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Enhancing EFL Students' Vocabulary Mastery Through Visual-Based Instruction: Evidence from Classroom Action Research in MAN 1 Sidrap

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Abstrak: Penguasaan kosakata memiliki peran yang sangat penting dalam pembelajaran bahasa Inggris sebagai bahasa asing (English as a Foreign Language/EFL), khususnya dalam mendukung keterampilan komunikasi, pemahaman membaca, dan kemampuan berbahasa siswa secara keseluruhan. Namun, banyak siswa yang mempelajari bahasa Inggris sebagai bahasa asing masih mengalami kesulitan dalam memperoleh, memahami, dan mengingat kosakata bahasa Inggris akibat terbatasnya penggunaan materi pembelajaran kontekstual serta masih dominannya penerapan metode pengajaran konvensional. Penelitian ini bertujuan untuk mengkaji penerapan pembelajaran berbasis visual dalam meningkatkan penguasaan kosakata bahasa Inggris siswa di MAN 1 Sidrap, Sulawesi Selatan, Indonesia. Penelitian ini menggunakan desain Penelitian Tindakan Kelas (PTK) yang dilaksanakan melalui tahapan siklus perencanaan, tindakan, observasi, dan refleksi. Intervensi pembelajaran mengintegrasikan berbagai media visual, seperti gambar, sketsa, dan kartun, untuk memfasilitasi pengenalan kosakata, pemahaman makna, serta praktik penggunaan bahasa secara bermakna. Pengumpulan data dilakukan melalui tes penguasaan kosakata, observasi kelas, dan dokumentasi untuk mengkaji perkembangan kemampuan kosakata serta keterlibatan siswa selama pelaksanaan siklus pembelajaran. Data kuantitatif dianalisis secara deskriptif untuk mengidentifikasi perubahan hasil penguasaan kosakata siswa, sedangkan data kualitatif dari hasil observasi digunakan untuk mengeksplorasi partisipasi, motivasi belajar, dan respons siswa terhadap penerapan pembelajaran berbasis visual. Penelitian ini dirancang untuk mengkaji bagaimana representasi visual dapat mendukung pembelajaran kosakata dengan menghubungkan kata-kata bahasa Inggris yang belum dikenal dengan gambar yang mudah dikenali serta konteks pembelajaran yang bermakna. Berdasarkan kerangka pembelajaran yang digunakan, pembelajaran berbasis visual diharapkan mampu meningkatkan partisipasi aktif siswa, memperkuat daya ingat terhadap kosakata, serta menciptakan lingkungan pembelajaran bahasa Inggris yang lebih interaktif dan menarik. Penelitian ini diharapkan dapat memberikan kontribusi praktis terhadap pengintegrasian strategi pembelajaran berbasis visual dalam pendidikan bahasa Inggris di tingkat sekolah menengah, khususnya dalam konteks pembelajaran bahasa Inggris sebagai bahasa asing di Indonesia.
Kata Kunci: Pembelajaran Berbasis Visual; Penguasaan Kosakata; Bahasa Inggris sebagai Bahasa Asing; Penelitian Tindakan Kelas; Media Pembelajaran Visual; Pendidikan Menengah.

Abstract : Vocabulary mastery is a fundamental component of English as a Foreign Language (EFL) learning, as it supports learners' ability to comprehend spoken and written texts, communicate effectively, and participate in meaningful language activities. Nevertheless, vocabulary acquisition remains challenging for many Indonesian secondary school students because of limited exposure to English, difficulties in retaining unfamiliar words, and insufficient opportunities for contextualized vocabulary practice. This study aims to investigate the implementation of visual-based instruction in enhancing EFL students' vocabulary mastery at MAN 1 Sidrap, South Sulawesi, Indonesia. A Classroom Action Research (CAR) design is proposed, consisting of two instructional cycles involving planning, action, observation, and reflection. Visual-based instruction integrates pictures, sketches, cartoons, and contextualized vocabulary exercises to facilitate word recognition, meaning comprehension, pronunciation, and vocabulary use. Data are to be collected through vocabulary achievement tests, structured classroom observations, and instructional documentation. Quantitative data will be analyzed using descriptive statistics to examine changes in students' vocabulary achievement across the preliminary assessment and instructional cycles, while qualitative data will be analyzed thematically to identify patterns of classroom participation, learning engagement, and instructional challenges. The study is informed by dual coding theory, multimedia learning principles, and contextual vocabulary instruction. The proposed intervention provides a systematic framework for examining how visual representations and repeated vocabulary practice can support English vocabulary development in an Indonesian Islamic senior high school. Its anticipated contribution lies in identifying practical, accessible, and pedagogically relevant strategies for strengthening vocabulary instruction in secondary EFL classrooms. Empirical conclusions concerning the effectiveness of the intervention will depend on the analysis of classroom data collected at MAN 1 Sidrap.
Keywords: Classroom Action Research; EFL Students; English Vocabulary Mastery; Visual-Based Instruction; Visual Learning Media

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Introduction

English language education plays an increasingly important role in preparing students to participate in academic, professional, and intercultural communication. As English continues to function as a widely used international language, students are expected to develop linguistic competencies that enable them to understand information, communicate ideas, and engage with various educational resources. In Indonesia, English is generally learned as a foreign language, and students often encounter the language primarily through formal classroom instruction. This situation creates particular challenges for learners who have limited opportunities to practice English outside school. Consequently, English teachers need to develop instructional approaches that facilitate meaningful language exposure, encourage active participation, and support the development of essential linguistic competencies.

Among the fundamental components of English language proficiency, vocabulary mastery occupies a central position. Vocabulary enables learners to recognize meanings, construct sentences, interpret texts, and express ideas in spoken and written communication. Nation (2001) emphasizes that vocabulary knowledge is essential for effective language use because learners need sufficient lexical resources to understand and produce meaningful messages. Similarly, Schmitt (2000) argues that vocabulary acquisition involves more than memorizing isolated words; it requires knowledge of word forms, meanings, associations, and appropriate usage. Without adequate vocabulary knowledge, students may experience difficulties understanding classroom instructions, comprehending reading materials, participating in conversations, and completing writing assignments.

Vocabulary learning is particularly challenging for EFL students because they must acquire unfamiliar lexical items while simultaneously developing grammatical knowledge, pronunciation accuracy, and communicative competence. Many learners struggle to remember new vocabulary after classroom instruction, especially when words are presented without meaningful contexts. Students may recognize vocabulary during lessons but fail to recall or use the same words in subsequent activities. This difficulty suggests that vocabulary instruction should emphasize not only initial exposure but also meaningful repetition, retrieval, contextualization, and opportunities for productive language use.

Traditional vocabulary instruction frequently emphasizes translation, memorization, and repetitive written exercises. Although these strategies can contribute to vocabulary learning, excessive dependence on teacher explanations and isolated word lists may limit students' opportunities to connect vocabulary with authentic situations. Webb and Nation (2017) explain that effective vocabulary development requires a balanced combination of deliberate learning, meaning-focused input, meaning-focused output, and fluency development. Therefore, instructional strategies should provide opportunities for students to encounter vocabulary repeatedly, understand its meaning, and apply it in meaningful communication.

Visual-based instruction represents a potentially valuable approach to addressing these challenges. Visual learning materials, including pictures, illustrations, sketches,

cartoons, and diagrams, provide concrete representations of vocabulary meanings. These materials can support students in understanding unfamiliar words by connecting linguistic expressions with recognizable objects, activities, people, and situations. For example, vocabulary related to occupations can be introduced through pictures of professionals performing their duties, while action verbs can be presented through illustrations depicting specific activities. Such representations can make vocabulary learning more contextualized and accessible.

The theoretical foundation of visual-based instruction can be explained through dual coding theory. Paivio (1986) proposes that human cognition involves interconnected verbal and nonverbal representational systems. When learners encounter information through both linguistic and visual representations, they may develop multiple pathways for understanding and remembering the material. Sadoski (2005) further explains that imagery and verbal associations can contribute to meaningful vocabulary learning, particularly when instructional materials involve concrete and imageable concepts. These perspectives suggest that appropriately designed visual materials may strengthen connections between English words and their meanings.

Visual-based instruction is also supported by the cognitive theory of multimedia learning. Mayer (2009) argues that meaningful learning can occur when students actively select, organize, and integrate verbal and visual information. However, the effectiveness of multimedia instruction depends on how instructional materials are designed and presented. Visual materials should be directly relevant to learning objectives, avoid unnecessary distractions, and provide appropriate support for learners' cognitive processing. In vocabulary instruction, this means that pictures should clarify word meanings rather than merely decorate instructional materials.

Research on vocabulary learning has increasingly examined instructional strategies that promote engagement, repetition, and meaningful vocabulary practice. Webb, Yanagisawa, and Uchihara (2020) demonstrate through meta-analysis that intentional vocabulary-learning activities can produce measurable learning gains, although their effectiveness varies across instructional conditions and assessment types. Their findings highlight the importance of selecting vocabulary-learning activities that align with learners' needs and instructional objectives.

In the Indonesian context, recent studies have also explored different approaches to strengthening students' vocabulary mastery. Safridah et al. (2026) investigated memorization strategies among junior high school students and reported higher vocabulary achievement in the experimental group than in the comparison group. Hermansyah et al. (2026) examined the use of a team race game and identified improvements in students' vocabulary achievement following the intervention. Iwan et al. (2026) investigated digital learning platforms and reported positive vocabulary-learning outcomes among senior high school students. These studies illustrate the importance of instructional strategies that provide structured learning opportunities and encourage student participation. evertheless, vocabulary-learning interventions need to be evaluated in relation to their educational contexts. Strategies that are effective in one institution may require modification when implemented in another school with different student characteristics, instructional resources, learning expectations, and

classroom conditions. In particular, visual-based instruction deserves further investigation in Islamic senior high school contexts, where English teachers may need to accommodate differences in students' vocabulary proficiency, prior learning experiences, and access to instructional technology.

MAN 1 Sidrap provides the intended educational context for the present study. As an Indonesian Islamic senior high school, it represents a relevant setting for investigating classroom-based strategies designed to strengthen English vocabulary instruction. However, the specific vocabulary difficulties, classroom participation patterns, and instructional needs of its students must be established through preliminary observation and diagnostic assessment rather than assumed from findings obtained at other schools.

Classroom Action Research offers an appropriate methodological framework for examining these issues because it integrates instructional improvement with systematic observation and reflection. Kemmis, McTaggart, and Nixon (2014) explain that action research involves collaborative and reflective processes through which educational practitioners examine and improve their practices. In vocabulary instruction, this approach enables teachers to identify learning difficulties, implement targeted interventions, observe students' responses, and refine instructional strategies across successive cycles.

The present study proposes visual-based instruction as a classroom intervention involving pictures, sketches, cartoons, vocabulary identification, pronunciation practice, and contextualized sentence construction. Rather than treating visual materials as supplementary decorations, the intervention positions them as instructional resources that support vocabulary comprehension and meaningful language production. The integration of visual representation and repeated practice is expected to create opportunities for students to develop connections between vocabulary forms, meanings, and communicative functions.

Despite the growing body of research on vocabulary-learning strategies, additional classroom-based evidence is needed to understand how accessible visual materials can be implemented systematically in Indonesian Islamic senior high schools. The present study addresses this contextual need by proposing an action research framework that examines both vocabulary achievement and classroom learning processes. It also extends the discussion beyond vocabulary test performance by considering students' participation, instructional challenges, and teacher reflection.

Accordingly, the study aims to investigate the implementation of visual-based instruction in English vocabulary learning at MAN 1 Sidrap, examine changes in students' vocabulary mastery across instructional cycles, and identify classroom conditions that may support or constrain the intervention. The study is guided by three research questions: How is visual-based instruction implemented in vocabulary learning at MAN 1 Sidrap? How does students' vocabulary achievement change across the preliminary assessment and instructional cycles? What patterns of student participation and instructional challenges emerge during the implementation of visual-based instruction?

The anticipated contribution of the study is both theoretical and practical. Theoretically, it applies principles of dual coding and multimedia learning to classroom vocabulary

instruction. Practically, it provides a structured framework for teachers seeking to integrate accessible visual materials into English lessons. By examining instructional implementation alongside student achievement, the study seeks to contribute contextually grounded evidence to the development of effective vocabulary-learning practices in Indonesian EFL education.

Literature Review

Vocabulary mastery is widely recognized as a fundamental dimension of second and foreign language acquisition. It provides the lexical foundation necessary for understanding messages, constructing meaningful expressions, and participating in communication. Vocabulary knowledge is not limited to recognizing individual words; it involves understanding their meanings, pronunciation, spelling, grammatical functions, associations, and contextual usage. Nation (2001) explains that vocabulary knowledge consists of interconnected dimensions of form, meaning, and use. These dimensions are essential because knowing a word requires more than recalling its translation into another language.

In EFL contexts, vocabulary acquisition is particularly important because students often have limited opportunities to encounter English outside formal instruction. Unlike learners who are surrounded by the target language in everyday communication, EFL students may depend heavily on classroom activities, textbooks, and teacher explanations. Consequently, vocabulary instruction must provide systematic opportunities for exposure, repetition, retrieval, and meaningful use.

Schmitt (2000) emphasizes that vocabulary acquisition is gradual and cumulative. Students rarely acquire complete knowledge of a word after a single encounter. Instead, vocabulary development involves repeated exposure to lexical items across different contexts. Each encounter may contribute additional information about meaning, grammatical behavior, pronunciation, and usage. This perspective highlights the importance of instructional strategies that allow learners to interact with vocabulary through multiple learning activities.

Vocabulary mastery also involves receptive and productive knowledge. Receptive vocabulary refers to words that learners recognize and understand when listening or reading, whereas productive vocabulary involves words that learners can retrieve and use in speaking or writing. Webb (2005) demonstrates that receptive and productive vocabulary learning may develop differently depending on instructional conditions. Therefore, teachers should design activities that promote both word recognition and meaningful language production.

For secondary school students, vocabulary instruction should address several important learning dimensions, including identifying word meanings, pronouncing words accurately, recognizing spelling patterns, and using vocabulary in context. Vocabulary achievement tests should consequently measure more than students' ability to translate isolated words. Contextualized assessments, sentence-completion exercises, picture identification, and short written responses can provide a broader understanding of vocabulary development.

Visual-based instruction refers to teaching practices that incorporate visual representations to facilitate students' understanding of instructional content. In English vocabulary learning, visual materials may include photographs, pictures, sketches,

illustrations, cartoons, flashcards, diagrams, and other representations that communicate meanings through observable images.

Visual materials serve several instructional functions. First, they provide concrete representations of unfamiliar vocabulary. When students encounter a picture of an object together with its English name, they can associate the linguistic form with its referent. Second, visual materials provide contextual information that supports meaning construction. A picture showing a person performing an activity, for example, can help students understand action verbs within recognizable situations.

Third, visual representations may increase students' attention and encourage active participation. Teachers can use pictures to initiate questions, stimulate discussion, encourage pronunciation practice, and develop vocabulary exercises. However, increased attention should not automatically be interpreted as improved learning. The instructional value of visual materials depends on their relevance, clarity, and integration with meaningful learning tasks.

Visual-based instruction can be implemented through several classroom procedures. Teachers may introduce vocabulary using pictures, guide students in identifying meanings, model pronunciation, and provide opportunities for learners to repeat target words. Students may subsequently match words with images, classify vocabulary into semantic categories, describe visual scenes, and construct sentences based on pictures.

The selection of visual materials should consider learners' proficiency, age, cultural background, and instructional objectives. Concrete vocabulary such as occupations, food, animals, and everyday objects can often be represented directly through images. Abstract vocabulary, however, may require more complex illustrations, contextual examples, or supplementary verbal explanations.

Dual coding theory provides an important theoretical explanation for the potential effectiveness of visual-based vocabulary instruction. Paivio (1986) proposes that human cognition involves verbal and nonverbal representational systems. The verbal system processes linguistic information, while the nonverbal system processes imagery and other forms of nonlinguistic representation.

According to this perspective, information presented through both verbal and visual representations may establish interconnected cognitive associations. In vocabulary learning, students can connect an English word with an image representing its meaning. These connections may facilitate recognition and recall when learners subsequently encounter the same vocabulary.

Sadoski (2005) applies dual coding theory to vocabulary learning and emphasizes the importance of imagery in developing meaningful word knowledge. His discussion suggests that concrete, imageable vocabulary may benefit particularly from instructional approaches that combine visual representations with verbal explanations.

Nevertheless, dual coding theory does not imply that adding pictures will automatically improve vocabulary learning. Visual representations must be meaningful, accurate, and cognitively manageable. Pictures that are ambiguous, overly complex, or unrelated to instructional objectives may create confusion rather than support comprehension.

In the present study, dual coding theory informs the instructional design by

encouraging teachers to connect English vocabulary with relevant visual representations. Students are expected to engage in activities that require them to identify images, retrieve associated words, pronounce vocabulary, and use lexical items in meaningful contexts.

The cognitive theory of multimedia learning further explains how students process verbal and visual information during instruction. Mayer (2009) identifies three fundamental assumptions underlying multimedia learning: dual channels, limited processing capacity, and active cognitive processing.

The dual-channel assumption suggests that learners process verbal and pictorial information through partially distinct cognitive channels. The limited-capacity assumption recognizes that learners can process only a restricted amount of information at a given time. The active-processing assumption emphasizes that meaningful learning requires learners to select relevant information, organize it into coherent representations, and integrate it with existing knowledge.

These principles have important implications for vocabulary instruction. Teachers should select images that directly represent target vocabulary and avoid unnecessary visual details. Presenting excessive information may increase cognitive demands and reduce students' ability to focus on relevant word meanings.

Mayer and Sims (1994) provide evidence that coordinated verbal and visual explanations can support learning under particular instructional conditions. However, findings from multimedia research should be interpreted in relation to the learning task, learners' prior knowledge, and the nature of the visual materials. For the present study, multimedia learning principles inform the use of clear images, concise vocabulary explanations, and structured practice. Although the proposed intervention does not require advanced digital technology, its instructional activities are consistent with the broader principle of integrating visual and verbal information to support meaningful learning.

Student engagement is an important consideration in vocabulary instruction because learning requires sustained attention and active participation. Engagement may be reflected in students' willingness to answer questions, complete assignments, participate in discussions, and practice unfamiliar vocabulary.

Visual materials can provide opportunities for interactive learning by encouraging students to interpret images, identify vocabulary, and explain their responses. For example, teachers may present illustrations depicting daily activities and ask students to identify relevant verbs. Students may then work collaboratively to construct sentences describing the illustrations.

Such activities can transform vocabulary learning from passive reception into active language practice. However, engagement and achievement represent different educational outcomes. A student may enjoy picture-based activities without necessarily developing durable vocabulary knowledge. Therefore, classroom observations should be complemented by vocabulary achievement assessments.Vocabulary retention also depends on repeated encounters and retrieval practice. Webb et al. (2020) report that intentional vocabulary-learning activities can produce substantial immediate gains, but delayed performance may differ from immediate assessment results. Their meta-analysis demonstrates the importance of

considering both instructional activity and assessment timing when evaluating vocabulary learning. Consequently, visual-based instruction should incorporate opportunities for students to retrieve previously introduced vocabulary. Teachers can revisit earlier pictures, conduct short vocabulary quizzes, and encourage students to use familiar words in new contexts. These activities may support consolidation and help teachers identify vocabulary that requires additional reinforcement.

Previous research has investigated different strategies for improving English vocabulary mastery in Indonesian educational settings. Although these studies vary in instructional approach, they provide relevant evidence concerning the importance of structured vocabulary-learning activities.

Safridah et al. (2026) examined the effectiveness of memorization strategies among students at SMPN 4 Patampanua. Their quasi-experimental study involved 60 students and compared structured memorization instruction with conventional teaching. The experimental group achieved a higher post-test mean than the control group, indicating that systematic repetition and retrieval can support vocabulary development.

Hermansyah et al. (2026) investigated the implementation of a team race game among seventh-grade students at SMP Negeri 2 Panca Rijang. Their findings indicated improvements in vocabulary achievement following the instructional intervention. The study highlights the potential contribution of interactive classroom activities to vocabulary learning.Iwan et al. (2026) examined digital platforms for English vocabulary instruction among senior high school students in Kendari. Their findings suggested that structured technology-supported learning activities could contribute positively to students' vocabulary achievement and engagement.Syahrir et al. (2025) investigated personal vocabulary notes among junior high school students at SMPN 1 Baranti. Their study reported improvements in vocabulary achievement and demonstrated the potential of systematic vocabulary recording and review.

These findings suggest that vocabulary development can be supported through different instructional strategies, including memorization, games, digital platforms, and vocabulary notebooks. However, evidence from these approaches cannot establish the effectiveness of visual-based instruction at MAN 1 Sidrap without additional classroom investigation.

Although previous studies have examined vocabulary-learning strategies, further research is needed to investigate how accessible visual materials can be systematically implemented through reflective classroom action research in Islamic senior high school settings.

The present study addresses this gap by integrating visual-based vocabulary instruction with cyclical classroom improvement. Its conceptual framework connects instructional planning, visual representations, guided vocabulary practice, student engagement, formative assessment, and teacher reflection.

The proposed instructional process begins with identifying students' vocabulary needs. Teachers then select relevant visual materials and implement structured vocabulary-learning activities. Students engage in picture identification, pronunciation practice, vocabulary matching, and contextualized sentence construction. Classroom observations and vocabulary assessments

provide information for evaluating the intervention and planning subsequent instructional improvements.Through this framework, the study seeks to examine not only whether students' vocabulary achievement changes but also how instructional practices and classroom participation develop across successive cycles.

Research Method

This study is designed as Classroom Action Research (CAR) to investigate the implementation of visual-based instruction in enhancing students' English vocabulary mastery at MAN 1 Sidrap, South Sulawesi, Indonesia. Classroom Action Research is considered appropriate because it focuses on identifying classroom learning problems, implementing instructional interventions, observing educational processes, and reflecting on outcomes to improve teaching practices.

The study adopts the cyclical framework associated with Kemmis and McTaggart, consisting of planning, action, observation, and reflection. Two instructional cycles are proposed, with each cycle incorporating systematic vocabulary-learning activities and formative evaluation. The second cycle will be informed by findings from the first cycle.

A mixed quantitative and qualitative descriptive approach will be employed within the action research framework. Quantitative evidence will be obtained from vocabulary achievement tests, while qualitative evidence will be collected through structured classroom observations, field notes, and instructional documentation.

The proposed study will be conducted at MAN 1 Sidrap, an Islamic senior high school located in Sidenreng Rappang Regency, South Sulawesi, Indonesia. The school has been selected as the intended setting for investigating visual-based vocabulary instruction within an EFL classroom.The participants will consist of students from one English class selected in coordination with the school. The final number of participants, grade level, class designation, and academic year must be recorded before the empirical study is reported.

Participants will be selected based on classroom instructional needs, accessibility, and the relevance of vocabulary learning difficulties identified through preliminary observation and diagnostic assessment.

Three principal instruments will be employed: vocabulary achievement tests, classroom observation sheets, and instructional documentation.The vocabulary achievement tests will assess students' ability to recognize English vocabulary, identify word meanings, match vocabulary with visual representations, and use selected words in context. The tests will be administered during the preliminary assessment and at the end of each instructional cycle.

The classroom observation sheets will document students' participation during vocabulary-learning activities. Observation indicators will include attention to instructional materials, willingness to answer questions, participation in individual and collaborative tasks, vocabulary pronunciation practice, and completion of learning assignments.Instructional documentation will include lesson plans, teaching materials, students' worksheets, assessment records, and teacher reflection notes. These materials will support the analysis of instructional implementation and provide contextual information for interpreting classroom outcomes.

Before implementation, the vocabulary tests and observation instruments should be reviewed for content relevance and clarity. Where feasible, the vocabulary tests should also undergo pilot testing and item analysis.

The research will begin with preliminary classroom observation and diagnostic vocabulary assessment. This stage will identify students' vocabulary difficulties, establish initial achievement levels, and inform the development of visual-based instructional materials.The first cycle will begin with instructional planning. The teacher-researcher will prepare lesson plans, select vocabulary targets, develop visual materials, and construct learning activities. The instructional content may include vocabulary related to occupations, daily activities, descriptive adjectives, and familiar objects.

During the action stage, the teacher will introduce target vocabulary using pictures, sketches, and cartoons. Students will identify visual representations, pronounce target words, explain meanings, and complete vocabulary exercises. Additional activities will include picture-word matching, vocabulary classification, and simple sentence construction.

The observation stage will document students' responses, participation, and difficulties during the instructional process. At the end of the cycle, students will complete a vocabulary achievement assessment.

Reflection will involve reviewing assessment results and classroom observations to identify successful instructional practices and areas requiring improvement.

The second cycle will incorporate instructional modifications based on the first-cycle reflection. These modifications may include clearer visual materials, additional pronunciation modeling, increased vocabulary repetition, differentiated tasks, and more opportunities for contextualized language production.ollowing the second cycle, vocabulary achievement and classroom observation data will be reviewed to determine whether the predetermined success criteria have been achieved.

Quantitative data will be analyzed using descriptive statistics, including mean scores, score distributions, percentages, and changes in vocabulary achievement across assessment stages.

The mean vocabulary score will be calculated using:

$$\bar X=\frac{\sum X}{N}$$

where $\bar X$ represents the mean score, $\sum X$ represents the total student scores, and N represents the number of participants.

Percentage improvement between assessment stages may be calculated using:

$$P=\frac{M_2-M_1}{M_1}\times100\%$$

where M_1 represents the earlier mean score and M_2 represents the subsequent mean score.

The percentage of students achieving the predetermined minimum mastery criterion will also be calculated.

Qualitative data will be analyzed through organizing observation records, identifying recurring patterns, categorizing classroom behaviors, and interpreting changes in participation and instructional implementation.

The criteria of success will be determined before the intervention based on the school's applicable minimum mastery standard and an agreed classroom achievement target. These criteria will be used to evaluate the outcomes of each instructional cycle.Ethical considerations will include obtaining institutional permission, explaining the study to participants, protecting students' identities, and ensuring that research activities do not interfere unnecessarily with regular instruction. Where participants are minors, appropriate parental or guardian consent and student assent should be obtained in accordance with applicable institutional requirements.

The research will report findings transparently, including unsuccessful instructional outcomes, incomplete observations, and limitations associated with the classroom action research design.

Results

The following section is a structured results draft. The numerical findings for MAN 1 Sidrap remain to be completed from original classroom records.

The preliminary assessment is intended to establish students' initial vocabulary achievement before the implementation of visual-based instruction. The assessment focuses on students' ability to recognize English words, identify vocabulary meanings, and use selected lexical items in context. This stage provides baseline information for determining instructional priorities and evaluating subsequent changes in vocabulary achievement.The diagnostic assessment should be analyzed according to vocabulary categories, including nouns, verbs, adjectives, and vocabulary related to everyday communication. Particular attention should be given to differences between receptive vocabulary knowledge and students' ability to produce vocabulary independently. The analysis should also identify common errors in spelling, pronunciation, word recognition, and contextual usage.

Table 1. Preliminary Vocabulary Assessment at MAN 1 Sidrap

Assessment indicator	**Result**
Number of participants	To be completed
Mean vocabulary score	To be completed
Highest score	To be completed
Lowest score	To be completed
Minimum mastery criterion	To be completed
Students achieving mastery	To be completed
Students below mastery	To be completed

The findings from this assessment will provide the empirical basis for identifying vocabulary-learning difficulties and determining whether visual-based instruction is appropriate for addressing the problems observed in the selected class.

The first instructional cycle focuses on introducing target vocabulary through structured visual representations and guided classroom activities. The teaching process is organized around the integration of pictures, sketches, and cartoons with vocabulary identification, pronunciation modeling, and contextualized exercises.

During the instructional implementation, students are introduced to vocabulary through visual materials representing familiar objects, occupations, activities, and descriptive

characteristics. The teacher presents each image together with the corresponding English word and provides explanations of its meaning and pronunciation. Students then participate in guided activities requiring them to identify images, repeat vocabulary, and match words with their visual representations.

The observation process should document the extent to which students participate in these activities and identify any difficulties encountered during instruction. Relevant indicators include students' attention to visual materials, willingness to answer questions, pronunciation attempts, collaborative participation, and ability to complete vocabulary assignments.

The first-cycle evaluation should examine whether students demonstrate improvements in vocabulary achievement relative to the preliminary assessment. It should also identify vocabulary categories that remain challenging and determine which instructional procedures require modification.

The first-cycle vocabulary assessment will provide evidence of students' achievement following the initial implementation of visual-based instruction. The results should be compared with the preliminary assessment to determine changes in average achievement and the proportion of students meeting the predetermined mastery criterion.

Table 2. Comparison of Preliminary Assessment and Cycle I

Indicator	**Preliminary**	**Cycle I**
Mean score	—	—
Highest score	—	—
Lowest score	—	—
Students achieving mastery	—	—
Mastery percentage	—	—

The analysis should distinguish between improvements in vocabulary recognition and improvements in productive vocabulary use. For example, students may demonstrate greater accuracy in matching pictures with words while continuing to experience difficulties constructing sentences independently.Such differences are important because vocabulary mastery involves multiple dimensions of linguistic knowledge. Consequently, the first-cycle evaluation should not rely exclusively on a single overall test score. Students' written responses, pronunciation performance, and classroom activities can provide supplementary information about their learning progress.The reflection process should use these findings to identify instructional priorities for the second cycle.

The second cycle is intended to address the instructional limitations identified during the first cycle. Its implementation will depend on the results of the first-cycle evaluation and classroom observations.

Potential modifications include selecting clearer visual representations, increasing vocabulary repetition, providing additional pronunciation modeling, and incorporating more contextualized exercises. Teachers may also introduce collaborative learning activities in which students describe images, construct short sentences, or identify vocabulary through peer interaction.

Another possible modification involves organizing vocabulary into meaningful categories. For example, vocabulary related to occupations can be connected with workplace activities, while descriptive

adjectives can be introduced through pictures illustrating physical characteristics or emotional expressions.

These modifications should be recorded systematically to establish how instructional practices changed between cycles. The analysis should also examine whether changes in student participation correspond with changes in vocabulary achievement.

The final quantitative analysis will compare students' vocabulary achievement across the preliminary assessment, Cycle I, and Cycle II. This comparison will provide descriptive evidence concerning the direction and magnitude of achievement changes during the intervention.

Table 3. Students' Vocabulary Achievement Across Research Cycles

Assessment stage	**Mean score**	**Mastery percentage**
Preliminary assessment	—	—
Cycle I	—	—
Cycle II	—	—

The analysis should report absolute score changes and percentage improvement between assessment stages. Where student-level data are available, the results may also describe variation in achievement, including the number of students whose scores improved, remained unchanged, or declined.

A positive change in mean scores would indicate improved performance during the instructional period. However, because Classroom Action Research generally does not involve a randomized comparison group, such changes should not automatically be interpreted as conclusive evidence that visual-based instruction alone caused the improvement.

Qualitative findings should be organized around classroom observation indicators and teacher reflection records. These data are intended to explain how students responded to visual-based vocabulary instruction and how their participation developed across the instructional cycles.

Table 4. Classroom Observation Framework

Observation dimension	**Evidence to report**
Learning participation	Responses, questions, task completion
Vocabulary recognition	Accuracy in picture-word matching
Pronunciation practice	Participation and observed difficulties
Collaborative learning	Peer discussion and group activities
Learning engagement	Attention and persistence
Vocabulary production	Use of words in sentences

The qualitative analysis should include specific classroom examples supported by observation records. Any reported improvement in motivation, confidence, or participation must be based on documented evidence rather than inferred from the presence of visual learning materials.

The final results should integrate quantitative achievement data and qualitative classroom observations. Quantitative findings will establish whether vocabulary scores changed across instructional cycles, while qualitative findings will help explain how the intervention was implemented and how students responded.

The overall evaluation should consider whether the predetermined success criteria were achieved, which instructional strategies appeared most useful, and which learning

difficulties remained unresolved.Until original data from MAN 1 Sidrap are available, no empirical claim of improved vocabulary mastery at that institution can be established.

Discussion

The proposed study is grounded in the assumption that visual-based instruction can provide meaningful support for vocabulary learning by connecting linguistic expressions with recognizable representations. In EFL classrooms, students frequently encounter unfamiliar English words without sufficient contextual information. Visual materials may help address this difficulty by illustrating word meanings and supporting the development of associations between vocabulary forms and referents.From the perspective of dual coding theory, presenting vocabulary through verbal and visual representations can create interconnected pathways for processing information. Paivio (1986) explains that verbal and nonverbal information can be represented through distinct but related cognitive systems. When learners encounter a picture alongside its corresponding English word, they may establish associations that facilitate comprehension and later retrieval.

Sadoski (2005) further emphasizes that imagery can contribute to meaningful vocabulary learning, particularly when words represent concrete concepts. This theoretical perspective supports the instructional use of pictures, sketches, and cartoons to introduce vocabulary associated with objects, occupations, actions, and familiar situations.

Nevertheless, the relationship between visual instruction and vocabulary achievement requires empirical verification. If vocabulary scores improve during the proposed intervention, the results would be consistent with the theoretical expectation that visual representations can support vocabulary learning. Such findings would not, however, demonstrate that visual instruction was the only factor responsible for improvement.

One of the principal advantages of visual-based instruction is its potential to facilitate meaningful vocabulary processing. Rather than relying exclusively on translation or verbal explanation, students can encounter vocabulary through representations of familiar objects and situations.For example, when students learn vocabulary related to occupations, pictures depicting different professionals can provide contextual clues that help them identify and distinguish word meanings. Similarly, illustrations of daily activities may support the comprehension of action verbs by connecting linguistic expressions with observable actions.This approach is consistent with Mayer's (2009) cognitive theory of multimedia learning, which emphasizes the importance of integrating verbal and visual information. Meaningful learning involves actively selecting relevant information, organizing it into coherent mental representations, and connecting it with prior knowledge.

However, visual materials must be carefully selected to avoid unnecessary cognitive demands. Pictures containing excessive details or ambiguous representations may distract students from the target vocabulary. Therefore, teachers should prioritize clear images, relevant vocabulary labels, and structured instructional explanations.

The proposed intervention also incorporates repeated vocabulary practice, including pronunciation exercises, picture-word matching, and contextualized sentence construction. These activities are important because initial recognition does not necessarily indicate complete vocabulary

mastery.Webb and Nation (2017) argue that vocabulary learning requires repeated encounters and opportunities to develop different dimensions of word knowledge. Consequently, the instructional effectiveness of visual materials may depend partly on the quality of the accompanying vocabulary exercises.

Vocabulary mastery includes both receptive and productive dimensions. Receptive knowledge enables learners to recognize and understand vocabulary when listening or reading, while productive knowledge enables them to retrieve and use words in communication.Visual-based instruction may be particularly useful for introducing receptive vocabulary because students can associate pictures with corresponding lexical items. However, the ability to identify a picture does not necessarily demonstrate that students can use the word accurately in sentences or conversations.

Webb (2005) highlights the distinction between receptive and productive vocabulary learning and suggests that instructional activities can produce different outcomes across these dimensions. This distinction is important when evaluating the proposed intervention.If students demonstrate improvements in picture-word matching but continue to experience difficulties constructing sentences, the findings would suggest that instructional activities should place greater emphasis on productive vocabulary practice.

Teachers can address this issue by integrating sentence-completion exercises, guided descriptions, pair discussions, and short writing activities. Such tasks encourage students to move beyond vocabulary recognition toward meaningful language production.The assessment framework should therefore examine vocabulary knowledge through different task types rather than treating all vocabulary performance as a single undifferentiated ability.

Visual-based instruction may also influence the nature of classroom participation by providing opportunities for students to interact with instructional materials. Pictures and illustrations can serve as prompts for questioning, discussion, prediction, and collaborative learning.For example, teachers can ask students to identify objects in an image, describe activities, or compare visual representations. These activities require learners to participate actively rather than simply listen to explanations.Student participation is particularly relevant in EFL contexts because opportunities for meaningful language practice may be limited outside the classroom. Visual prompts can provide accessible starting points for communication, especially among learners who have difficulty expressing ideas independently.

Nevertheless, engagement should be distinguished from vocabulary achievement. Students may participate enthusiastically in picture-based activities without necessarily retaining or applying the target vocabulary. Therefore, classroom observations should be interpreted alongside achievement assessments.

The proposed study addresses this distinction by combining vocabulary tests with systematic observations. If both vocabulary achievement and classroom participation improve, the findings could provide complementary evidence concerning the instructional value of visual-based learning. However, the strength of such interpretations will depend on the quality and consistency of the collected data.

The proposed study contributes to the broader discussion of instructional strategies for English vocabulary development in Indonesian schools.Safridah et al. (2026) reported that structured memorization activities supported vocabulary achievement among junior high school students. Their findings emphasize the potential value of repetition and retrieval practice. Visual-based instruction may complement these processes by providing meaningful representations that help students connect vocabulary forms with their meanings.

Hermansyah et al. (2026) demonstrated improvements in students' vocabulary achievement following the implementation of a team race game. Their findings highlight the contribution of interactive instructional activities. Although visual-based instruction differs from game-based learning, both approaches can incorporate student participation, repeated vocabulary exposure, and structured classroom practice.

Iwan et al. (2026) investigated digital platforms for vocabulary instruction among senior high school students. Their study illustrates the potential of technology-supported learning environments. In contrast, the proposed visual-based intervention can be implemented through printed pictures, sketches, and cartoons without depending entirely on digital infrastructure.This distinction may be relevant for schools with varying levels of technological resources. Accessible visual materials can provide an instructional alternative where internet connectivity, digital devices, or multimedia equipment are limited.

Furthermore, the findings reported by Syahrir et al. (2025) concerning personal vocabulary notes suggest that systematic recording and review can support vocabulary development. Visual-based instruction could potentially incorporate similar review procedures through picture dictionaries, illustrated vocabulary notebooks, or student-generated visual materials.

These studies collectively support the importance of systematic vocabulary instruction, but they do not establish that any single teaching strategy is universally superior. Instructional effectiveness depends on learner characteristics, task design, classroom conditions, and assessment procedures. Classroom Action Research provides a methodological framework for examining instructional practices through repeated cycles of implementation and reflection. Unlike research designs primarily intended to establish generalizable causal effects, action research focuses on improving teaching and learning within a specific educational context.

Kemmis et al. (2014) emphasize the importance of reflective practice and systematic inquiry in educational improvement. Through planning, action, observation, and reflection, teachers can examine the consequences of instructional decisions and modify their practices accordingly.

In the proposed study, the first instructional cycle will provide information about students' responses to visual-based vocabulary instruction. The reflection stage will identify instructional strengths and weaknesses, while the second cycle will incorporate modifications intended to address observed learning difficulties.

This process is particularly useful because vocabulary instruction may require adjustments according to students' proficiency levels and learning needs. Some students may benefit from additional pronunciation modeling, while others may

require more opportunities for contextualized sentence construction.

The cyclical structure allows teachers to respond to these differences systematically. It also provides a basis for documenting how instructional decisions develop during the research process.

The proposed study has several potential implications for English language teaching in Indonesian secondary schools.First, visual materials should be integrated into clearly defined vocabulary-learning objectives. Teachers should identify target vocabulary and select visual representations that communicate meanings accurately.

Second, visual instruction should involve active student participation. Activities such as picture identification, vocabulary matching, pronunciation practice, and contextualized sentence construction can provide opportunities for learners to process vocabulary in different ways.

Third, teachers should incorporate repeated retrieval and review activities. Vocabulary introduced through pictures should be revisited during subsequent lessons to support retention and strengthen students' ability to retrieve lexical items independently.

Fourth, instructional evaluation should include both achievement and classroom process indicators. Vocabulary tests can measure learning outcomes, while observations can provide information about participation, instructional challenges, and the suitability of learning materials.

Finally, teachers should adapt visual materials to students' linguistic proficiency and educational context. Familiar images may support initial comprehension, while more complex illustrations can be introduced as learners develop greater vocabulary knowledge.The proposed research design has several limitations that should be acknowledged when interpreting future findings.

First, Classroom Action Research typically involves a limited number of participants within a specific classroom. Consequently, findings may not be directly generalizable to other schools or student populations.

Second, the absence of a comparison group limits the ability to establish a causal relationship between visual-based instruction and vocabulary achievement. Improvements may also reflect repeated exposure, teacher support, assessment familiarity, or other classroom factors.

Third, vocabulary achievement measured immediately after instruction may not reflect long-term retention. Webb et al. (2020) demonstrate that immediate and delayed vocabulary-learning outcomes can differ, suggesting the importance of including delayed assessments when feasible.

Fourth, classroom observations may be influenced by observer expectations or students' awareness of being observed. Clear observation criteria and consistent documentation are therefore necessary.

Future research could investigate visual-based instruction through quasi-experimental designs involving comparison groups, delayed vocabulary assessments, and larger samples. Additional studies could also compare printed visual materials with digital images or examine the effects of visual instruction on receptive and productive vocabulary knowledge separately.

Overall, the theoretical and empirical literature provides a reasonable foundation

for investigating visual-based instruction in EFL vocabulary learning. However, the contribution of the present study will depend on the availability of authentic classroom evidence from MAN 1 Sidrap and the transparent interpretation of the findings.

Conclusion

This study proposes a classroom action research framework for investigating the implementation of visual-based instruction in enhancing English vocabulary mastery among EFL students at MAN 1 Sidrap, South Sulawesi, Indonesia. Drawing on dual coding theory, multimedia learning principles, and vocabulary acquisition research, the proposed intervention integrates pictures, sketches, cartoons, pronunciation practice, vocabulary identification, and contextualized language activities. The instructional framework emphasizes the importance of connecting verbal information with meaningful visual representations while providing opportunities for repeated exposure, retrieval, and productive vocabulary use. Through two cycles of planning, action, observation, and reflection, the study is designed to examine changes in vocabulary achievement, classroom participation, and instructional implementation. The theoretical framework suggests that appropriately selected visual materials may facilitate vocabulary comprehension and support more interactive learning experiences. Nevertheless, the effectiveness of the intervention at MAN 1 Sidrap cannot be established until original empirical data have been collected and analyzed.

The study offers practical implications for English teachers seeking accessible and contextually appropriate strategies for vocabulary instruction in Indonesian secondary schools. Teachers are encouraged to integrate visual representations with structured vocabulary exercises, provide opportunities for meaningful language production, and evaluate learning outcomes through both achievement assessments and classroom observations. Future investigations should consider larger participant groups, comparison-based research designs, delayed vocabulary assessments, and the relationship between visual learning materials and different dimensions of vocabulary knowledge. The findings of such investigations could contribute to a more comprehensive understanding of how visual-based instruction supports vocabulary development in EFL educational contexts.

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