Enhancing EFL Learners' Reading Vocabulary Acquisition through Task-Based Instruction

Peningkatan Pemerolehan Kosakata dalam Membaca bagi Pembelajar Bahasa Inggris sebagai Bahasa Asing melalui Instruksi Berbasis Tugas

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Abstract

This study is intended to enhance students' reading vocabulary through task-based instruction. It was also devised not only to answer how the strategy can enhance students' reading vocabulary but also to get data about students' vocabulary retention two weeks after the implementation and students' responses towards the strategy. The participants of this study were 30 ninth graders in SMPN 11 Malang in the second semester of 2019/2020 academic year. Classroom Action Research (CAR) was used as the research design. Vocabulary test, questionnaire, observation sheet, and interview session were the instruments of this study. There were three vocabulary tests, namely vocabulary test one, vocabulary test two, and delayed test. The result showed that there was an improvement in students' scores. 90% of students achieved at least 25 improvement points for the vocabulary test two, 61% of students passed the delayed vocabulary test, and 97.5% of students responded positively toward the strategy. TBI could enhance vocabulary acquisition from the context and task's characteristics. The context of the text helped students to give a clue about some forgotten vocabularies, so they felt less burdened to remember the vocabulary in the whole text because they generally understand the context of the text.

Keywords: task-based instruction, reading vocabulary, vocabulary retention

Abstrak

Penelitian ini bertujuan untuk meningkatkan kosakata membaca siswa melalui instruksi berbasis tugas. Penelitian ini juga dirancang tidak hanya untuk menjawab bagaimana strategi yang diterapkan dapat meningkatkan kosakata membaca siswa tetapi juga untuk mendapatkan data tentang retensi kosakata siswa dua minggu setelah penerapan dan tanggapan siswa terhadap strategi yang diberikan. Partisipan penelitian ini adalah 30 siswa kelas 9B di SMPN 11 Malang semester genap tahun ajaran 2019/2020. Penelitian Tindakan Kelas (PTK) digunakan sebagai desain penelitian. Tes kosakata, angket, lembar observasi, dan sesi wawancara menjadi instrumen dalam penelitian ini. Ada tiga tes kosakata yang diberikan, yaitu tes kosakata satu, tes kosakata dua, dan tes tertunda. Hasil penelitian menunjukkan bahwa ada peningkatan pada nilai siswa: 90% dari keseluruhan siswa mencapai setidaknya 25 peningkatan poin untuk tes kosakata dua, 61% dari keseluruhan siswa mampu melalui tes kosakata tertunda, dan 97.5% dari keseluruhan siswa menanggapi strategi secara positif. TBI dapat meningkatkan penguasaan kosakata dari suatu konteks dan karakteristik tugas. Konteks dari suatu teks membantu siswa mendapatkan petunjuk tentang beberapa kosakata yang telah terlupakan, sehingga mereka merasa tidak terlalu terbebani untuk mengingat kembali kosakata keseluruhan teks karena mereka pada umumnya memahami konteks teks tersebut.

Kata kunci: instruksi berbasis tugas, kosakata bacaan, retensi kosakata

1. Introduction

The majority of students in Indonesia learn English as a foreign language (EFL) rather than as a second language (L2). EFL means that they do not study English in the English-speaking country as their first language, nor do they use English as their second language. The basic foundation to learn a new language is by understanding the vocabulary. According to Cahyono and Widiati (2008), the mastery of productive and receptive skills is boosted by adequate mastery of vocabulary. The productive skills are the output while the receptive skills are the input of the language. Cheng and Matthews (2018) believe receptive and productive skills in L2 vocabulary are dissimilar. Being able to produce some words in the written or spoken form means that the students have sufficient vocabulary knowledge input. Zou (2016) states that vocabulary knowledge is an important element in communication and also in second language acquisition. Massaro (2015) suggests that young children should learn vocabulary first to accelerate the development of language acquisition.

Understanding the meaning of words has been a necessity for learners in the process of learning (Schreiber, 1980; Engelbar & Theukerkauf, 1999; Zhang & Anual, 2008; Silver & Png, 2016). Schuetzhe (2014) found that content and short words are better recalled than function and longer words. Since short, meaningful, and usable words will make students easily recall the words. Students' foundation of vocabulary knowledge influences their vocabulary collection that they will gain (Joe, 1998). Lee and Paulido (2017) offer teachers to provide reading materials for L2 vocabulary learners. Providing reading materials are feasible action to overcome the situation and it is also in line with the decree of the Ministry of Education and Culture Number 21/2016 about the standard of content for the level of junior high school to senior high school English students that they are generally required to identify the social function, structure of a text, and its language features, to communicate using the targeted language, and to construct a simple and short text. Teachers could implement reading vocabulary materials on the basic competencies that they teach based on the decree of the Ministry of Education and Culture Number 24/2016.

Reading is best suited to the context of English as a Foreign Language which gives both incidental acquisition and intentional learning with pedagogical materials intended for classroom learning. In a reading section, students can easily reread a text they do not know about which makes repetitions of words come continuously. Repetitions of the same words encountered by learners help them to procure the knowledge of the word (Swanenflugel, Stahl and McFalls; 1997, Laufer & Rozovski-Roitblat; 2011, Liu & Todd; 2014). Deficiency in knowledge and skills to capably read a text are the issues for mostly striving youth readers (Clemens, Simmons, Simmons, Wang, and Kwok, 2017). In addition, reading as a habitual activity will enrich students' knowledge, guiding them to be lifelong learners, creative, critical thinking, comprehending sciences, technology, arts and culture. It is related to the goals of the decree of The Ministry of Education and Culture Number 20/2016 about the standard of graduate competence. Students' understanding should be reviewed regularly, over time, to measure their development (Klingner, 2004).

Masrai (2019) claims that reading performance in the L2 perspective depends on how much vocabulary they could recognize. This is what Indonesian educators and researchers need to better systematize the product of English for students. According to Nation (2006), 8,000–9,000 vocabulary knowledge is required in writing a text while 6,000–7,000 families are required in speaking a text. Eckerth and Tavakoli (2012) report that reading increases

receptive skills and also productive vocabulary incidentally. Learners in incidental acquisition situations deal with unfamiliar words while in the intended lesson, learners have been guided to the teachers' aims (Bordag, Kirschenbaum, Rogahn and Tschirner, 2016). According to Ivone (2005), language educators must not depend on incidental word knowledge only. Moreover, teachers should direct materials used in real-life activities and nurture students to be able to use the target language. Zheng and Borg (2014) claim that memorizing and transferring information is not the intention of learning, but it should be through an inquiry and discovery process. Rassaei (2015) argues that instructional involvements focusing on lexical and word production activities are beneficial for L2 learners' vocabulary mastery. Therefore, the implementation of reading vocabulary materials needs a suitable approach.

Task-Based Instruction (TBI), or also known as Task-Based Language Teaching (TBLT), proposes an effective approach to be used in learning and teaching for students. Lee (2016) claims that TBI supports productive and receptive skills in tasks, allowing students to utilize L2 eagerly and expressively. Ellis (2003) believes that a task is associated with the proficiency of four skills.

TBI helps students enhance their vocabulary through a variety of tasks consisting of Lower Order Thinking and Higher Order Thinking Skills. It is in line with the standard of graduate competence for knowledge and skill description in the learning characteristics (The decree of The Ministry of Education and Culture Number 22/2016 about the standard of process).

According to de la Fuente (2006), the acquisition of both the definition and word formation is the objective of L2 vocabulary tasks. Getting integrated between students and the context is the purpose of a task, and task-based instruction is a favorite outdoor activity that exactly stands the notion (Lee, 2005). Ellis (2009) reports that establishing a context to help students to feel familiar with the situation of communication by themselves is one of the purposes in TBLT. A context facilitates students to learn the given vocabulary in a task.

TBLT encourages learners to practice using the language and provides them with a real-world communicative situation (Benson, 2016). Teachers should consider the characteristics of tasks that aim to bolster L2 acquisition and conversational effectiveness (Ellis, 2000). Song and Sardegna (2014) argue that students can evaluate their proficiency while trying to communicate using the target language. Choosing a topic that is close to students' environment tightens their understanding of the targeted vocabulary.

There were several researches associated with task and vocabulary. Shintani (2012) shows the efficiency of the input-based task approach to students who learn English for the first time. Her research successfully attracts the attention of children to communicate using English. Another study conducted by Newton for L2 adult learners investigated two types of communication tasks for 12 weeks at a New Zealand university. Newton (2013) claims that the task's quality is essential to manage students' interest in vocabulary in more advantageous conditions. The task assists the teacher to have specific material for students to be more focused that can be used to cover students' weak points. De la Fuente (2006) states that the focus on forms in TBLT appears to be more efficient than in PPP sessions, presents more occasion for negotiation of meaning and output production, and permits recollection of intended words.

As many as 30 Japanese learners aged six participated in a quasi-experimental design by Shintani. Shintani (2012) demonstrated that the allocated task consisting of listening and performing activities offers learners the chance to manage how the speech escalated. It helps to make a space for students to communicate using the targeted language in a communicative way. Lee (2005) claims that task-based instruction is connected to three important pieces of language learning, namely comprehensible input, comprehensible output, and motivation. The data were collected from ten regular elementary classes in Korea from five different schools.

A study of using tasks showed another positive response. Skehan and Foster (1997) state that the planning session in TBI had a huge impact on the fluency and efficiency of task implementation to control and direct learner's capabilities. Payant and Reagan (2016) argue that distinguishing tasks categories may benefit students' vocabulary retention. Their study involved 28 learners of Spanish foreign language. According to Eckerth and Tavakoli (2012), a high reiteration of the same words and intensive tasks determines vocabulary acquisition. Therefore, TBI is a feasible approach integrated with reading materials to teach vocabulary. The task can be modified based on the materials and the learning goals. This study aims to enhance students' reading vocabulary through task-based instruction for ninth graders at SMPN 11 Malang.

2. Method

There were a few activities in the early study, such as confirming the issue of what had happened in the class. One English teacher for the ninth grade from SMPN 11 was interviewed to provide background information about the issue found in her students during the teaching and learning process. Eleven questions were written in Indonesian to minimize misconceptions, consisting of the teacher's academic background and the students' problem. The results of the interview showed that most students faced the same problem of having difficulties in memorizing and using English vocabulary. The teachers informed that she often taught vocabulary in her prime time, but students forgot words so easily that they cannot remember. Consequently, she used a game in order to teach vocabulary in a fun way, such as guessing word games. It became a challenging situation for the teacher; meanwhile, their score was also entirely unsatisfactory. So, there was an urgency to find a proper solution to deal with the issue, and TBI was considered a feasible approach in fixing the issue to enhance students' reading vocabulary.

Students' reading vocabulary were measured by using vocabulary tests. Two try-out tests were administered to get a reliable vocabulary test before it was implemented in the strategy. Those try-out tests were not applied to the targeted class for the research which were administered to students in 9A and 9D classes. The final form of the vocabulary test was achieved after analyzing the two try-out tests. Item facility and item distraction were used to evaluate the difficulty of the question and the multiple-choice options. Two report texts entitled Batik and Komodo Dragon became the primary sources for the vocabulary test. The chosen twenty vocabularies were not in the same part of speech because it was taken from the general context of the text, so students need to generally understand the whole idea from the text.

This study implemented Classroom Action Research (CAR). Planning, acting, observing, and reflecting are the four stages in a cycle of CAR (Altricher, Kemmis, McTaggart, and Zuber-Skerritt, 2002). By applying CAR, teachers will benefit from a strategy that can be developed in

the long run to wrap up the issue while boosting other students' capabilities. It promotes a more effective process of teaching and learning in the classroom. CAR provides teachers with lesson plans that could be evaluated to see the progress and the output at the same time. Students are supposed to be on the active side instead of the teacher in the classroom.

The participants of this study were 30 students from 9B class of SMPN 11, junior high school in Malang. The result of the interview with the senior teacher showed that students lacked vocabulary knowledge; therefore, TBI was chosen and implemented to encounter the issue. TBI was expected to strengthen students' reading vocabulary and help them to better recall the targeted vocabulary for a specific time. The goal of the study was to enhance students' reading vocabulary acquisition in class 9B through TBI based on the English syllabus for ninth graders of junior high school second-semester academic year 2019/2020 which dealt with the basic competence point 3.9 about differentiating social function, structure, and language features of some report texts in the form of spoken or written text about asking and giving information, simple and short, associated with the context. This study was devised with a view to answering the following research questions based on the background of the study:

(1) How can Task-based instruction enhance students' reading vocabulary acquisition?
(2) How is students' retention of targeted vocabulary two weeks after the implementation?
(3) How do students respond to Task-based instruction?

TBI uses tasks in the context of real-life situations as a way to deliver the materials. Two kinds of report texts were selected and adapted based on the topic that was connected to the part of Indonesian culture. These texts, Batik and Komodo Dragon, were then used as underlying components to develop into tests and tasks. The test became the vocabulary test to measure students' reading vocabulary while the tasks were used to record students' progress on each task. As a result, there were three tests and five tasks that were implemented in the study. The test consisted of twenty multiple choices dealing with the vocabulary of two report texts. The chosen vocabulary was considered to be in the high level of average junior high school students. Although it had been designed to be rather difficult, there were tasks that would help them to do the assignment.

The form of the task was divided into two, individual task and group task. Instead of finishing the whole tasks individually, TBI equips students with social skills. Collaborative work made them finish their task faster than doing it individually. They were required to divide a task equally and to help each other in the group to finish the task. Another purpose was to get a different point of view from their friend, so they would be able to accept a different opinion. In the end, they would think that they could learn something new, not only from their teacher, but also from their friend because learning is a never-ending process.

Vocabulary tests, observation sheets, questionnaires, and an interview session were the instruments for collecting the data in the study. There were three vocabulary tests, namely vocabulary test one, vocabulary test two, and delayed test. Two vocabulary test results were registered to get the data about students' improvement points. Then, the delay test result was utilized to gain data about the memory span of the targeted vocabulary which was conducted two weeks after the vocabulary test two.

The observation sheet was related to students' performance. It was used to record students' activities in the classroom when the strategy was being implemented in four

meetings. Generally, students' observation was focused on their participation, attention, and understanding of the tasks. There were four scales to be chosen in evaluating the observation sheet. It ranged from poor, fair, good, to very good. The data was useful for improving the strategy to better attract students' attention toward the activity in the classroom.

The students' questionnaire consisted of six questions. Four questions were multiple choices while two last questions were open-ended questions. In general, it reviewed three points which were about students' interest, students' attitude, and the teaching strategy. Right after giving the questionnaire, one student would have an interview session asking several questions about the result of the vocabulary test two. There would be only one student who would be interviewed because they got the lowest score on the second vocabulary test. There were fifteen questions listed, the applied strategy, student's background knowledge, and student's interest in learning English.

The success of the implemented strategy was based on the criteria of success. There were three types of indicators as follows:

1. 75% of students gained 25 points of improvement on the vocabulary test two.
2. 50% of students acquired the delayed test score at least the same as they had in the vocabulary test two.
3. 80% of students showed positive responses toward the task-based instruction strategy.

The activities had been designed to make students improve their vocabulary based on the given text. The first criterion is to gather data on how TBI can enhance students' reading vocabulary acquisition. The gain score was obtained by comparing the result of the vocabulary test one with the result of vocabulary test two. On the other hand, students' retention was measured by comparing the result of the delayed test with the result of vocabulary test two on the second criterion of success. The students' responses of the strategy in the third criterion of success were acquired from the student's questionnaire at the final meeting. The indicators of the criteria of success and other data instruments had been discussed with the English teacher because she was fully aware of her students' capabilities as well as considering what students could achieve in the four meetings of the implementation time.

Table 1 List of Activities in Task-based Instruction

No	Meeting	List of Activities
1	First Meeting on 29th January 2020	Administering vocabulary test 1
		Making a group work of four students at most
		Instructing students to do task 1 related to Batik
		They were required to do open-ended questions and matching activities
		Showing a video about the structure of report text
		Discussing the given task
2	Second Meeting on 3rd February 2020	Asking students to make a pair work
		Delivering task 2 dealing with Komodo Dragon
		Students were required to do open-ended questions, completing sentences, and writing sentences
		Instructing students to do part A and B
		Discussing the given task
3	Third Meeting on 5th February 2020	Instructing students to write 12 sentences as task 3 individually in part C of Komodo Dragon's text
		Guiding students in writing their sentences

No	Meeting	List of Activities
		Giving every student homework to write a simple report text as task 4
		Discussing the task 3 and task 4
4	Fourth Meeting on 10th February 2020	Ordering students to submit the task 4
		Making a group work of four students at most
		Giving students task 5 about analyzing two different kinds of report text
		Discussing the given task
		Administering vocabulary test 2
5	Fifth Meeting on 24th February 2020	Delivering the delayed test
		Distributing questionnaires
		Interviewing one student who obtained the lowest score

3. Finding and Discussion

3.1 Vocabulary Acquisition

Task-based instruction which was used in the study had been applied by considering several factors. Firstly, the Indonesian English syllabus requires the element of basic competence to be taught in the classroom. As a result, basic competence 3.9 became the key figure to determine the later learning objectives which also made the first study related to report text. TBI was known for the spoken output; however, the basic competence 3.9 was specially designed for the writing skill, so there was a new adapted strategy. Secondly, two types of report texts were used as the main resources dealing with reading vocabulary acquisition which were modified into variations of tasks. It was arranged to help students grasp the content of the given materials and learn the targeted vocabulary as well. Thirdly, twenty vocabulary questions were prepared to gain data about students' improvement points and their vocabulary retention. The general Task-based instruction strategy had been adjusted to suit the English curriculum and students' capabilities.
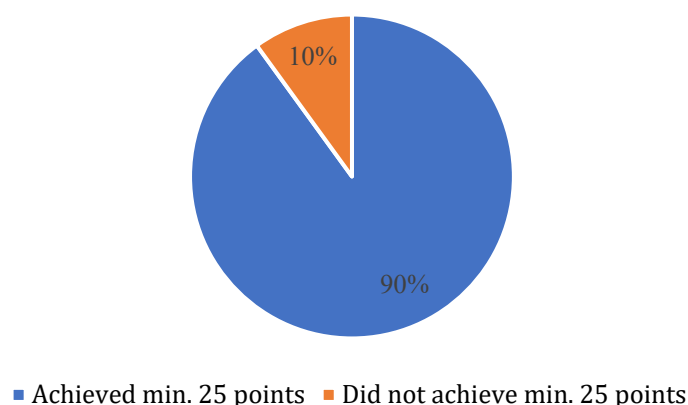

■ Achieved min. 25 points   ■ Did not achieve min. 25 points

Figure 1. The Percentage of Students' Improvement Point

Based on the data as shown in the figure above, 10% of all the participants did not meet the first criteria of success. A student should acquire a minimum of 25 improvement points to be categorized as passing the first criteria of success. The score was obtained by comparing the result of the vocabulary test one with test two. In fact, three students did not achieve the criteria of success. Two students did not meet the criteria of success because they did not

participate in the vocabulary test two. However, another student did not meet the criteria of success because he got a lower score, hence less improvement points. His gain point was only 10, which is 15 points less than needed to be classified as passing the criteria of success.

Students' average score, starting from the vocabulary test one was 45.5 calculated from all attending participants that were doing the test on the same day. After being given the implementation, their average score changed completely and showed an improvement to reach 86.2, excluding two students compared to the vocabulary test one. In other words, there was an improvement of 40.7 points. According to the first criteria of success, at least 75% of students were required to gain 25 improvement points in the vocabulary test two. The result of analysis showed that 90% of students surpassed the minimum targeted points, so the result of the students' vocabulary test two could be considered to achieve the first criteria of success

3.2 How TBI Improves Students' Vocabulary Acquisition

The first research question that was examined was related to students' improvement in their reading vocabulary acquisition using Task-based instruction. According to the findings, TBI could successfully enhance students' vocabulary acquisition from the mean score of 45.5 to 86.2. 90% of students acquired at least 25 improvement points in vocabulary test two. This data supported the feasible strategy through the tasks' activities.

Task-based instruction is suitable for language acquisition activities (Ellis, 2003). It aligns with Shintani's (2012) research result that the input-based task succeeded in improving vocabulary acquisition. The study examined the acquisition of learners' vocabulary and grammar through the task in the flashcard game. Newton (2013) states that the design of tasks influences the learners' vocabulary acquisition. His study investigated how English as a second language (ESL) learners' reaction to unfamiliar words in the negotiation task. Moreover, task selection is the key figure to determine the target of learning (Skehan, Xiaoyue, Qian & Wang; 2012, Newton; 2013, Benson; 2016). Lee (2005) assumes that a task's properties could affect the intensity of students' participation. The study observed the effectiveness of task-based instruction for Korean elementary students. According to Lee (2016), tasks encourage learners to participate in the learning and teaching process. The study was about Computer-mediated Communication (CMC) implemented with TBI as a digital tool to evaluate learners' autonomous learning. The best design of the task was by reading and using the pointed words repeatedly. Waring and Takaki (2003) believe that there is a required repetition of words to expand vocabulary acquisition.

According to Ellis (2009), TBLT provides authentic learning in the classroom, facilitates various input of target language, and allows students-centered teaching. Within this learning framework, students would have a high probability of comprehending and using the targeted language by the given task. Correspondingly, TBI directed students to real-world materials (Ellis; 2000, Lloret & Nielson; 2015, Lee; 2016). They were presented with the updated topic that happened around them. Eckerth and Tavakoli (2012) state that a richer repetition of words and a greater selection of tasks generated in higher word acquisition. Outside of the task's design, TBI is suitable for the teachers who intend to improve students' vocabulary acquisition.

There were several reasons why task-based instruction could improve students' reading vocabulary acquisition. Firstly, it provided learners with authentic materials of report text,

which helped them remember forgotten vocabulary through the context. In line with Ellis's (2009) statement, inventing context is one of the goals in TBLT. Starting from the context, students would get exposure to understand the story presented in the text and help them to learn the vocabulary. De la Fuente (2006) claims that the vocabulary task eases learners to understand the meaning and structure of the targeted words. The study compared the effectiveness between task-based lessons and Presentation, Practice, and Production (PPP) lessons. After students were familiar with the meaning of some vocabulary in context, they began to comprehend the forms. This idea is supported by Payant and Reagan (2016) that state students seem to be accustomed to several vocabularies from the given task.

Secondly, the characteristics of a task could be used as a stimulus to learn new vocabulary. Ellis (2000) claims that the design of the tasks stimulates students' language acquisition and their speaking proficiency. The focus of the task depended on the teacher's goal; in this case, it was about vocabulary acquisition. This notion was in accordance with Newton's (2013) idea that task's character acts as a significant position to direct learners' attention to vocabulary learning in more constructive ways. Although not all of the tasks in the study were equipped with vocabulary practices, four tasks were designed to connect students with targeted vocabulary in the context. The first and second task consisted of open-ended questions, matching activities, and completing sentences about targeted vocabulary, the third task helped to write sentences using some of the vocabularies while the fifth task compared the elements of two used report texts which required students to reread the texts thoroughly. Consequently, the property of the given task in the TBI enhanced students' vocabulary acquisition by helping them to use the targeted vocabulary.

Lee (2005) believes that tasks are beneficial at helping students to practice the target language. Teachers should modify their lessons, so their pupils have adequate vocabulary knowledge because it is a foundation for learning a language. However, teachers had to pay attention to their syllabus carefully to see if a modified lesson is suitable without disregarding the target competence. Ellis (2003) states that teachers should examine the curriculum used by the school and students' learning objectives for each lesson. It was important to give them rich input of the vocabulary so that they had a better output. Therefore, TBI was useful to be used as an input to learn new vocabulary. Shintani's (2012) input-based approach has shown success for students at the beginner level of English. In other words, TBI was effective to be implemented for beginner learners because the early learning stage served as a stepping stone to get to the higher level. Massaro (2015) suggests that learners would be better to gain vocabulary in the first stage of learning a language. While conducting the teaching and learning session, teachers were expected to do planning beforehand. In the case of TBI, it acted to prevent the lesson from going off track.

Skehan and Foster (1997) believe that deferment in teaching sessions has been initiated by task performance because it is not being evaluated in the planning phase. It is in line with Silver and Png's (2015) opinion on the importance of the lesson plan i.e. improvisation while teaching is considered a difficult task, so teachers are used to acting on scripts. The lesson plan had been prepared for the teachers to arrange a list of activities dealing with what they should do in the classroom. Nevertheless, there would always be a time when the teachers needed to make adaptations to follow the stream of the lesson in the classroom. For example, students were expected to make a report text, but they forgot how the structure of the text was, so the teacher had to teach their students the concept of structure in the report text first.

According to Cahyono and Widiati (2008), language skills proficiency is encouraged by decent vocabulary acquisition. Thus, in order to get good vocabulary, TBI could be used as a feasible approach to learn new vocabulary and improve its mastery. Lee (2016) believes that TBI allows learners to utilize productive and receptive skills expressively while studying the target language. Combining language skills should also apply high order thinking materials. The easiest way was to search for a text that represents the intended criteria. From that source, teachers could develop their materials into reading and writing or with listening and speaking as well. According to Zhang and Anual (2008), educators need to organize 5000 reading vocabularies to enhance students' reading performance. The core issue of the students was that they did not get much input on literacy. As a result, they did not have much vocabulary knowledge to use in production skills such as in writing and speaking skills.

Improving their literacy means the improvement of their vocabulary, in this case by using task-based instruction. As explained above, TBI could be used to enhance students' vocabulary acquisition. In the lesson plan, the teachers could carefully design their learning materials which definitely support vocabulary acquisition integrated with the English syllabus. They should compile lessons that are suitable for students' capabilities, so that the students' could fully grasp the given materials. Eventually, the task was supposed to provide a context and practice session as a reinforcement of using the targeted vocabulary.

3.3 Students' Vocabulary Retention

The students' vocabulary retention was evaluated from the result of the delayed test scores that had been compared to the result of the vocabulary test two. It was performed to acquire the data to answer the second criterion of success about students' retention of twenty targeted vocabularies. If at least 15 students could get the same score of the delayed test as they obtained in the vocabulary test two, then the second criteria of success were achieved. Two weeks after the fourth meeting of the implementation of the strategy, the delayed test was conducted. It was used as a surprise test because only their English teacher knew about the test. The content of the delayed test was similar to its former vocabulary test. The delayed test's score was then examined in order to study their memory span for two weeks after the implementation.

The delayed test was not counted as an implementation of the strategy but served as an additional meeting that completed the teaching strategy, so there were no teaching activities except for the delayed test, the questionnaire, and the interview. The interval in doing the vocabulary test one through test two was two weeks, and between the vocabulary test two over the delayed test was also two weeks. The delayed test also demonstrated a decent average score of 86.5 points. It was slightly different (0.3 points) from the mean score of vocabulary test two that was 86.2.

Based on the data findings, the lowest score for the delayed test was 70 while the highest score was 100. Two students' scores were not used because they did not participate in the vocabulary test two. Eleven students obtained the same score as they had in the vocabulary test two, eleven students decreased their points up to ten points, and six students successfully improved their scores. According to the second criteria of success, 50% of students were required to get the delayed test score at least the same score as they acquired in the vocabulary test two. It was found that 61% of students achieved the second criterion of success. It meant

that 17 students passed the requirement of students' vocabulary retention two weeks after the implementation.
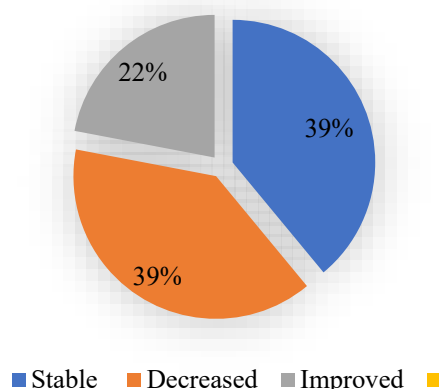

Figure 2 The Percentage of Students' Vocabulary Retention

3.4 Students' Vocabulary Retention

The second research question in the study discussed how students' retention of targeted vocabulary two weeks after using Task-based instruction. The students' retention of reading vocabulary was based on the result of the delayed test. The data was then processed to get the mean score and to compare with the vocabulary test two mean scores.

According to Cheng and Good (2009), a reduction on the first delayed retention test and an astonishing small improvement on the second delayed retention test. The interval of their recall test was one week on each test. A reasonable justification in their study was that the vocabulary recall tests acted to strengthen students' memory. Another study from Waring and Takaki (2003) states that a higher frequency to encounter and study the targeted words could increase the percentage of vocabulary retention. In other words, teachers should pay more attention to the property of tasks if they want to enhance students' retention. Teachers needed to put context in their lesson plan, so their students would feel more comfortable in learning vocabulary. Joe (1998) claims that recollecting some words with the help of context equips students to easily and contextually memorize the targeted vocabulary. It is the teachers' duty to facilitate learners with fun and satisfying learning in the classroom.

Careful selection of the number of vocabularies to be learned by students was also important. Teachers should recognize the students' capabilities before determining the level of difficulty in their lesson. Schuetze (2014) believes that giving less vocabulary to be rehearsed might raise the retention capacity of short-term memory. By doing so, students had priority on what vocabulary they should comprehend. The small number of vocabulary made students feel less burdened. Therefore, the given task played a significant role in leading the learning direction. If the teachers wanted their students to have much vocabulary knowledge, then they needed to provide rich input for vocabulary lessons. It could be in the form of listening or reading activities. Additionally, giving vocabulary that was close to students' lives made them easily remember because they used it many times on their daily basis.

Laufer and Rozovski-Roitblat (2011) suggest that recollecting words is more influenced by intensifying low rates of word frequency and directing on the structure than recognition.

This idea could be used by language educators that a limited number of vocabulary but fully used in the variety of tasks could be powerful for vocabulary learning. The focus of the task that was highlighted in vocabulary learning improved students' retention of targeted vocabulary. It served as an essential input to better recall when the vocabulary was needed. For example, writing activities reinforced students to use vocabulary that they had known before and prolonged their recollection of used vocabulary. Rassaei (2015) states that written tasks consisting of innovation and creative instruction carry a long-term retention impact on vocabulary acquisition. Students were required not only to recall some vocabulary but also to look for the word replacement of similar meaning when they tried to write sentences into an essay.

Moreover, Folse (2006) found that managing time wisely in a sentence-completion task allows students to have better word recollection than writing activities. Time efficiency was one of the main reasons why writing original sentences was less efficient than sentence-completion. The goal of those two tasks was different from each other, but the function was still for students' vocabulary retention. Eckerth and Tavakoli (2012) demonstrated that vocabulary recollection tests were more effective in students' retention than recognition tests. The tests that implemented vocabulary lessons were also expected to support a recall test in the end so that students might have decent targeted vocabulary retention.

Meanwhile, Kitajima (2001) claims that learners' concentration is supposed to be pointed in the meaning and structure to strengthen it into their word retention. The surface-level forms were identical with syntactic and morphological features. While studying a particular vocabulary, the sentence contained a meaningful expression that could be used to reinforce students with targeted vocabulary. The context of the text helped students to recall the vocabulary. Furthermore, task-based instruction focused on vocabulary can be used to manage students' interest in the meaning and structure of the words (Kitajima, 2001).

3.5 Students' Responses toward the Implementation

The responses of students were categorized into two types. The first one was in the form of a questionnaire and the latter was organized as an interview session. Both of them were applied to collect some information from students in evaluating the implemented strategy and students' opinions at the same time, but only the result of the questionnaire was used to compare with the criteria of success. The students' questionnaire consisted of six questions, four close-ended questions and two open-ended questions. The questions were combined with the task-based instruction teaching strategy, their memory on the targeted vocabularies, and their criticisms and suggestions toward the strategy.

On the other hand, the interview session was formulated from fourteen questions. It could be said that the interview was aimed to find the difficulties from the strategy on the students' point of view. There was only one student that was being interviewed because he got the lowest score from the vocabulary test two. The student seemed to hold back his answer and thought of how to reply before giving his own answer. He was nervous and tense because he could see that he was the only one being asked questions. Furthermore, the reason why he got the lowest score was that he didn't really like the English subject.

Based on Table 2, all of the students agreed to enjoy the strategy of reading vocabulary using task-based instruction. There were two main reasons why they had one same answer.

The first one was that they were already familiar with the concept of a task since they regularly received some tasks from their teachers. The second reason was that they had learned the implemented strategy through numerous variations in the task, so they did not feel bored in the process. They also decided to vote that the strategy was able to help them in learning the vocabulary. The introduction of vocabulary in the context applied in the reality of a daily basis gave them a formidable foundation for the prolonged duration. Students could find commonly used vocabulary in the text among the targeted vocabulary. The selected well-known materials supported the students to feel relaxed and to enjoy the activities in the classroom. These were parts of the Indonesian culture that were supposed to be acknowledged by students. The practice session helped them in recognizing the vocabulary while the reinforcement part of the activities enhanced them to use some vocabulary.

Table 2. The Percentage of Close-ended Questionnaire

Question Items	Variables	Students' Answer			
		Yes		No	
		f	%	f	%
1	Enjoy the strategy	30	100	0	0
2	The strategy helps to learn vocabulary	30	100	0	0
3	Understand the meaning of given vocabulary	29	96.7	1	3.3
4	Help to use the given vocabulary	28	93.4	2	6.6
	Total	117	97.5	3	2.5

Conversely, not all students had the same answer to question number three. However, the majority of the answer still showed a positive reaction toward the strategy. Students faced some challenging situations to understand the meaning of given vocabulary. Firstly, they needed to be aware of the part of speech for every vocabulary because the meaning might not be the same in different forms. Secondly, the vocabulary was taught in a text or full of sentences, so it took time to study and to comprehend the vocabulary. Twenty-eight students believed that the strategy provided them with a chance to learn the vocabulary. There were two tasks that could be used for students to use the vocabulary. Those were task three and task four. In task three, they were required to write twelve sentences from the box. Meanwhile, in task four, they were instructed to write their own report text. According to the table above, 97.5% of students gave positive responses toward the strategy, so the result could be considered to achieve the criteria of success.

Table 3 showed the frequency of vocabulary that students recalled when filling out the questionnaire, and a summary of the students' opinions concerning task-based instruction. The most remembered vocabulary by the students was the word heritage, while only four students remembered the word celebration. There were at least twenty students and more who could memorize the word heritage, hone, artisan, lay, poaching, masterpiece, serrated, preserve while the rest of the vocabulary could be remembered by less than twenty students. Most of them approved the notion that the strategy helped them to get new vocabulary and to learn them easier. A combination of teaching media encouraged students to learn more actively and refreshed their attention to the lesson. Some of them even wanted to get the translation first before the lesson.

Table 3. The Summary of Open-ended Questionnaire

Question Items	Variables	Students' Answer			
5	Remembered vocabulary	Heritage	29	Whopping	14
		Hone	28	Express	14
		Artisan	28	Exhibition	12
		Lay	27	Patience	11
		Poaching	26	Recognize	10
		Masterpiece	22	Dearth	10
		Serrated	22	Intertwined	8
		Preserve	20	Threatened	8
		Founder	19	Prosperous	6
		Wound	18	Celebration	4
6	Upside opinions of TBI	It helps to understand and remember new vocabulary			
		Make it easy to learn new vocabulary			
		Fascinating strategy in learning vocabulary			
		The strategy is a great assistance to get new vocabulary			
	Downside opinions of TBI	It is good, but it is not easy			
		Vocabularies need to be translated to Indonesia first			
		It needs a clear meaning and an in-depth explanation of the text			
		A movie related to the material will be useful to accompany the task			

3.6 The Students' Responses

The result of the students' questionnaire was used to evaluate the research question about how the students responded toward Task-based instruction. Only four questions were selected for the students' responses because the two open-ended questions are less easy to put into exact percentage. The total 97.5% score in the students' questionnaire revealed that students gave their positive responses toward the strategy. All of the students agreed that they enjoyed learning vocabulary using task-based instruction. It might happen because the property of the task supported them to engage in the learning activities. According to Ellis (2000), a task is a practical instrument for teaching language that leads students to be involved in a particular category of information-handling. The design of the task should be based on the students' performance and participation.

Another reason was that TBI made them work in a group. Performing group work with their peers caused them to quickly discuss a difficult part of the assignment to get the best answer. It is in line with Lee's (2016) statement that cognitive, social, and affective dimensions of independent study are encouraged in TBI by permitting learners to study autonomously and cooperatively with their friends and teachers. The students believed that the strategy helped them to learn vocabulary. The given text with a topic related to students' life and a vocabulary designed task facilitated them in learning vocabulary. De la Fuente (2006) states that TBI dealing with vocabulary learning provides a reassuring approach in the pedagogical standpoints and the research. Furthermore, the strategy provided students with the context of the text.

Once they comprehend the context, they could also discern the whole story of the text in general. Waring and Takaki (2003) showed that a context helps students to study words, but it

is more effective to encounter the words numerous times. Generally, the discussion session in the classroom reinforced the understanding of given vocabulary or about the context of the story in the text. Meanwhile, the majority of students accepted the idea that the strategy helped them to use the given vocabulary because some of the tasks focused on students using the targeted vocabulary. Joe (1998) states that recollection with the help of the text facilitates learners to have a clue of applying the target words meaningfully.

3.7 Observation Sheet

The other finding was obtained from the students' observation sheet. It was used to assess students' performance on the whole activities during the implementation. It was then analyzed to get an evaluation of how learning and teaching had been conducted in the classroom. Some data in the observation sheet could later be used to improve the strategy, attract students' attention and participation, or cope with several issues that might happen during the implementation. The data was based on the real situation in the field that had been observed by the researcher. Some issues could be found when students felt less enthusiastic toward the implementation or did not perform as expected. Constructive feedback from their English teacher was supposedly helped in the teaching process.

There were three observation sheets in total to be filled up by the English teacher as the class observer. It was formulated to assess students' roles. The observation sheets were differentiated into three meetings only although originally there were four meetings in the implementation. Firstly, it was based on the text given during the meeting. In fact, there were three texts used during the four meetings. The first text was about Batik, the second was dealing with Komodo Dragon, and the third text was a combination of the two. Meanwhile, the second reason was because of mixing meeting two and meeting three. Meeting three was still part of the sequence session of three tasks in a row from meeting two. Session A was open-ended questions, session B was about completing ten sentences, and session C was about constructing their own twelve sentences.

Table 4. The Results of The Observation Sheet on Meeting 1-4

Students' Activities	Meeting 1 percentage	Meeting 2-3 percentage	Meeting 4 percentage
Being active in asking question in the class.	75%	100%	75%
Being active in answering question in the class.	100%	100%	100%
Being active in doing group or individual task.	100%	100%	100%
Paying attention to teachers' explanation.	100%	100%	100%
Paying attention to other students' question and answers.	100%	75%	75%
Be able to perform the instruction of the task.	100%	100%	100%
Be able to understand the content of the given task.	100%	100%	100%
Be able to identify the classification of the task (report text).	100%	100%	100%
Be able to identify the description of the task (report text).	100%	100%	100%

4. Conclusion

The study had succeeded in enhancing students' reading vocabulary through Task-based instruction. 90% of students gained 25 points of improvement on the vocabulary test two, 61% of students could maintain their score on the delayed test, and 97.5% of students gave positive responses toward the strategy. The context of the text became a clue when students forgot some vocabulary on the text while the task's characteristics directed them to learn and use the given vocabulary. The limitation of twenty vocabulary made them understand the vocabulary faster. Repetition of words on different tasks that provided students to grasp the meaning and understand the structure strengthened their retention. Simple and clear instructions made students comprehend the strategy easily. It also supported them with group work, so they could divide the given task within the group member or they could discuss the difficult part of the task together.

TBI integrated with reading vocabulary acquisition materials could be used by teachers to enhance students' vocabulary that could be adjusted based on the basic competences. The variety of tasks had been arranged to make students feel less burdened while learning vocabulary.

Other researchers could explore more of the topic by considering the limitations of the study. Firstly, basic competence 3.9 dealing with report text acted as the pillar of the implementation in this strategy. It determined the selection of the text that was going to be used. Secondly, the study was limited to the two types of report texts related to Indonesian culture that was about Batik and Komodo Dragon. Thirdly, open-ended questions, matching activities, completing sentences, table analyzing, and writing activities were the tasks that were applied in the study. Fourthly, the form of vocabulary items test was similar to each other that was implemented three times in the study, at the first meeting, at the fourth meeting, and the last meeting two weeks after the fourth meeting. Lastly, the delayed test was administered within an interval of two weeks. The context of the text, the targeted vocabulary, the variety of given tasks, and the interval to conduct the delayed test might influence the result of the study. The other researchers could consider conducting the delayed test in a longer duration.

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