



ENGLISH VOCABULARY AND GRAMMAR PROFICIENCIES OF SMPN 17 STUDENTS IN BENGKULU CITY

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KEYWORDS

Junior High School Students, English Grammar Proficiencies, English Vocabulary Proficiencies.

ABSTRACT

The objectives of this research were to find out "how the student's English vocabulary and grammar proficiencies were". The population was all students of SMP N 17 Bengkulu City. The samples were approximately 57 students, with detail were 4 classes of 7th grade. The design of the research was descriptive quantitative. The instrument was English grammar and vocabulary test to measure students' skill. The results of the research showed that the total average score from grade 7th, their total average score was 33, their average vocabulary score was 20 and then their average grammar score was 44. Based on the results, it can be concluded that the 7th grade students' vocabulary and grammar skills of SMPN 17 Bengkulu City were still low, also the difference between their average grammar and vocabulary scores of grade 7 was very far, but both's scores were still under the minimum score (75). This phenomenon could have been prevented if junior high school students had received English background knowledge when they were still in elementary school. This phenomenon is what the researchers are trying to show that this is the effect of not getting background knowledge of English when they were in elementary school. Of course this will cause problems for these students in the future, because the level of difficulty in terms of English study they will encounter in the future will be more difficult.

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INTRODUCTION

Entering the era of globalization, this era requires every individual to prepare reliable resources, especially in the field of education, science and technology. To understand this, an adequate knowledge is needed in dealing with the demands of a global competitive world. One of the most important knowledge areas is mastering English. English is one of the subjects that gets much interest by the community. Mastering English is also in great demand because of the many job opportunities after graduating from English faculty, whether it's the teacher training faculty or vocational because in addition to being a teacher, almost all aspects of life in society require foreign language skills, such as working in a hotel, chefs, hospital employees, doctors, civil servants, tour guides, and so forth.

Then when do we need to start learning English? According to Emma (2016) in developmental psychology theory, there is a relationship between age and the process of learning a foreign language. In that case, learning English can be started even better in our early age. Learning activities at an early age and adulthood produce different outcomes. Learning at an early age is like "writing on a rock", while studying at an adult is more like "writing on water". It is not one hundred percent true, but in reality it is easier to absorb lessons at an early age than to learn when older. This also applies in learning English.

But contrary to reality, at this time the students who learn English at their golden age in Indonesia still face various obstacles. Along with the development of English in elementary schools, the process of learning English still has problems, and the results obtained are also still not optimal, even though each level of education has used a variety of methods. This indicates that there are problems that make English experience less than the maximum development.

One of the problems is the revocation of English subjects in elementary school since the academic year of 2013/2014 in Indonesia, which is believed to make most of Junior High School students becoming less proficient in English as well as English language skills, and make them become less interested in mastering English when they are in junior high school. It is feared this will complicate their learning process when they are in higher education, such as in high school or when they are in college.

SMP N 17 Kota Bengkulu was established in 1993. This school is located in W.R. Supratman street, Pematang Gubernur Bengkulu City. This school is accredited A with complete facilities like mosque, library, computer lab, volley ball court, football field, basketball court, science lab and cafeteria. With a land area of 11,716 M², the school provides students a place to develop their capability in sports, science, technology and etc, also it is a quite good place for students to develop their creativity in this age of globalization.

The effect of English subject revocation in Elementary School is also felt by SMPN 17's students. Based on the researchers' preliminary investigation, many of the students there still lacked in vocabulary and grammar, while one of the main focus in learning English is vocabulary and grammar mastery. By mastering large amount of vocabulary and mastering English grammar, the students can arrange sentence orderly with a lot of options of words to make it more vary and will make them easier to understand the context of a discourse, and it will also help them to understand the material given by their teacher easily.

It should also be noted that because English lessons have been withdrawn from elementary school, students at SMP N 17 Bengkulu City are also students who did not receive English lessons before, they really just learned English when they were in Junior High School. This is what the researcher believes is the cause of the various problems experienced by junior high school students both when researchers conduct research and in the future.

The students of SMP N 17 were still confused with the use of grammar and made them struggle to arrange words orderly and misunderstood the context of a discourse. Those made it difficult for the researcher to deliver English material properly when he did internship in SMP N 17 Kota Bengkulu. Therefore, the researcher believes that if English taught to student since their early age, that phenomena could have been prevented.

In the future, researcher hopes that all the students especially students from SMPN 17 Kota Bengkulu can get the maximum English lesson. The researcher believes that this lesson they should have gotten and learned when they were in elementary school.

METHODS

Participants / Subject / Population and Sample

The design of this research was descriptive quantitative. According to Creswell (2012:13), in quantitative research the investigator identifies a research problem based on trends in the field or on the need to explain why something occurs. Quantitative research method was used by researcher to measure students' basic vocabulary and grammar proficiencies and to see the differences in terms of their English vocabulary and grammar proficiencies of the seventh-grade students.

Instruments

The researcher used test sheet and rated the students' rate scores to gain data quantitatively, and then the result of the test was explained. The researcher designed the vocabulary test by adopting book by Watcyn-Jones (2000) entitled "Test Your Vocabulary" the first series. The researcher chose the 1st series/edition to test the students' basic English vocabulary. The Researcher only chose 20 questions from the book by adjusting the difficulty level of each questions. While for basic English grammar test, the researcher designed the test by adopting from the book by Doff and Jones (2000) entitled "Beginner Test, Language In Use." Similar with the previous book, researcher took only 20 questions from the book.

Data Analysis Procedures

After the data were collected, then the researcher analyzed the data of the students' test scores by following these steps below :

1. Checking students' answers and rate them.
2. Calculating the average score of all participants (Student).

The researcher used the following formula in order to calculate the students' final score (average score) :

$$Av = \frac{T}{A}$$

Description :

Av : Average Score

T : Total Value

A : The Amount of Data

Then, the researcher adjusted the students' scores to the score of 75, the researcher set a score of 75 as the minimum score to measure whether a student was successful or not in the test conducted by the researcher in this research, and the score of 75 was chosen because it is identical to the KKM score that also applies at SMP N 17 which is 75 for English subjects.

FINDINGS

The Students' Score of Vocabulary and Grammar Test

The finding of the research was obtained after the English test was distributed to all participants and had been corrected. The result showed from all students in 7th grade, there was no students whose score more than 75, based on this results, we could see

that all 7th grade students failed the test, beside that we could also see that all of scores was under average.

The table below showed the scores of the 7th grade students in terms of their English vocabulary and grammar proficiencies, the table and explanation were as follows:

Table 1. The Grammar Score of 7th Grade Students

Class	Numbers of Students	Average Grammar Score
7C	13	49.6
7D	14	33.2
7E	16	50
7F	14	42.5
Total Students : 57		
7th Grade Total Average Grammar Score : 43.8		

From the tables above, we could see that there were 13 students from class 7C, the grammar score of class student was 49.6, class 7D had 14 students with their grammar score was 33.2, for class 7E, the students were 16, their grammar score was 50, class 7F students was 14 with their grammar was 42.5. While for their total average grammar score was 43.8.

Table 2. The Vocabulary Scores of 7th Grade Students

Class	Numbers of Students	Average Vocabulary Score
7C	13	14.6
7D	14	17.5
7E	16	19.7
7F	14	29.3
Total Students : 57		
7th Grade Total Average Vocabulary Score : 20.3		

From the tables above, we could see that there were 13 students from class 7C, their average vocabulary score was 14,6, class 7D vocabulary score was 17.5 from 14 students, for class 7E, the students were 16, their vocabulary score was 19.7, class 7F students was 14 with their vocabulary score was 29.3. While for their total average vocabulary score was 20.3.

The Comparison Between Average Grammar and Vocabulary Scores of 7th Grade Students.

These chart below explained the scores of seventh grade students in terms of their vocabulary and grammar proficiencies, the result was obtained after the scores from each classes was already being calculated with the formula in chapter 3 and also had already being compared, the detail of the charts were as follows :

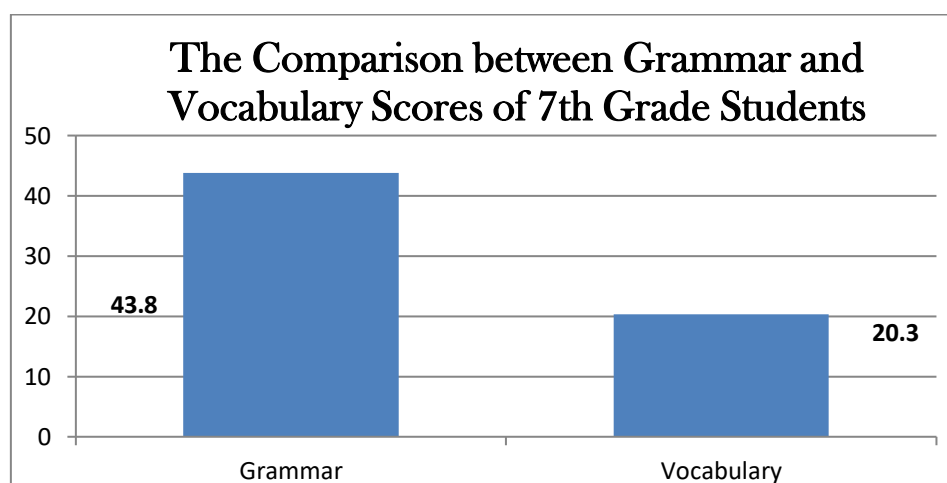


Chart 1 : Comparison of Total Average Grammar Score Between 7th and 8th Grade

From the chart above, we could see that the 7th grade student's Grammar scores was a bit better than their Vocabulary scores, their Grammar score was 43.8 while their Vocabulary score was 20.3. The highest average score for grammar was from class 7E with 50 and the lowest was from class 7D with 33.2. Then for the highest average score for vocabulary was from class 7F with score 29.3 and the lowest score was 14.6 from class 7C.

DISCUSSION

Students' Basic English Vocabulary and Grammar Skills.

Based on analysis, there was none a single student class from grade 7 that pass 75 on their average grammar neither their vocabulary score, some students even had score 0 and 5 in grammar test, It means the students failed the test. This phenomenon was still happening in SMPN 17 because based on the statements from some of students asked by the researcher, they stated that this happened because they (students) did not have English subjects and did not study English when they were in elementary school. Also, students always found and considered English was too difficult for them even when they just told to read the text given by their teacher, and when teaching and learning activities were on process, SMP N 17 students sometimes still have difficulty in arranging sentences or understanding the context in a discourse. They also have difficulty in understanding the material given by their teacher. This would also cause problems to student in the future.

Furthermore, based on the result, it can be concluded that the vocabulary and grammar skills of Students of SMPN 17 Bengkulu City were still very low by seeing the score of 7th grade. Their total average grammar score was 43.8 and their total average vocabulary score was 20.3, none of those classes were pass 75. Then after we saw the importance of learning English especially grammar and vocabulary for beginner students and saw what happened in this research, to let student doesn't study English in their early age would cause them various problems in the future.

Comparison Between English Basic Vocabulary and Grammar Scores of 7th Grades.

After finding the average scores of each class from 7th grade, we could see that the 7th grade students were weak in vocabulary than in grammar. Having a weakness in vocabulary even grammar for students who want to learn English is not good for them and will interrupt their learning process or in their everyday lives. This is crucial when studying English, particularly for new students who consider English to be a second or even foreign language. This finding is in line with Andriani and Sriwahyuningsih (2019), who said the key of English is vocabulary, without a vocabulary, one cannot speak, write, listen, or read, Mahendra and Thresa (2016) also stated that Grammar is a set of principles for using spoken and written English that are frequently referred to as fundamental English rules. Therefore, vocabulary and Grammar are crucial for communication, the goal is to teach student how to use these abilities in everyday situations. According to the statement, English vocabulary and Grammar are very essential to students especially to student who just newly start to study English or in beginner level.

But not only that, if we look at the difference in the average scores difference in grades 7, we could see that the difference in their grammar and vocabulary's scores is too far. If these students first studied English in elementary school, the difference should not be this far. This phenomenon is what the researchers are trying to show that this is the effect of not getting background knowledge of English when they were in elementary school. Of course this will cause problems for these students in the future, because the level of difficulty in terms of English study they will encounter in the future will be more difficult, and this will make it difficult for them to communicate to the global community as well as if they want to look for a job where almost all lines of occupations now requires us to at least mastered English.

Related to the results of the research which showed that the vocabulary and grammar skills of SMP N 17 students were still below the average or had not passed the minimum score, this was also because students did not acquire English background knowledge in elementary school.

CONCLUSIONS

The result of the research showed that out of all students in 7th grade, there were no students who can pass the minimum score which means they failed the test. Therefore, it can be concluded that the vocabulary and grammar skills of 7th grade Students of SMPN 17 Bengkulu City were still very low. The result also showed that the difference between grammar and vocabulary scores of grade 7 was very far but both were still under the minimum score (75). This phenomenon could have been prevented if junior high school students had received English background knowledge when they were still in elementary school. Based on the conclusions above, researcher provides some suggestions they are as follows :

For Teacher, researcher suggests that to give students basic knowledge in English when they are still in elementary school or before, because with background knowledge or in this case, background knowledge in English will make it easier for students to learn English and accept the lessons given by the teacher when they are in Junior or Senior High School or in higher level.

For Students, the researcher suggests that students be more diligent in seeking additional knowledge of alternative English, such as watching English films, reading English comics, reading magazines, listening to English songs, in order to enrich their vocabulary and strengthen their grammar skills in English, which will make it easier for them to accept the English lessons given by their teacher.

For Curriculum Designer, researcher suggests that curriculum designers to return English lessons at the elementary school level, even if necessary English subjects are given to pre-school level students, to equip students with basic knowledge of English to help them and make them easier to learn English.

For Future Researcher, the researcher suggests that this research be continued further by analyzing students' difficulties in learning English or by finding out in detail the reasons why students have below average in terms of English proficiencies, also researcher suggests that for future researcher to design an English test that may be more in line with the applicable curriculum at the school also with proper level of difficulty because it also affected student's scores when doing the research.

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