The Use of Body Language to Enhance Students' Vocabulary Learning

Umiyana Puradin[1], Megawati Basri[2], Zulhasmi Abasa[3]

[1,2,3] Universitas Pasifik Morotai

E-mail: umiyanapuradin@gmail.com

Article Info	ABSTRACT
	The aim of this study is to determine the effectiveness of using body language to improve students' vocabulary mastery. The study was conducted at SMPN Unggulan 3 Pulau Morotai, involving 37 students at class VII-A and VII-B. A quantitative pre-experimental design using a one group pre-test and post-test model was employed. Data were collected through a pre-test, six treatment sessions integrating body language into vocabulary teaching and a post-test. The results showed a significant increase in students' vocabulary scores, with an average increase from 23.08 (pre-test) to 75.95 (post-test). The data were analyses using SPSS Windows 22. Statistical analysis using the Wilcoxon signed-rank test confirmed that this increase was significant (asymptotic significances = 0.00 < 0.05). The findings suggest that incorporating body language into vocabulary teaching is an effective strategy, as it makes learning more interactive, interesting and meaningful. This method helps with word retention and builds students' confidence in using English. This study suggests that teachers should implement body language in the classroom and encourages further research into its impact on other language skill. *This is an open access article under the CC BY-SA license.*

Corresponding Author:

Umiyana Puradin
Universitas Pasifik Morotai
E-mail: umiyanapuradin@gmail.com

INTRODUCTION

According to Soedjito in Hilaliyah (2018:157), vocabulary is all the words in a language, the wealth of words owned by a speaker or writer, and the words used in a field of science. Vocabulary is one aspect of language that must be considered and mastered in order to support smooth communication using Indonesian both orally and in writing.

According to Liu (2019:962), body language is essential for teaching English, as it fosters a positive and harmonious relationship between the teacher and students, promotes discipline, and increases teaching efficiency. Moreover, teachers' body language cues, including eye contact, voice tone, hands movements, body movements, special distance, facial expressions, posture, and touching, clarify the information and facilitate it for the students. So, it is used for better understanding. Therefore, body language is considered a powerful aid in regulating and fostering students' learning achievements and language skills.

Body language is form of non-verbal communication that is done through movement, facial expressions, postures, and gestures to convey messages or emotions without using words. Body language is often more honest and believable than verbal communication because it can reveal emotions or intentions that are not conveyed through words. Although most gestures are universal, some aspects of body language can have different meanings depending on the cultural context.

LITERATURE REVIEW
1. Definition of Vocabulary

Vocabulary is the total number of words in a language. It is also a collection of words a person knows and uses in speaking and writing. Vocabulary is the total number of words in a language; also, the ability of words that a person knows and uses in speaking and writing. (Ratna Susanti, 2019:87). According to Thornbury (2002:13) without grammar very little can be conveyed, without vocabulary nothing can be conveyed. This means that in language learning, grammar alone is not enough and more emphasis must be placed on vocabulary. Vocabulary is a collection of words that form a language and vocabulary is an important factor in the language teaching and learning process, especially in English. Moreover, without vocabulary and its meaning, written and spoken communication will not be understood properly.

2. Body Language

According to Liu (2019:962), body language is essential for teaching English, as it fosters a positive and harmonious relationship between the teacher and students, promotes discipline, and increases teaching efficiency Moreover,

teachers' body language cues, including eye contact, voice tone, hands movements, body movements, special distance, facial expressions, posture, and touching, clarify the information and facilitate it for the students. So, it is used for better understanding. Therefore, body language is considered a powerful aid in regulating and fostering students' learning achievements and language skills.

3. The Importance of Vocabulary Mastery

The concept is derived from the term "master," denoting someone with profound knowledge in a specific field, such as a master painter Mastery: Definition, Meaning & Synonyms, (Merriam-Webster, 2023:9). A robust vocabulary enables students to tackle schoolwork more effortlessly and find greater success in various assessments that include vocabulary related questions. The more vocabulary a person could achieve, the higher chances of them in having a good use of English in communicate Gustian D (2021:2). Achieving these skills requires an interactive, inspiring, and enjoyable learning environment, supported by the use of media that encourages active participation from students.

4. Type of Body Language

According to Vijendra (2018:n.d), there are several types of body language as: Turning of the head, Rubbing eyes, Ear tugs, Head motion, Eyes contact, Eyebrow, Body Posture, Hands movement, The use of smile, The use of gesture and Facial expressions.

METHOD
Research Design

The type of quantitative method used in this study is pre-experimental, where the study is conducted without using an adequate control group. The pre-experimental design chosen in this study is one-group pretest-posttest, which involves measurements before (pretest) and after (posttest) the treatment is given to see the changes that occur. According to Sugiyono (2019:74), pre-experimental research with a one group pretest-posttest design is an experimental design that uses one sample group and takes measurements before and after treatment is given to the sample.

Population and Sample

The population comprised all seven-grade students at SMPN Unggulan 3 Pulau Morotai. A total of 37 students.

Instruments

The instrument of this research was a vocabulary test in the from of a pre-test and a post test. Each test consisted of 50 questions, including multiple choice, missing text, and matching words, designed to be completed in 60 minutes. The pre-test was given before the treatment to measure students' initial vocabulary mastery, while the post-test was give after six treatment sessions using body language to determine the improvement of students' vocabulary mastery.

Procedure

The research procedure consisted of three stages: a pre-test with 50 vocabulary questions to measure students' initial ability, six treatment sessions integrating body language in teaching

various vocabulary topics, and a post-test with the same format to assess improvement.

Data Analysis

Data were analyzed using SPSS 22. Since the normality test showed non-normal distribution, the Wilcoxon signed-Rank test was applied, and the result indicated a significant improvement in students' vocabulary after the treatment.

RESULT AND DISCUSSION
Research Result
Descriptive Statistics

	N	Minimum	Maximum	Mean	Std. Deviation
Pre Test	37	16	46	23.08	5.387
Post Test	37	60	92	75.95	9.375
Valid N (listwise)	37				

The table above shows that pre-test and post test data at SMPN Unggulan 3 Pulau Morotai. The students who participated in this research were 37 and from the those students, it was knows that the mean score of the pre-test was 23.08 and after being given a treatment of body language in the learning process and it turned out that the mean scores increased, can be seen from the post test value increased to 75.95. So, it can be concluded that by using body language, the value of the student vocabulary can be improved.

Wilcoxon signed-Rank Test

		N	Mean Rank	Sum of Ranks
Post Test - Pre Test	Negative Ranks	0^a	.00	.00
	Positive Ranks	37^b	19.00	703.00
	Ties	0^c		
	Total	37		

The table shows that all students (N=37) experienced an increase in their post-test scores compared to the pre-test, with 37 positive ranks, 0 negative ranks, and 0 ties. This indicates that the use of body language in vocabulary teaching resulted in a consistent improvement for all participants.

Discussion

In this study, the researcher used a quantitative method and discussed the findings during the pre-test, treatment and post-test to determine whether using body language in the learning process could improve students' vocabulary at SMPN Unggulan 3 Pulau Morotai. Based on the analysis of the data, it can be concluded that Body language can improve students' vocabulary skills, particularly at SMPN Unggulan 3 Pulau Morotai. The post-test value was higher than the pre-test value after six treatment sessions. The researcher also tested this data using the SPSS application and found that using body language in the learning process can improve students' vocabulary.

The first previews research finding by Indrayani simpuruh at al. (2021:9) "The Use of Gesture in Improving Students` Vocabulary Mastery in Selected Indonesian Junior High School". Based on the result of the research, concludes that using gesture in teaching English vocabulary improve the students' vocabulary achievement. It was proved by the data of students score in pre-test and post-test before and after doing gesture activity. The table of both scores showed that students' mean score in the post-test (75.44) was higher than the mean score of the students in pre-test (41.77). The students' vocabulary mastery improved after doing some treatment by using gesture. So, it concluded that the used of gesture was effective to improved students' vocabulary achievement to the second grade students of Indonesian junior high school. It showed by the table that

most of students got high score at the mean score in questionnaire was 8064.52 which stayed on very high interesting.

The second previews research finding by Dewi Purnama Sutji at al (2020:1) "Students' Body Language in Responding to Teacher Talk in EFL Classroom at SMA Athirah Makassar". This research provides ideas and values the body language which is repeatedly employed in the class in responding to teacher talk. The students performed five type of body language to respond to teacher talk which varied from genetics, postures, gestures, facial expressions, and eye contact. In details, genetic could be tracked as some students suddenly laughed when listening to something funny. Gestures could also be tracked since some students used their hands and arms to form body language. Some gestures found were clapping hands, arm raise, chin support, face cover, holding veil, hair clasp, neck scratch, head nod, forefinger blow and mouth clasp. Three of gesture (holding veil, hair clasp, and neck scratch) are special gestures that are used by female students who wear veil. Those gestures show that the wearing of veil for Moslem female affects their body language. Likewise, postures such as body lean, hands shrug, head clamp, putting the arms behind the back and in front of the body, boredom posture, standing while clenching hands and standing while hand is gripping the wrist were also found. Facial expression, additionally, varied from smiling and bored expressions. Eye contact, as observed, also included eyes close eyes stare and eyes rise. The second, the function of body languages stated by three respondents of this research also could be identified. Even though it is

known that there are some functions of body language, the respondents only mentioned a few of them that is to help them deliver their massage well and to make the verbal massage clear.

So, Previous research by Indrayani Simpuruh revealed that the use of gestures significantly improved students' vocabulary mastery at the junior high school level through a quantitative experimental design, while Dewi Purnama Sutji focused on identifying the types and functions of students' body language in responding to teacher talk using a qualitative method through observation and interview. Different from the two studies, the present research employed a quantitative pre-experimental design, focusing on the use of body language by the teacher in vocabulary learning. The findings of this study proved to be significant in enhancing students' vocabulary mastery, thus supporting previous results while also providing new evidence that teachers' body language can serve as an effective strategy in teaching English vocabulary.

CONCLUSION

Based on the explanations in Chapters I to IV of this study, it can be concluded that mastering vocabulary is fundamental to learning the English language. Vocabulary encompasses not only common words, but also word equivalents, antonyms, verbs and expressions that are essential for oral and written communication. However, at SMPN Unggulan 3 Pulau Morotai, students' vocabulary mastery, particularly with regard to verbs, is still relatively low, thus hindering their language development. A literature study discussed

in Chapter II found that body language plays an important role in language learning, particularly in improving understanding of word meaning through non-verbal communication involving gestures, facial expressions, eye contact and posture. Previous research also shows that using body language can increase students' interest in the material and help them to understand language concepts. This study employed a quantitative approach with a pre-experimental design and a one-group pre-test/ post-test model. Data were collected through pre- and post-tests conducted before and after six learning sessions incorporating body language. Data analysis was carried out using SPSS version 22. Considering that the data were not normally distributed, the Wilcoxon test was used for the main analysis.

The data analysis results presented in Chapter IV showed a significant improvement in students' vocabulary after the intervention. The mean pre-test score of 23.08 increased significantly to 75.95 in the post-test. The Wilcoxon test yielded a significance value (Asymp. Sig. 2-tailed) of 0.000, indicating a significant difference between the pre- and post-test results. This proves that using body language can effectively improve students' vocabulary mastery, particularly with regard to understanding and using verbs in the context of English learning. Therefore, integrating body language into the learning process provides an interactive and enjoyable atmosphere and is empirically proven to increase student engagement and absorption in vocabulary mastery. This research makes a valuable contribution to foreign language learning strategies by providing a more contextual and communicative approach that aligns with the learning characteristics of junior high school students.

Suggestions

1. For Students: should use body language to help memorize and practice vocabulary inside and outside the classroom.
2. For Teachers: are encouraged to apply body language creatively to make learning more engaging.
3. For Future Researchers: may explore other language aspects or use experimental designs for stronger validity across different levels of education.

REFERENCES

Gustian, D. (2021). *The importance of vocabulary in English learning* (Undergraduate thesis, Universitas Indonesia).

Hilaliyah, T. (2018). *Vocabulary Mastery and Interpersonal Intelligence with Students' Narrative Writing Ability*. Journal of Indonesian Language and Literature Reading, 3(2), 157-168.

Liu, M. 2019. *The Research On Body Language's Role In English Teaching*. International Journal of English Literature and Social Sciences, 4(4), 962-966. https://tinyurl.com/mwfsa47m.

Merriam-Webster. (2023). *Mastery: Definition, meaning & Synonyms,* 9.

Ratna Susanti. (2019). Peng*uasaan Kosa Kata Dan Kemampuan Membaca Bahasa.* Academia, 01, 87-93.

Simpuruh, Indrayani & Syamsinar Syamsinar. (2021). *The Use of Gesture in Improving Students' Vocabulary Mastery in Selected Indonesian Junior High School*. Utamax: Journal of Ultimate Research and Trends in Education, 3(1), 9-13.

Sugiono. 2019. *Metode Penelitian Kuantitatif, Kualitatif dan R&D*. Bandung: Alfabeta

Sutji, Dewi Purnama, Haryanto, H., & Salija, Kisman. (2020). *STUDENTS'BODY LANGUAGE IN RESPONDING TO TEACHER TALK IN EFL CLASSROOM*

AT SMA ATHIRAH MAKASSAR (Doctoral dissertation, UNIVERSITAS NEGERI MAKASSAR).

Vijendra, pratapsingh (2018) Language and Body Language. *Research Gate*