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English exposure in english-speaking environment to vocabulary acquisition in junior high school

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Abstract

English is a language that is needed in this day and age. Therefore, exposure is very necessary for students so that they are familiar with it for their future preparations. This research was conducted to determine the exposure of English students at Mts Bilingual Pucang to the acquisition of new vocabulary. Qualitative descriptive is the research method used in this research. The aim of this research is to describe exposure to English in an English-speaking environment on vocabulary acquisition. This research uses several instruments to collect data such as observation sheets to observe activities at school, questionnaires and interviews to determine students' perceptions of being in an English-speaking environment. The results of this research are based on observation data where students can acquire new vocabulary because they receive continuous exposure to English and are supported by an immersive environment. In addition, students are motivated to use English at school because of the positive impact they get, so that students enjoy the English-speaking environment.

Keywords: Exposure, English-Speaking Environment, Vocabulary.

INTRODUCTION

Language is a dynamic system, which all humans use to communicate. Serves as a means of conveying ideas, feelings and thoughts. This is an important component of social interaction. Language can be categorized into various types, such as family heritage language or first language (mother tongue), second and foreign language (Rajudin and Sugianto, 2018). First languages are

often learned from childhood or even earlier, and second languages are typically learned later and outside of the sensitive time (Vulchanova et al., 2014). A language that is considered "foreign" is a language that is usually unrelated to the social or personal environment of the speaker. Therefore, the choice of a target foreign language is largely up to the learner, with the exception of situations where one must master a foreign language for a specific purpose (Punchihetti, 2013).

In Indonesia, English as a foreign language is taught in schools, starting from the primary education level as the local content until higher education level (Soma et al., 2018). Even though English is taught in schools, the majority of Indonesians do not speak the foreign language in daily interactions. Instead, Indonesians use various local languages while having informal social interactions. In contrast, when interacting with one another in formal context like conferences, offices, or educational institutions, Indonesians usually use their national language, Bahasa Indonesia.

English mastery is urgently required today to enter a tight competition in the global world. Understanding English enables individuals from different countries to communicate and keep updated on world progress (Hazizah et al., 2024). Consequently, English is used variedly in many fields, such as commerce, politics, economics, and technology. Moreover, this international language is the most spoken language throughout the world in 2023. This fact is supported by Dyvik (2023) through the data obtained from Statistic that English has 1,456 millions users. it shows that English is the most commonly used language worldwide after their first language.

Effective communication depends on understanding proper vocabulary. According (Baihaqi et al., 2019) stated that without grammar can be conveyed, without vocabulary nothing can be conveyed. In general, vocabulary is a part of language that includes some information about usage and meaning e (Mattsson and Norrby, 2013). Thus, people will not be able to write or speak fluently without acquiring vocabulary. Vocabulary acquisition highlights the process by which language learners increase the number of words they understand while acquiring the target language (Wollacott, 2023). Vocabulary is very important for understanding a language in all situations; Therefore, it is important for us to understand how best to teach vocabulary (Ricketts et al., 2021). Vocabulary acquisition depends on the obtained input. Basically, this input comes from environmental exposure. This exposure appears in the form of writing, pictures, interactions, and others (Leona et al., 2021).

There are several previous studies which are related to this study. ISLAMIATI, 2019 analyzed the English environment role in developing students' English-speaking ability" aimed to find out the process of English-speaking skills, the factors that support English language environment, and the role of the language environment in developing English speaking skills in Islamic boarding schools. Another study was conducted by Hidayatullah, 2022 entitled "The Influence of Language Environment in Islamic Boarding School on the Achievement of English-Speaking Skill". It was found that there was an increase in English speaking skills after the implementation of an English speaking environment. Another study was conducted by Rani, 2022 entitled "Investigating Second Language Acquisition of English Foreign Language Student in Al-Iman Modern Islamic Boarding School Viewed from Students Learning Environment". The study showed that exposure to an environment that uses English can influence students' English language skills. Previous studies focused on English speaking mastery. However, this research focuses on English exposure on vocabulary acquisition.

One of the bilingual junior high schools in Sidoarjo, named MTS Bilingual Sidoarjo, has successfully built an English-speaking environment. The students and teachers use this foreign language as the main language at school. They do not use English only in classroom, but also outside the classroom during social interaction. The interaction process in the school environment helps and supports students' English language skills. The students who at first only know a few English words become more familiar with the use of English. In other words, their vocabulary develops much.

Despite the positive effects of English-speaking environment on the student English skills, a problem still appears when the students use English in that school. The students are still in the process of introducing English so students' vocabulary knowledge is still lacking. Meanwhile, the environment there requires English speaking. They are confused about starting to speak because they don't know some vocabulary. Thus, it is interesting to describe the English exposure in the English-speaking environment to vocabulary acquisition to find out English exposure to vocabulary acquisition at MTS Bilingual Sidoarjo. Therefore, this study was aimed at describing "English Exposure in English-Speaking Environment to Vocabulary Acquisition in Junior High School, Sidoarjo".

METHOD

This study will be conducted using qualitative methods with the aim of exploring comprehensive problems when collecting the necessary data because the qualitative data are collected through observation, questionnaires and documentation. According to Leavy, 2017, a qualitative approach is to show the depth of meaning and subjective experiences of people. Thus, qualitative research is useful for studying a social phenomenon inductively from the perceptions of individuals and small groups.

This study is qualitative descriptive in which is used to describe the phenomena and situations being researched. Qualitative descriptive is especially suited to research involving mixed methods, questionnaire designs, or factual descriptions of phenomena (Turale, 2020). In this study, data play a crucial role. Words, phrases, sentences, and utterances collected during observations are used in this study. In this study, observation, questionnaires, and documentation were the methods used to collect data. The technique for collecting data is used to get information.. Those data will be taken from thirty-three students in class VIII at MTs Bilingual NUP.

The data reduction is the process of choosing, gathering, and converting data. Data reduction was done because the amount of data collected in the field required careful and accurate recording. Data for this study came from field note transcriptions, documentation, interview and questionnaires, for it produced relevant findings and conclusions. Data display is the process of arranging facts and data to make analysis and conclusion-making simple. To help with the understanding of each pattern, category, focus, subject, and difficulty, the reduction's findings will be presented in a specific way. When doing this study, field notes from observation, interview, questionnaire, and documentation studies will provide data. This is the final step in qualitative data analysis. Researchers draw conclusions and verify from field observation notes and questionnaires. Researchers compared this data with several previous studies regarding English-Speaking environment on vocabulary acquisition. Then this activity ends with drawing conclusions from the findings in the field.

RESULT AND DISCUSSION
Result

The writer presented the finding of English exposure in English-speaking environment to vocabulary acquisition in junior high school of bilingual school located in Sidoarjo. The observation was aimed at observing how the students were exposed to English inside and outside the classroom. The results of the observation obtained through the checklist and field notes are presented below.

Table 1. Observastion Checklist

Date : Class :		
Statement	Yes	No
The school has a commitment to use English at school.	V	
The use of written English in teaching materials/videos/pictures/banners/pamphlets at school also exposes the students to English.	V	
English exposure at the school is sufficient	V	
English exposure contributes to vocabulary acquisition	V	
When teaching, the teachers speak English in the classroom.	V	
When learning, the students speak English in the classroom.	V	
The students and teachers speak English outside the classroom.	V	
English conversations about topics relevant to the students' life provide more optimal and comprehensible inputs that are more easily to memorize.	V	
English conversations at school help the students gradually acquire new English words.	V	

A description of how the process of exposure to English influences students' vocabulary was also obtained from field notes written while observing activities at school. Findings obtained from field notes are also included to support as additional notes from the checklist. The first note describes the school's complete consistency in implementing English in every activity both outside and inside the classroom. There is a department that is responsible for supervising the use of English in every activity. And if you find students who do not use English at all, they will be subject to educational punishment. Such as writing stories in English, writing large amounts of English vocabulary, and so on.

The second note describes several media that use English, including all student handbooks. The student handbook is made by the teacher in charge of the subject. The contents of the book are adjusted to the curriculum they use, namely the Cambridge curriculum. And several media that support the process of exposing students to English. The third note describes activities that can support the process of exposing students to English. This activity is carried out regularly.

Discussion

This section discusses English exposure in English-speaking environment on vocabulary acquisition. English exposure refers to a situation in which students constantly hear, read, write, and speak English. Students are engaged in various activities, such as listening to everyday conversations, following lessons, and participating in discussions. Dealing with vocabulary requires an understanding of the communication power of language, whether it be in the written or spoken word (Zaniar et al., 2024). When students hear or read new words in stories, books, or conversations, they can associate those words with specific contexts (F. Bailey and Fahad, 2021). Through constant exposure, students often encounter new words that are then repeated in various contexts. This helps them understand the meaning and usage of the words.

Apart from that, continuous exposure will also make students become more familiar with English, so that students feel more comfortable and get accustomed to using English in various situations. This habit helps students become more confident in using English, such as when listening, speaking, reading, and writing. Thus, it is essential for effective communication.

(1) The importance of School Commitment to Use English

At Mts Bilingual, exposure to English appears in oral and written forms. It is supported by some activities that make students active in using English. The school's commitment to use English can help the students acquire vocabulary by providing consistent and continuous exposure to support active use of English.

The commitment creates the consistency of the teachers and students to have a contact with English. The school has many programs that support the students' English skills, such as vocabulary time, ECI subject, podcasts, debates, and English camp. Those activities cause them to be more active in using English. Furthermore, this supporting environment thereby creates an English–speaking environment where the students receive valuable exposure.

This immersive environment not only improves students' vocabulary and speaking skills, but also prepares students for academic future and endeavors to prioritize English language proficiency. It is in line with the claim stating that language learning is the result of a series of stimuli and reactions and all learning is the formation of habits through reinforcement (Bf, 1948 in Aimin, 2013). By committing to create a supportive environment, the students eventually become accustomed and familiar with English.

(2) Spoken English Exposure at School

Speaking is a productive oral talent that involves using language in a methodical way to express meaning (K. Bailey, 2005 in Puspitasari, 2011). It means, speaking is a productive skill of conveying meaning through utterances. By using English as the main language at Mts Bilingual, the teachers and students interact using the language inside and outside the classroom. In that school, the teachers teach their students using English so that all instructions are delivered in English. Through that way, the teachers create an environment for students to practice and become familiar with the language. Moreover, they provide new vocabulary, explain meaning, and help students understand how to use them correctly.

The students also participate in group projects, presentations, and discussions in English, improving speaking and listening skills, building self-confidence, and increasing speaking fluency. By engaging in collaborative tasks, the students practice expressing their ideas clearly and understanding others, enhancing their ability to communicate effectively in English. These activities immerse students in various contexts where English is used naturally to help in acquiring new vocabulary

Not only in the classroom, interactions outside the classroom in that school are also encouraged to do in English. It provides continuous and adequate exposure. The social interaction extends an immersive language environment beyond formal lessons, allowing for ongoing language development throughout the school day. By using English in informal settings, such as during breaks, lunch, and other activities, students are exposed to a wider vocabulary and practical use of the language. This phenomenon is supported by Lev Vygotsky's (1930) in (Mustafa et al., 2017) about Sociocultural Theory emphasizing the role of social interaction in cognitive development. This theory claims that language learning is a social process, and interaction with more professional speakers facilitates learning. It means that the students have many opportunities to interact with fluent speakers, including teachers and peers. The social interaction provides an environment that supports vocabulary acquisition, as students receive immediate feedback and can learn through observation and imitation.

(3) Written English Exposure at School

English is also exposed through different writings in various media at the school. The use of written English in almost all teaching materials, pictures, banners and pamphlets around the school. The writings containing information in different locations, such as signs, including classroom labels, directional signs, and informational plaques are written in English. Moreover, all examinations and instructions are written in English. Shortly, the written English exposure ensures that the students get accustomed to the language in written forms.

This exposure helps the students discover and learn new words in different contexts, providing rich and varied input. It helps students understand language structure, new vocabulary, and proper context of use. This is supported by Krashen's Input Hypothesis (1930) in (Thach, 2022) stating that

language acquisition occurs through exposure to comprehensible input. Written English sentences that are slightly more difficult than the student's competency level (called i+1) can encourage their gradual language development. By integrating English into all visual and written resources, the school creates a rich language environment that supports ongoing learning and language development. Ensuring that students receive broader exposure to English through a variety of contexts helps them acquire the language more effectively.

(4) Relevance of Topic With Student Life

English conversations on topics that are relevant to students' lives provide input that is more optimal and easier to understand so that they are easier to remember. When the students at the Mts B discuss topics that are familiar to them and relevant to their lives, they are more likely to understand the context and content of the conversation. Through relevant topics, the students not only receive information but also process and produce language actively. This contextual understanding helps them understand new vocabulary and language structures more easily. Conversations about relevant topics enable meaningful social interactions. These interactions help students learn through real conversations, where they can practice language in natural and relevant contexts. This finding is supported by Social Interactionist Theory by Lev Vygotsky's, (1930 as cited in Mustafa et al., 2017) emphasizing the importance of social interaction in cognitive development and language learning.

(5) English Conversation for Vocabulary Acquisition

Conversations in English at school have a strong relationship in helping students gradually master new words in English. Through conversation, the students are exposed to new words many times in a variety of contexts (Kabellow et al., 2020). This repetition is important for vocabulary acquisition because it strengthens memory retention. By hearing and using new words repeatedly, students can deepen their understanding of the meaning and usage patterns of these words. This is related to Krashen Input Hypothesis theory in chapter 2 stated that students acquire language best when they are exposed to comprehensible input. In other words, students master language best when they are exposed to comprehensible input. Conversations provide a rich source of input where students interact with language slightly above their current proficiency level, encouraging gradual learning.

CONCLUCION

The results of this study on English exposure in an English-speaking environment and its importance on vocabulary acquisition highlight several key factors. First, the importance of school commitment to using English emerged as a foundational element, emphasizing that institutional dedication to English usage creates a supportive learning environment for students. Second, spoken English exposure at school was identified as crucial, with regular verbal interactions significantly enhancing vocabulary acquisition. Third, written English exposure at school was also found to be vital, providing students with diverse opportunities to encounter and learn new vocabulary. Fourth, the relevance of topics to student life played a significant role, indicating that vocabulary acquisition is more effective when the content is meaningful and directly connected to students' experiences. Lastly, engaging in English conversations was shown to be a powerful tool for vocabulary development, as it encourages active use and reinforcement of new words. Overall, these findings underscore the multifaceted nature of English exposure and its critical role in facilitating vocabulary acquisition in an English-speaking environment.

AUTHOR CONTRIBUTION STATEMENT

Y. Y conducted the research and formulated the issue. M. D. E. helped to develop the theoretical framework and evaluate the research methods. N. R. A. evaluated the results that have been done. N. N helped to improve this article. All authors have contributed to the writing of this article.

DECLARATION

DATA AVAILABILITY

The dataset generated during the current study are available from the corresponding author on reasonable request.

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