and holds the attention of the learners which is an important part of the learning process. The use of short stories to teach English has several other benefits including motivational, literary, cultural and higher –order thinking benefits.

As stated above short stories, captures the learners' attention by its setting, characters and compelling plot. Using short stories in language teaching has also other outcomes such as motivation for learning the language, develops literary understanding. Short stories are also can be used as tools to enhance cultural and higher order thinking benefits. As stated earlier short stories help enhance teaching the four language skills to different levels of language learning. For example, Murdoch (2002: 9) pointed out that "short stories can, if selected and exploited appropriately, provide quality text content which will greatly enhance ELT courses for learners at intermediate levels of proficiency". He believes that, short story is a very useful method in teaching and learning different activities including writing.

Novel as a Source of Vocabulary Enrichment

Novels provide learners with immersive experiences, allowing them to encounter vocabulary in various contexts. In a study conducted by Thompson (2020),

it was observed that students who read novels regularly demonstrated enhanced vocabulary acquisition compared to those who relied solely on textbooks. Novels expose learners to diverse vocabulary, idiomatic expressions, and colloquial language, thereby expanding their linguistic repertoire. Novels provide learners with immersive experiences, allowing them to encounter vocabulary in various contexts. As learners engage with the storylines and characters, they are exposed to a wide range of vocabulary, including idiomatic expressions, colloquial language, and specialized terminology.

According to Schmitt, N. (2000) Novels often present vocabulary in nuanced ways, showcasing different shades of meaning and usage. This exposure to diverse vocabulary expands learners' linguistic repertoire and helps them develop a deeper understanding of word meanings and connotations. Laufer, B., & Hill, M. (2000) points out that novels offer rich contextual clues that can aid in the comprehension and interpretation of idiomatic expressions. Encouraging learners to pay attention to the surrounding text and infer the meaning of idioms from context can enhance their vocabulary acquisition. These strategies emphasize the benefits of using novels for vocabulary enrichment and provide guidance on encountering and interpreting idiomatic expressions in the context of novels.

Review of literature related to the study

The study "Strategies for Improving Vocabulary English" by Andi Ernie Zaenab Musa, Dina Destari, Ignatius Septo Pramesworo, Dedy Ari Asfar, and Irmayani, presented at The 3rd International Conference on Advance & Scientific Innovation (ICASI), delved into various strategies aimed at enhancing English vocabulary acquisition. The study explored the utilization of literature, part-of-speech conversion, syntactic analysis, formative assessment, and game-based methods to improve vocabulary learning. It underscored the crucial role of effective vocabulary instruction in bolstering general English education and shed light on the historical evolution of English teaching methods and their impact on students' language acquisition. This research underscored the significance of innovative teaching strategies in fostering students' vocabulary acquisition and overall language learning, making it a valuable contribution to the field of language education.

Moreover, the study "Improving Students' Vocabulary Mastery Using English Song" by Elvinna, Yana, et al. (2019) provided valuable insights into the use of English songs as a tool for enhancing students' vocabulary mastery. The research demonstrated that incorporating English songs in language learning could significantly impact students' vocabulary acquisition, as evidenced by the notable improvement in students' achievement from Cycle I to Cycle II. The study emphasized the importance of vocabulary in language learning and highlighted the benefits of using songs in the classroom, such as reducing student anxiety, fostering interest in learning, and improving motivation to learn a foreign language. Furthermore, the research addressed the challenges faced by teachers in organizing

classes and engaging students, underscoring the need for effective teaching methods and learning media. Overall, this study contributed to the literature by showcasing the potential of English songs as a fun and efficient tool for improving students' vocabulary acquisition and language learning.

The field of improving vocabulary acquisition through the English literature subject is an important area of research in education. The availability of published literature in this field is relatively vast, indicating a solid foundation of knowledge and interest. A multitude of studies, articles, and books have been published on this subject, showcasing the breadth of research in this area. These publications offer a variety of strategies, techniques, and approaches to enhance vocabulary acquisition through the use of English literature.

By addressing the gaps and limitations identified in previous studies, this research seeks to contribute to the understanding of effective strategies for improving vocabulary acquisition through the English literature subject. The focus of this literature review is to identify the research gap in the field of vocabulary acquisition through the English literature subject. After conducting an extensive review of previous studies and research articles, the researcher identified a methodological gap that needs to be addressed. This research aims to investigate the impact of incorporating English literature into the curriculum on vocabulary acquisition, research on the effectiveness of alternative methods in the context of English literature.

However, there is a lack of research on the effectiveness of alternative methods, specifically song-based learning, vocabulary development games, and language boards, within the context of English literature. Song-based learning has shown promise in engaging students and facilitating vocabulary acquisition in other educational settings. Similarly, vocabulary development games, which provide interactive and engaging activities for students to practice and reinforce their vocabulary knowledge, have received attention in recent years. Additionally, the use of language boards, visually displaying key vocabulary words and their definitions, has been found to be beneficial in vocabulary acquisition. However, there is a lack of research specifically examining their use within the English literature subject.

By addressing this methodological gap, this research aims to contribute to the existing body of knowledge and provide valuable insights for educators and curriculum developers. The study seeks to investigate the effectiveness of song-based learning, vocabulary development games, and language boards in enhancing vocabulary acquisition within the English literature subject. Through empirical research and data analysis, the study aims to provide practical implications for educators seeking to enhance vocabulary instruction strategies in English literature classrooms.

METHOD

Overview

This chapter includes the sample setting, research design, research procedure, which employed an action research approach and utilized pre-test, mid test and post-test activities to measure the impact of the intervention on vocabulary acquisition through the English literature subject. It also covers the instruments and techniques of collecting data, such as pretest activities, a structured questionnaire, observations, mid test and post-test activities, each designed to capture different aspects of the students' experiences and progress in vocabulary acquisition.

Sample Setting

In research setting, the researcher chose the setting of place which is related to the research. The research was conducted at Al Mazhar Girls' High School Nintavur. MGHS, which is situated in the Ampara district under the Eastern province. The school is located in the Kalmunai education zone under the Nintavur Educational division and offers classes from Grade 1-13, providing a comprehensive educational experience for students across various age groups. The research targeted 35 students from the school, and after the pre-test, 20 students were selected to form the sample for the study, including those who scored below 50 marks. These students were enrolled in the GCE (O/L) grade at the school, representing a diverse group with varying learning styles and academic backgrounds, offering a comprehensive sample for the research.
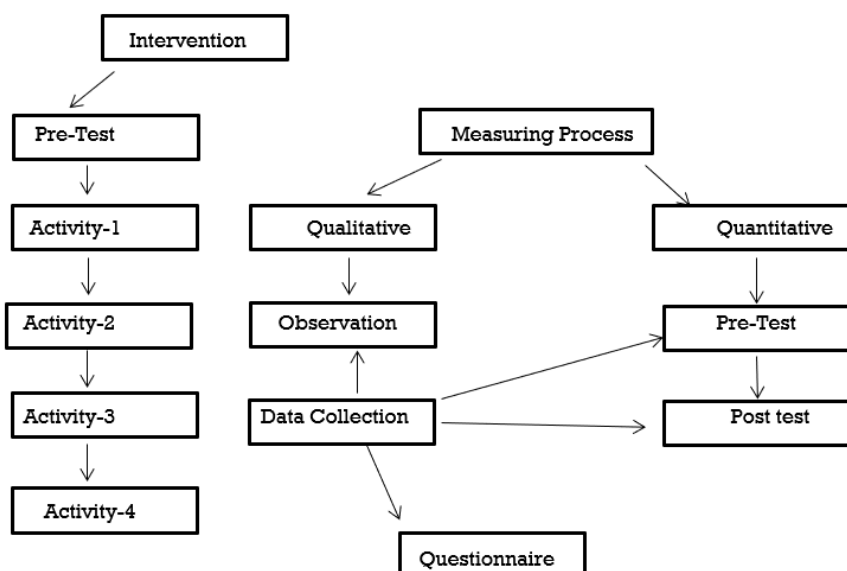
Research Design

Figure 1. Research design

Action Research

In this research, the researcher used action research. According to (Cameron-Jone, 1983) action research is research conducted by researchers with a view to

improve the professional practice of researchers and understand it better. There are four stages of each cycle, they are the planning of the action, the implementation of the action, classroom observation and reflecting of the action (Kemmis & McTaggart, 1988).

Research Procedure and Intervention

This study employed an action research approach to investigate the effectiveness of enhancing vocabulary acquisition through English literature instruction. The research design included 4 pre-test activities to establish a baseline, followed by 4 post-test activities to measure the impact of the intervention on vocabulary acquisition. The intervention involved the selection of the poem "Two's Company" by Charles Edward Carry, the novel "The Prince and the Pauper" by Mark Twain, and the short story "The Nightingale and the Rose" by Oscar Wilde. These literary works were carefully chosen for their linguistic richness and relevance to the students' learning objectives. The research procedure encompassed planning, implementing activities related to the selected literary works, observing students' responses, and reflecting on the effectiveness of the intervention.

The intervention was designed to be interactive and engaging, incorporating various activities such as group discussions, vocabulary-building exercises based on the selected literary works, songs audio clips learning, vocabulary development games, and usage of language board . Data collection methods encompassed pre- and post-test activities, mid test, student questionnaire, and qualitative observations among students to provide a comprehensive understanding of the intervention's impact.

Instruments and Techniques of collecting data

In the context of investigating the effectiveness of improving vocabulary acquisition through English literature instruction, the selection of appropriate instruments and techniques for collecting data is crucial. This part includes the specific instruments and techniques used for collecting data, focusing on the pre-test, mid test, questionnaire, observation, and post-test methods as outlined in the research procedure.

Questionnaire (Appendix – 1)

As part of the data collection methods, a structured questionnaire was administered to gather insights from the students regarding their experiences and perceptions of the intervention, including the implementation of song-based learning, vocabulary development games, and the usage of language boards. This questionnaire aimed to capture the students' perspectives and experiences related to the intervention, providing valuable qualitative data on their engagement, interest, and perceived impact of the intervention on vocabulary acquisition. The questionnaire consisted of various types of questions, including close-ended questions, multiple-choice questions, yes/no questions, and open-ended questions. This mix of question types

enabled the collection of both quantitative and qualitative data, providing a comprehensive understanding of the students' experiences.

Pre-Test (Appendix -2)

The pre-test activities, conducted as fundamental instruments for establishing a baseline of the 35 students' vocabulary knowledge and language proficiency before the intervention. Each paper was allocated 100 marks. These activities included vocabulary assessments and language proficiency tests tailored to the specific learning objectives. By conducting these pre-tests, the researcher was able to gain valuable insights into the students' initial vocabulary skills and language competencies, providing a reference point for measuring the impact of the intervention on vocabulary acquisition.

Mid test (Appendix -3)

In addition to the pre-test and post-test activities, a mid-test was conducted to assess the students' progress in vocabulary acquisition midway through the intervention. Each paper was allocated 100 marks. The mid-test included vocabulary assessments and language proficiency tests, similar to the pre-test, to gauge the students' development in vocabulary knowledge and language competencies. This mid-test provided an interim evaluation of the intervention's impact on the students' vocabulary acquisition, allowing for adjustments to be made based on the students' progress and performance. By including the mid-test in the data collection process, the researcher aimed to align the assessment activities with the research objectives outlined in the study, providing a comprehensive understanding of the intervention's effectiveness over time.

Observation (Appendix-4)

The observation method involved systematically observing the students' responses and interactions during the intervention activities, including group discussions, vocabulary building exercises based on the selected literary works, song-based learning, vocabulary development games, and the usage of language boards. This method provided qualitative insights into the students' engagement, participation, and comprehension of the literary materials, as well as the effectiveness of the interactive and engaging elements of the intervention.

The incorporation of songs audio clips learning and vocabulary development games was observed to have a positive impact on the students' engagement and interest in learning new words and phrases. The use of music and interactive games not only made the learning process enjoyable but also facilitated a deeper understanding and retention of vocabulary. Additionally, the usage of language boards provided a visual and interactive method for reinforcing vocabulary, making the learning process more memorable and effective for the students.

Post-Test (Appendix-5)

The post-test activities were crucial for measuring the impact of the intervention on vocabulary acquisition. Each paper was allocated 100 marks. These

activities involved administering vocabulary activities to assess the 20 students' word knowledge and retention after the intervention, including their engagement with usage of new techniques. By conducting these post-tests, the researcher was able to measure the effectiveness of the intervention and the students' vocabulary acquisition progress, aligning with the research objectives outlined in the study. The post-test results indicated an improvement in the students' vocabulary knowledge and retention compared to the pre-test, demonstrating the positive impact of the intervention on their vocabulary proficiency.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

In the data analysis section and findings of this part, the focus was specifically on analyzing the results of the pre-test, mid test and post-test marks. The analysis aimed to measure the students' vocabulary proficiency progress by comparing their performance before and after the intervention. This involved examining the specific impact of the intervention on the students' ability to acquire and retain vocabulary, as evidenced by the differences in their pre-test and post-test scores. The results were presented in tables providing a visual representation of the students' progress and allowing for a clear comparison of their performance. Additionally, questionnaire analysis, student's vocabulary errors analysis, and observation analysis were conducted to provide a comprehensive understanding of the intervention's impact on the students' vocabulary development. The findings indicated a noticeable improvement in the students' vocabulary acquisition following the intervention, highlighting the effective strategies for improving vocabulary proficiency through the English literature subject.

Findings of the Questionnaire

The findings of the questionnaire part included closed-ended questions, "Yes" or "No" questions, and open-ended questions, and the findings were visually represented in pie charts.
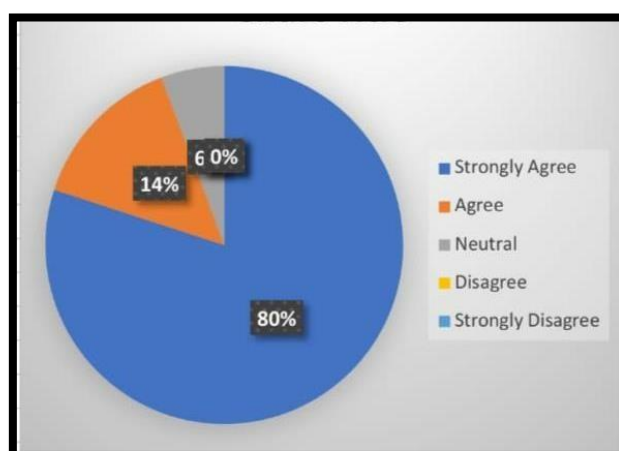
Findings of the Closed-ended Questions

Figure 2. Findings of the Closed-ended question

After analyzing the responses from the students, it was found that for the close-ended questions related to the effectiveness of poetry in enhancing reading skills, vocabulary acquisition, and interest in learning the English language, approximately 80 % of the students "Strongly Agreed" 14% of the students "Agreed" and 6% of the students responded to "Neutral".
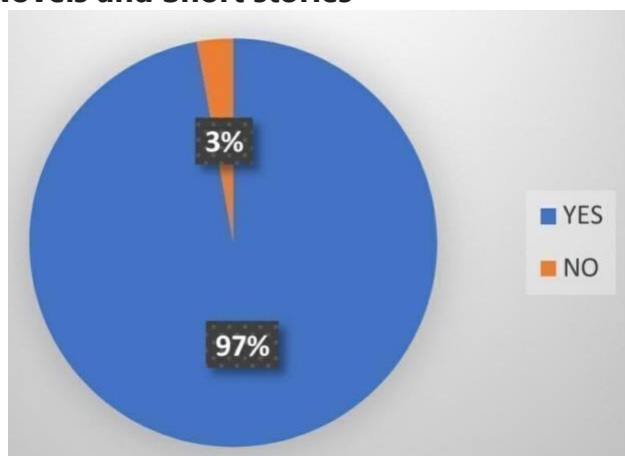
Effectiveness of Novels and Short stories

Figure 3. Effectiveness of Novels and Short stories

For the "Yes" or "No" questions related to the effectiveness of novels and short stories in language learning, approximately 97% of the students responded "Yes" to these questions. Moreover 3% of the students responded "No" to the question. The overwhelming majority's positive response underscores the perceived effectiveness of incorporating novels and short stories into language learning, highlighting their potential to engage students and facilitate language proficiency.

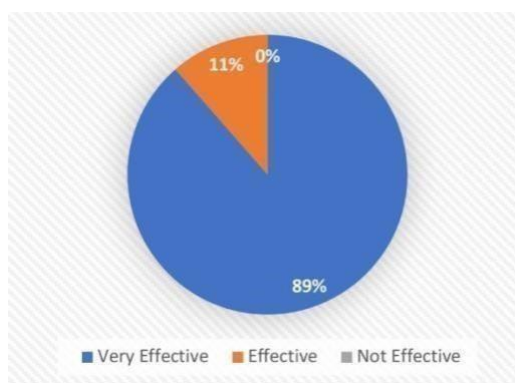**Effectiveness of the Song-Based Learning**

Figure 4. Effectiveness of the Song-Based Learning

Regarding the questions related to song-based learning approximately 89% of the students responded to very effective and 11% of the students responded to effective. This overwhelming positive response indicates that song-based learning is

perceived as a highly effective method for engaging students and facilitating the learning process. The use of music and songs to convey educational content appears to resonate well with the majority of the students, suggesting its potential as a valuable pedagogical tool.
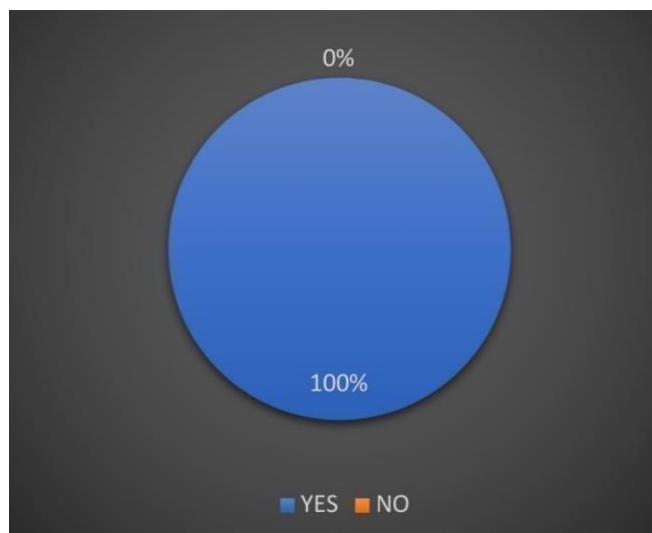
Effectiveness of the Language Board

Figure 5. Effectiveness of the Language Board

For the question related to language boards, around 100% of the students agreed to "yes" that language boards could make the process of learning vocabulary more engaging and enjoyable. The use of language boards, which visually display vocabulary words and their meanings, seems to have garnered unanimous support among the students as an effective tool for enhancing the learning experience.

Effectiveness of the Games

Figure 6. Effectiveness of the Games
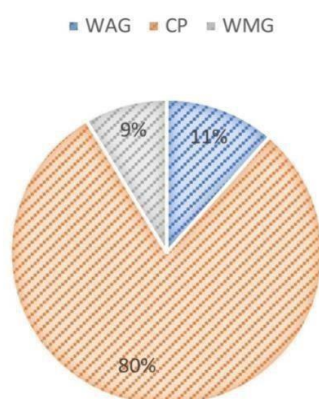
According to the pie chart, in related to the games questions, around 80% of the students reported to crossword puzzles game. Moreover, approximately 11% of the students believed that incorporating word association games into vocabulary development could be effective. Also 9% of the students responded to word matching games. This indicates the potential of incorporating such games into the

learning process to engage students and improve their vocabulary skills. These findings, when visually represented in a all five pie charts, illustrate the distribution of responses and the overall agreement or disagreement with the effectiveness of these methods in language learning.

Results of the Pretest

In the pre-test analysis, the students' initial performance was assessed through a series of vocabulary assessments and language proficiency tests. The table provided a clear overview of the students' baseline performance, laying the groundwork for measuring the impact of the intervention on their vocabulary proficiency. A total of 35 students participated in the pretest, and it was observed that a significant number of students scored below 50 marks. Consequently, these students were selected to the sample for this study.

Pre-Test Average Marks of the Activities

A total of 35 students participated in the pre-test

Table 1. Pre-test marks

Student	Average Marks	Student	Average Marks
1	75	19	38
2	49	20	64
3	44	21	67
4	79	22	41
5	35	23	70
6	84	24	26
7	39	25	47
8	62	26	42
9	40	27	78
10	29	28	34
11	60	29	55
12	25	30	58
13	88	31	20
14	48	32	40
15	92	33	53
16	46	34	48
17	77	35	37
18	45		

Upon analyzing the pre-test marks table, it was found that the highest mark obtained was 92, the lowest mark was 20. Additionally, a significant number of students scored below 50 marks. Out of the total 35 students, 20 students scored less than 50 marks in the pre-test activities, while 15 students only achieved 50 marks or more. Particularly, 7 students obtained less than 35 marks in the pre-test activities.

According to this table data suggests a range of performance levels among the students, indicating a need for targeted intervention to improve vocabulary proficiency.

Results of the Activities on Student's Vocabulary Errors

In the analysis of the students' answer sheets, various vocabulary errors were identified. Identifying and addressing these vocabulary errors is crucial for enhancing the students' vocabulary proficiency.

Example 1

"Hear melodies are sweet, but those unheard are sweeter."
What is the synonym for the bolded word "sweeter"?

- A) Bitter
- B) Pleasant
- C) Sour
- D) Tasty

Student's Error: One of the student selected option A) Bitter as the synonym for "sweeter." Correct Answer: The correct synonym for "sweeter" is option B) Pleasant.

The student's error in this case stemmed from a misunderstanding of the comparative form of the word "sweet." The student overlooked the context of the sentence, where "sweeter" was used to compare the sweetness of heard and unheard melodies. This error indicated a need for further understanding of comparative forms and contextual comprehension. This error indicates a need for further understanding of comparative forms and contextual comprehension. According to these errors are indeed related to vocabulary proficiency. The errors indicate a need for a deeper understanding of word meanings, synonyms, antonyms, and contextual comprehension.

Example 2

Read each sentence below. Fill-in the blank with a vocabulary word from the word bracket (magazine, courage , height, beneath, baseball, husband, vegetable, opportunity)

1.   I had to look ....by bed for my shoes.
2.   I increased in......as I got older.
3.   My favourite sport is ......
4.   The soldiers had a lot of ....
5.   I love to read a .... for recreation.
6.   I don't often get this kind of......
7.   My ....mows the lawn on the weekend.
8.   Can you pull the ......from the garden?

In 8th question one of the Students' Answer: "Can you pull the **height** from the garden?"

The word "height" does not fit the context of the sentence. The word "vegetable" would have been more appropriate in this context, as it would make the

sentence grammatically and contextually correct. In these instances, the students' errors indicate a misunderstanding of word usage and context. It's important for students to grasp the appropriate usage of vocabulary words in different contexts to enhance their language proficiency.

Results of the Mid Test

After the pre-test 20 students were selected to the sample for this study.

Mid test marks

Table 2. Mid test marks

Student	Mid Test
2	62
3	51
5	48
7	50
9	59
10	47
12	38
14	59
16	62
18	71
19	47
22	63
24	45
25	73
26	76
28	55
31	39
32	69
34	72
35	59

Upon analyzing the mid-test marks table, the highest mark obtained was 76, and the lowest mark was 38 only. Comparing these mid-test marks with the pre-test marks, it can be observed that some students showed improvement .For example, Student 3 scored 51 in the mid-test, an improvement from their pre-test score of 44. Similarly, Student 25 scored 73 in the mid-test, an improvement from their pre-test score of 47. This analysis indicates varying levels of improvement among the students from the pre-test to the mid-test.

Results of the Post-Test

In the post-test analysis, the students' performance after the intervention was evaluated based on their vocabulary acquisition and language proficiency. The table presents the students' post-test marks, showcasing their progress following the

intervention. This data allows for a comprehensive assessment of the impact of the intervention on the students' vocabulary acquisition and language skills, providing valuable insights into their development and the effectiveness of the implemented strategies.

Post-Test Average Marks of the Activities

A total of 20 students participated in the pre-test

Table 3. Post-test marks

Student	Post- Test
2	88
3	70
5	60
7	63
9	69
10	54
12	58
14	80
16	78
18	83
19	59
22	79
24	58
25	82
26	84
28	71
31	53
32	85
34	89
35	64

Upon analyzing the post-test marks table, the highest mark obtained was 89, and the lowest mark was 53 only. This analysis indicates varying levels of improvement among the students from the pre-test to the mid-test and finally to the post-test.

Comparison of Pre and Post Test Marks

This bar chart are shown in two different ways to understand the improvement. Pre test shows in the blue colour and the post test shows in the orange colour column.
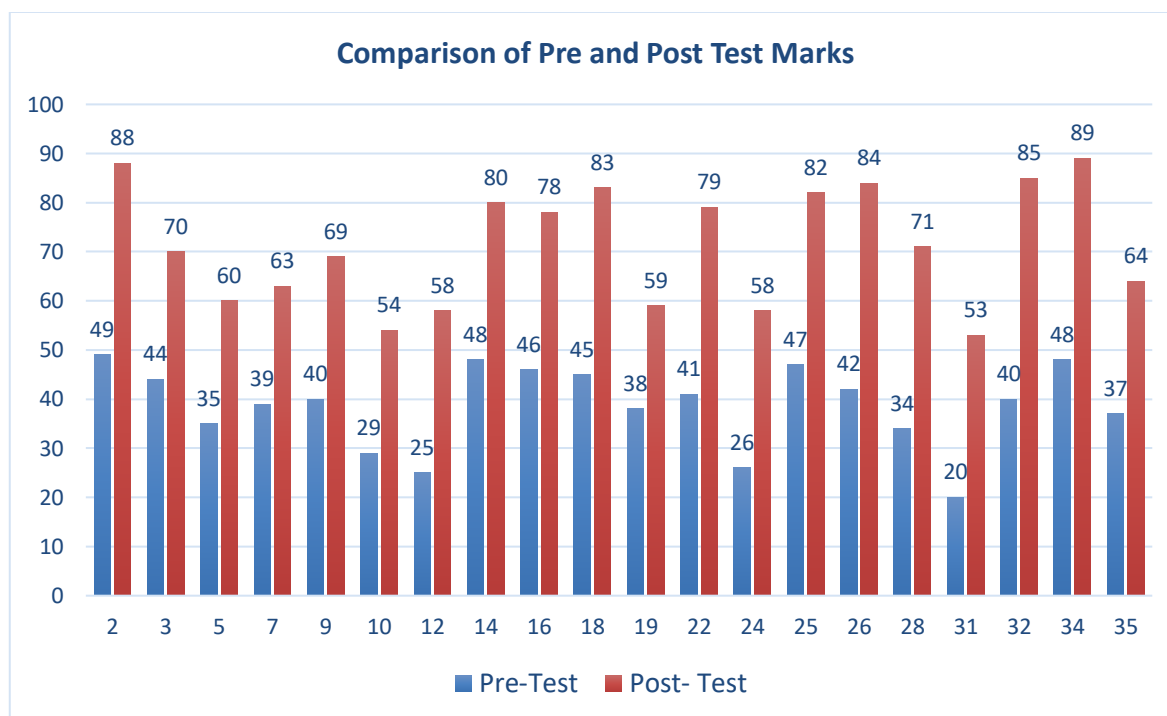
Figure 7. Comparison of Pre and Post Test Marks

The bar chart compares the pre-test and post-test marks of the students. This marks schedule shows obviously performance of the 20 sample during the research intervention. The height of each bar corresponds to the respective mark obtained by the student. This visualization allows for a clear comparison of each student's performance in the pre-test and post-test, highlighting any improvements or declines in their marks. Comparing these post-test marks with the pre-test and mid-test marks, it can be observed that many students showed improvement. For example, Student 31 scored 53 in the post-test, a significant improvement from their pre-test score of 20 and mid-test score of 39. Similarly, Student 25 scored 82 in the post-test, a notable improvement from their pre-test score of 47 and mid-test score of 73.

According to this bar chart illustrates that most of the students achieved significant improvement from the pre-test to the post-test. The majority of the bars representing the posttest marks are notably higher than the corresponding pre-test marks, indicating substantial progress in the students' performance.

Findings of the Observation

The qualitative analysis of the observations provided further insights into the students' behaviour during the intervention activities. Not only did the students respond promptly to the teacher's questions, but they also exhibited a keen interest in the vocabulary-building exercises and interactive learning methods. Their high levels of concentration and focus were evident as they actively participated in the activities with minimal distractions. This strong engagement suggests that the

students were deeply involved in the learning process, indicating a positive response to the intervention's methods.

Moreover, their excitement and eagerness to acquire new vocabulary were significantly amplified, especially due to the integration of song-based learning and vocabulary development games. The utilization of music and interactive games not only enhanced the enjoyment of the learning process but also contributed to a more profound comprehension and lasting retention of vocabulary. Additionally, the utilization of language boards served as an interactive and visual tool to strengthen vocabulary, thereby enhancing the memorability and effectiveness of the learning process for the students.

The classroom observation provides compelling evidence that these effective strategies are highly beneficial for students. This conclusive evidence from classroom observation strongly supports the notion that these strategies are indeed valuable and impactful for students' learning and vocabulary proficiency.

CONCLUSION

The research demonstrated the positive impact of integrating literature-based instruction, interactive activities, and selected literary works on students' vocabulary proficiency at Al Mazhar Girls' High School. Significant improvements were observed in students' vocabulary skills following the intervention, with song-based learning, vocabulary games, and language boards proving particularly effective. The comparison of pre-test and post-test results further validated these methods, highlighting the potential of literature-based instruction in enhancing vocabulary development. To build on these findings, educators are encouraged to prioritize literature-based teaching methods and incorporate interactive activities into their curriculum. Tailoring strategies to accommodate individual student differences can further enhance engagement and support language development effectively.

Future research should investigate the long-term effects of literature-based instruction on vocabulary retention and explore its impact on diverse student demographics and language proficiency levels. Integrating technology, such as digital literature resources and language apps, into these methods could provide innovative approaches to vocabulary acquisition. Additionally, studies comparing traditional vocabulary teaching methods with alternative strategies, such as song-based learning, vocabulary games, and language boards, would offer valuable insights. Expanding research to different age groups, cultural contexts, and educational settings would help create a more comprehensive understanding of the applicability and effectiveness of these methods, contributing further to the field of language education.

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