

Applying picture walk and read aloud strategies with supporting audio activities to enhance vocabulary mastery of Elementary School Students at SD Negeri 200104 Padangsidempuan

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Abstract

This community service program (PKM) aims to improve English vocabulary mastery among sixth-grade students at SD Negeri 200104 Padangsidempuan. The program implemented "Picture Walk" and "Read Aloud" strategies, structured within a systematic instructional design. To optimize the learning environment, audio technology via speakers was utilized for educational songs during ice-breaking sessions. The study involved 30 students, focusing on vocabulary related to fruits, human anatomy, and days of the week. Results indicated that the integration of audio technology and visual-based reading strategies significantly improved student engagement and vocabulary retention, fulfilling the predefined instructional objectives.

Keywords: audio technology; instructional system; picture walk; read aloud; vocabulary mastery

INTRODUCTION

Developing vocabulary mastery at the elementary level is considered an essential aspect of early English language learning, as it supports students' ability to understand, communicate, and participate in meaningful classroom interactions. English vocabulary is a crucial component of language proficiency, enabling individuals to communicate effectively and comprehend diverse texts (Arslan, 2024). At this stage, students begin to develop their ability to understand simple instructions, recognize basic sentence patterns, and express ideas in a limited yet meaningful way. Vocabulary plays a central role in supporting these skills, as it forms the foundation for both comprehension and communication. By learning vocabulary, the students can be communicates in English and use the language well because vocabulary is a foundation of language component that involves the four skills (listening, speaking, reading and writing) (Waruwu, 2020). However, students at SD Negeri 200104 Padangsidempuan still encounter significant challenges in retaining newly learned vocabulary. These difficulties are often associated with traditional teaching methods that emphasize memorization and repetition, which can lead to low student motivation and passive classroom participation. These conditions suggest that vocabulary instruction at the

elementary level needs to be approached differently. Young learners tend to learn more effectively when they are exposed to learning experiences that are engaging, interactive, and meaningful. In an age of constantly changing classrooms, progress in technology, and growing awareness of the needs of diverse learners, teaching strategies have emerged as essential tools (Amiri et al., 2025). Therefore, teaching strategies should not only focus on introducing new vocabulary but also on helping students internalize and apply it in real-life contexts. Creating a learning environment that actively involves students is essential for improving both their motivation and learning outcomes.

One way to support this process is through the integration of simple technology in classroom activities. In this context, audio features have emerged as a pivotal component in enhancing educational experiences, leveraging the rich information embedded within sound to facilitate learning and engagement (Pardo et al., 2025). The use of audio speakers to play English songs, for instance, can create a more dynamic and enjoyable learning atmosphere. Songs provide repeated exposure to vocabulary, along with rhythm and contextual usage, which facilitate better retention. In addition, they help reduce students' anxiety and encourage active participation. The incorporation of technology in learning has been shown to enhance instructional effectiveness and promote a more student-centered approach (Irmayana, 2024). In line with these ideas, current educational practices emphasize student-centered learning, where students are encouraged to actively participate in the learning process. Vocabulary learning becomes more effective when students are involved in interactive and contextual activities that allow them to connect new knowledge with their prior experiences. As a result, teachers are expected to implement strategies that support active engagement and meaningful learning.

One instructional strategy that reflects these principles is the Picture Walk strategy. Picture walk are done prior to reading the book (Berenberg, 2021). This approach encourages students to observe images before reading a text, enabling them to predict content and activate their prior knowledge. By connecting visual cues with vocabulary, students can better understand the material and build stronger comprehension. Visual elements also make learning more interesting and help simplify complex concepts for young learners. Furthermore, this strategy promotes active participation, as students are encouraged to share their ideas and predictions. Research conducted by (Solihah and Rustandi, 2020) shows that the use of Picture Walk significantly improves students' reading comprehension and engagement. In addition to visual-based strategies, auditory approaches such as the Read Aloud method also play an important role in language learning. Read aloud is a method of reading books aloud with enjoyable ways to help students focus and influences how children understand the content of the story (Pricilia, 2025). Reading ability is closely related to students' academic achievement, as it affects their comprehension and vocabulary development. However, many students still face difficulties in achieving reading fluency, which is often marked by slow reading, hesitation, and a lack of confidence. The Read-Aloud method addresses these issues by providing a clear model of pronunciation, intonation, and fluency. Through repeated listening and imitation, students can improve their phonological awareness and become more confident in using the language.

According to (Lee and Kim, 2024), the Read-Aloud method not only improves reading fluency but also enhances students' motivation and confidence in learning. In addition, it contributes to vocabulary development by exposing students to new words in context and reinforcing word recognition through repetition. This process enables students to better retain and apply vocabulary in meaningful communication. The combination of visual strategies, auditory approaches, and technological support creates a more comprehensive and effective learning experience. When students engage with vocabulary through multiple sensory channels, they develop stronger memory connections, which support long-term retention. Moreover, this approach makes learning more engaging and encourages students to actively participate in classroom activities.

Despite the advantages of these strategies, their implementation in elementary classrooms is still relatively limited. Many teachers continue to rely on conventional methods due to factors such as limited time, lack of resources, or insufficient familiarity with alternative teaching strategies. This creates a gap between recommended practices and actual classroom implementation. Therefore, it is important to explore practical and applicable strategies that can effectively improve vocabulary learning outcomes. Based on these considerations, this community service program aims to implement Picture Walk and Read Aloud strategies, supported by simple audio technology, to enhance vocabulary mastery among elementary school students at SD Negeri 200104 Padangsidimpuan. It is expected that this program will provide valuable insights into the application of interactive and student-centered instructional strategies in improving vocabulary learning outcomes.

METHODS

This community service program (PKM) was carried out on December 2, 2025, at SD Negeri 200104 Padangsidimpuan, involving 30 sixth-grade students as participants. The implementation was organized using a systematic instructional framework divided into three main stages: technological orientation, strategic implementation, and evaluative assessment. This structured design was intended to ensure that the learning activities were well-organized, engaging, and in line with the predetermined learning objectives. Instructional approaches used to avoid confusion when discussing, designing, or researching instruction (Lowell, 2023). The choice of instructional strategies, namely Picture Walk and Read Aloud, was grounded in their effectiveness in supporting vocabulary learning through visual and auditory inputs. Furthermore, the use of simple audio technology, such as speakers, was incorporated to create a more interactive and stimulating learning atmosphere. Each stage of the program was systematically arranged to encourage active student involvement, enhance vocabulary mastery, and improve the overall quality of the learning experience.

Steps of Implementation

The PKM activity was carried out in three stages, namely Technological Orientation, Strategic Implementation, and Evaluative Assessment.

Technological Orientation

At the beginning of the activity, the teaching team started with a simple ice-breaking session by playing English songs about fruits using audio speakers. The purpose of this step was to create a fun and comfortable classroom atmosphere so students would feel relaxed before starting the lesson. Through the songs, students were also indirectly introduced to English vocabulary, helping them get used to the sounds, pronunciation, and rhythm of the language in an enjoyable way. This activity also helped activate their prior knowledge and prepared them to be more ready and confident in joining the lesson.

Strategic Implementation

In this stage, two main strategies were applied, namely Picture Walk and Read Aloud, to help students learn vocabulary more effectively. 1) Picture Walk: Students were asked to look carefully at several visual posters. From these pictures, they tried to guess meanings, recognize objects, and connect the images with the correct English words. This activity helped students understand vocabulary through context, improved their ability to think critically, and reduced their dependence on direct translation. 2) Read Aloud: After that, the teaching team demonstrated how to pronounce the words correctly. Students then repeated the words together several times. This activity helped students improve their pronunciation, become more confident in speaking, and get more familiar with English sounds. The combination of seeing and hearing in this stage made the learning process more interesting and easier to understand.

Evaluation Assessment

In the last stage, an evaluation was carried out to see how well students understood the material. The team gave a quiz where students had to remember and identify the vocabulary they had learned. In addition, rewards were given to increase students' motivation and enthusiasm. This evaluation not only showed students' learning progress but also encouraged them to participate more actively and feel proud of their achievements.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

The community service program conducted at SD Negeri 200104 Padangsidempuan was implemented successfully and gained positive feedback from both the school and the students. The activities involved two classes, namely Class VI A consisting of 17 students and Class VI B consisting of 13 students. Both classes displayed different levels of English vocabulary mastery during the learning activities.

In Class VI A, most students were already familiar with several basic English vocabularies, such as the names of days and fruits. This initial understanding helped the learning activities run more smoothly and efficiently. During the picture walk and read aloud sessions, students participated enthusiastically and showed confidence in pronouncing the vocabulary introduced. Some students were even able to pronounce the words clearly and accurately. The quiz session held at the end of the activity also demonstrated positive outcomes, as nearly all students answered the questions correctly.



Figure 1. Vocabulary learning activity in class VI A

On the other hand, students in Class VI B showed more diverse vocabulary abilities. While some students had already mastered basic vocabulary, others still needed additional assistance and guidance throughout the learning process. Nevertheless, all students remained enthusiastic and actively engaged in every activity provided during the program.



Figure 2. Vocabulary learning activity in class VI B

The learning activities were beneficial, especially for students who were still unfamiliar with English vocabulary. The use of visual media helped students identify and understand words more easily through pictures. In addition, pronunciation exercises and simple educational games encouraged students to become more confident in repeating and using the vocabulary taught in class. These activities also created a more lively and enjoyable classroom atmosphere.

The quiz conducted at the end of the session revealed that most students had understood the vocabulary presented during the activities. Furthermore, the small rewards given to students successfully increased their motivation and participation throughout the learning process. Praise, recognition of achievement, or other non-material incentives can arouse students' interest and enthusiasm for learning, linking their efforts to expected positive outcomes (Bruni et al., 2020; Mahadaniyah et al., 2023; SEMGAZA, 2022 as cited in Wahidiyah, 2024). These findings suggest that interactive reading strategies supported by visual learning media can effectively improve students' vocabulary comprehension and retention.



Figure 3. Quiz and reward session

In general, the implementation of the community service program was carried out effectively and smoothly in both classes. The reading strategies applied during the activities were able to support students in understanding and memorizing basic English vocabulary. Meanwhile, the use of illustrated posters made the learning process more attractive and interactive. Students from both Class VI A and VI B demonstrated high enthusiasm and active involvement, indicating that enjoyable and visual-based learning methods can positively influence vocabulary learning among elementary school students.

CONCLUSION

Vocabulary mastery has an important role in helping elementary students develop their fundamental English skills, including understanding simple instructions, improving reading competence, and increasing confidence in communication. Nevertheless, students at SD Negeri 200104 Padangsidempuan still encountered difficulties in learning and retaining new vocabulary because teaching activities were commonly conducted through traditional methods. To address this issue, Picture Walk and Read Aloud strategies supported by simple audio technology were implemented to provide a more engaging, interactive, and student-centered learning experience.

The findings revealed that the activities positively influenced students' participation, motivation, and self-confidence during the learning process. The use of visual media, English songs, pronunciation exercises, quizzes, and simple games assisted students in understanding and memorizing vocabulary more effectively. Both students in Class VI A and Class VI B showed active involvement and positive attitudes throughout the program, despite having different levels of vocabulary knowledge. Furthermore, the integration of visual and auditory approaches contributed to a more enjoyable and dynamic classroom atmosphere.

In conclusion, the application of Picture Walk and Read Aloud strategies was effective in improving students' vocabulary learning experiences at the elementary level. These strategies not only supported students in understanding vocabulary more easily but also encouraged them to become more confident and enthusiastic in learning English. Future programs are expected to continue applying interactive learning approaches with more diverse media and activities to further enhance students' English vocabulary development.

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