

# Students' Perception towards Do-It-Yourself Word Diary (DIYWODY) to Learn Vocabulary at Tangga Batu Community College, Melaka

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## ABSTRACT

The results of the Vocabulary Test conducted on 32 students of the Tourism Certificates Program at Tangga Batu Community College, Melaka showed that they have very limited English vocabulary knowledge which have made them being unconfident and less proficient. The main reason was due to the difficulties in learning the language resulted the students lose their interest easily. Thus, the focus of this Do-it-Yourself Word Diary (DIYWODY) is to introduce methods and strategies on how to help students in enhancing their English vocabulary in effective and engaging way. This innovation functions as a Graphic Diary that provides interactive pages with strategies in learning English vocabulary which allows students to deliver the meaning of the difficult words via their understanding through graphic illustration. Then, the students will create simple sentences from the word chosen. This strategy helps them in memorizing the words easily. In the technology aspect, graphic is one of the important multimedia elements in the information delivery process. The use of the Adobe Illustrator application in the production of graphical diary is developed along with the Adobe Photoshop application to produce a quality graphics. After DIYWODY had being used by the Tourism students in December 2018, it found that students learned and memorized the English vocabulary easily and they can create sentences using the word chosen as well as apply the words in their daily life confidently. Pre- test and post- test were also given to them in order to measure the effectiveness of this DIYWODY. A total of 30 students achieved better grades in the Post- Test compared to the Pre- Test they have taken earlier. Meanwhile, the remaining two students were still trying to adapt with the strategy. It is crucial for these students to be proposed with a variety of visuals in their learning process to help them learn effectively.

**Key Words:** vocabulary learning strategy, pre- test, post- test, vocabulary test

## 1.0 INTRODUCTION

Vocabulary knowledge plays a critical role in students' academic development to a degree that it is strongly related to reading comprehension (Graves, 2006), academic achievement and lives beyond schools (Beck & McKeown, 2002). At the same time vocabulary learning is a formidable and complex life-long task (Stahl & Nagy, 2006). Vocabulary knowledge is very important in language learning in order to communicate effectively in a second language. Numerous language learners commonly avoid communication because they do not have the foggiest idea about the right word or phrase for what they wish to communicate. Learners need to pay attention to some elements of English language such as pronunciation, spelling, structure, and vocabulary. To master English skills, students must know the vocabulary of the language i.e. a list of words with their meaning because it supports their skills' improvement (Linse, 2005)

Based on the research review by Hazita, Normazidah and Koo (2012), one of the causes of limited English proficiency among Malaysian learners is learners are found to have limited vocabulary as English reading materials are not always available. Furthermore, a study by Saadiyah and Kaladevi (2009) states that inappropriate word choice is common among learners. Koo (2008) asserts that literacy in the 21st century necessitates an inclusive pedagogy that looks at learners as co-authors

and co-producers in knowledge acquisition. When learners participate in meaningful learning, they acquire new literacy.

For the Tourism Students, to put such a great amount of exertion in adapting new vocabulary in a second language, they must acquire a high persuasive dimension as it drives one to achieve the learning objectives. As stated by Deng (2010) students need to be motivated to learn vocabulary intentionally as well as incidentally. Without the intention for learning, the learning process that leads to acquisition and retention is not possible. Motivation is what activates behavior and helps individuals persist in given tasks (Guthrie & Wigfield, 2000).

### **1.1 Problem Statement**

The cause of poor performance in vocabulary pre-test on the 32 students comes from the limitation of English words that most students experienced nowadays. The main reason was due to the difficulties in learning the language and the vast majority of the students just precisely memorize new words, without being exposed with the strategies on how to learn them. This situation causes the students lose their interest easily. Furthermore, vocabulary learning is not given much insistence in Community College system.

Many parents and lecturers complain about the students of our generation who have not developed vocabulary enhancement among themselves. One of the many issues encountering students nowadays is conceivably, not their inefficiency to learn the vocabulary but their inadequacy of interest. Thus, the current circumstance of learning vocabulary with Tourism students can be laid out as pursues:

1. Lack of different strategies in learning vocabulary.
2. Inefficient ways of learning vocabulary practiced by the students. Generally, learners mechanically memorize vocabulary without being aware of other effective learning strategies.

### **1.2 The Purposes and Objectives of the Study**

The purpose of this study is to examine the use of the Do-It-Yourself Word Diary (DIYWODY) among Tourism Certificates Program Students at Tangga Batu Community College, Melaka. Specifically, the objectives of this study include:

1. To identify students' perceptions towards the use of DIYWODY.
2. To introduce vocabulary learning strategies by using DIYWODY.
3. To enhance students' vocabulary knowledge by using DIYWODY.

## **2.0 LITERATURE REVIEW**

One of the ultimate goal of Tourism students is to be able to communicate in a second language. Mastering vocabulary is not just essential, but critical in a second language environment when dealing with international and domestic travelers. Therefore, the need to expanding and broaden the vocabulary is very crucial. Vocabulary learning is an imperative part of learning foreign language (Schmitt & Carter, 2000). On the other hand, the inappropriate use of vocabulary affects the communicative act. That is, vocabulary is one of the linguistic components influencing the development of communicative competence and learners' language skills as well (Brown, Waring, & Donkaewbua, 2008; Meara & Jones, 1990; Moir & Nation, 2002; Schmitt, 1998; Schmitt, Wun-Ching, & Garras, 2011).

Read (2000, p.1) mentioned that "words are the basic building block of language, the units of meaning from which larger structures such as sentences, paragraphs and whole text are formed". The statement demonstrates the significance of vocabulary in relaying thoughts and transferring knowledge and information. It can likewise be a signal that communication will ineffectively be comprehended without a wide range of vocabulary. Hence, language learners need an ample dimension of vocabulary items and it is crucial that they have to find out more on how to enhance their vocabulary learning since English is not their mother tongue.

Vocabulary learning is one of the major challenges foreign language learners face during the process of learning a language (Ghazal, 2007). Therefore, assisting students in learning the

vocabulary is through becoming independent learners during the course. Furthermore, Ghazal (2007) explains that this could be achieved through instructing learners to apply vocabulary learning strategies as efficiently as possible. Utilizing fun activity as an instructive technique is not something new and had a long history in language teaching. During the language learning process, learners acquire vocabulary fast rather than structures. Fun activities can help establishing the relationship between the words to other lexical items so that a vocabulary network is built up (Ashrafa, Ghanei Motlagh & Salami, 2014).

The use of games and fun activities for vocabulary teaching and its wash-back effect well documented in various studies that help many students to shed their embarrassment and be able to participate more actively in the meaning making process (Honarmand & Rostampour 2014). According to Derakhshan and DavoodiKhatir (2015), various methods such as using games can be used to teach and learn vocabulary.

### **3.0 RESEARCH METHODOLOGY**

#### **3.1 The significance of the Study**

Vocabulary is important across the curriculum from language arts and social studies to mathematics and science. It is intimately connected to both effective reading and writing skills, and these skills in turn are necessary for doing well in school (K5 Learning Blog). Meanwhile, recent research indicates that teaching vocabulary may be problematic because many teachers are not confident about best practice in vocabulary teaching and at times don't know where to begin to form an instructional emphasis on word learning (Berne & Blachowicz, 2008).

The significance of the study brings the concept of indirect or "implicit" vocabulary learning, on the other hand, encompasses learning the meaning of new words implicitly when language learners hear or see the words used in many different contexts, for example, through daily opportunities, through conversations with others and through reading extensively on their own (Read 2000, p. 39; Laufer and Hulstijn 2001, p.1)

As for this study, the whole result goes to the top management of education in creating good vocabulary skills for the students. In order for students to produce good writing texts they have to possess huge word power (Afaf Abdelrahim Jalal Eldin Ahmed, 2017). Thus, the study focus on how to comprehend and brings then students to the next level of vocabulary skills.

#### **3.2 Population and Sample**

Due to the limitations of the study a total of 32 respondents from semester one and semester two studying Tourism Program at Tangga Batu Community College Melaka participated in this study, and the English language was their second language. The respondents came from different demographics aged from 18 to 20 and were all students taking two different classes.

#### **3.3 Research Design**

##### **3.3.1 Pre- Test and Post- Test**

The pre- and post-test used were self-developed by the researcher. It consisted of 40 questions of multiple choice divided by four sections, each with different topic. The tests were prepared by the researcher and verified by an appointed expert. The content of the both tests were adopted from the MPU 1181 Communicative English Syllabus for semester one by Jabatan Pendidikan Kolej Komuniti, Kementerian Pendidikan Tinggi (2017). The full score for the test was 40. They were told that this was a pre- test, and that they would take a post- test after receiving a sample of DIYWODY. On the other hand, the post- test was actually the same test used in the pre- test but changes were made in terms of the arrangement of the vocabulary and phrases which was given at the conclusion of five weeks of intervention in order to make a comparison.

##### **3.3.2 DIYWODY**

Do-it-Yourself Word Diary (DIYWODY) is an interactive diary with strategies in learning English vocabulary which allows respondents to deliver the meaning of the difficult words based on their understanding through graphic illustration. It provides pages with vocabulary activities such as fill in the vocabulary template with new words, keep their favorite quotation from movies they have watched, quizzes, drawing and plenty of spaces to write the respondents' life's story. This is underpinned by Baker, Simmons, & Kameenui's (1995) idea of the students who struggle to acquire new vocabulary may have generalized linguistic deficiencies, memory deficits, poor word learning strategies, or any combination of the three fallibility of inferring the meanings of unknown words from pictures.

### 3.3.3 Feedback Form

The respondents' evaluation form was developed in the form of choosing the yes or no answer which consisted of four questions and a question of seeking opinions to investigate respondents' overall perceptions towards their learning experience during the experiment.

## 4.0 METHODS AND DATA ANALYSIS

The data was analyzed based on the scores of the pre and post- test. The analysis has been done through totaling the frequency of respondents achieved certain grades in the both tests and the data obtained was converted to the percentage form. Formula used to calculate the percentage of data from the questions, were shown below:

$$\text{Percentage (\%)} = \frac{\text{Number of Respondents}}{\text{Total Number of Respondents}} \times 100$$

### 4.1 Findings

Overall achievement will be analyze using a vocabulary test scoring rubric adapted from MPU 1181 assessment rubric by Jabatan Pendidikan Kolej Komuniti, Kementerian Pendidikan Tinggi (2017). A rubric is a scoring guide used to evaluate performance. It is a coherent set of criteria for students' work that includes descriptions of levels of performance quality on the criteria. In many instances, the use of a scoring rubric enables students to hand in work that is better in quality than they might otherwise have done. Students do not have to guess or infer what the assessor wants; and assessors are forced to articulate and, if necessary, quantify the most valued outcomes of students' learning (Stevens & Levi, 2005). The vocabulary test scoring rubric were shown below:

Figure 1: Vocabulary Test Scoring Rubric

<b>MARK</b>	<b>GRADE</b>
80-100	EXCELLENT
60-79	GOOD
40-59	AVERAGE
20-39	WEAK
0-19	POOR

#### 4.1.1 Pre- Test

Figure 2 indicates the results of the pre-test which shows the number of respondents that have achieved certain grades. There are two out of 32 respondents have achieved Poor Grade (6.25%) and the marks they have obtained were below 19%. The highest number of respondents were in the Weak Grade which 21 out of 32 respondents with 65.63%, meanwhile the obtained marks were between 20% to 39%. In the Average Grade, there were nine out of 32 respondents (28.13%) and the marks obtained were between 40% to 59%. On the other hand, both Good and Excellent Grades with the mark is 60% up to 100% remain zero respondent (0%). The pre- test result was shown below:

Figure 2: Pre Test Result

<b>MARKS</b>	<b>GRADE</b>	<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>PERCENTAGE</b>
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80-100	EXCELLENT	0	0%
60-79	GOOD	0	0%
40-59	AVERAGE	9	28.13%
20-39	WEAK	21	65.63%
0-19	POOR	2	6.25%

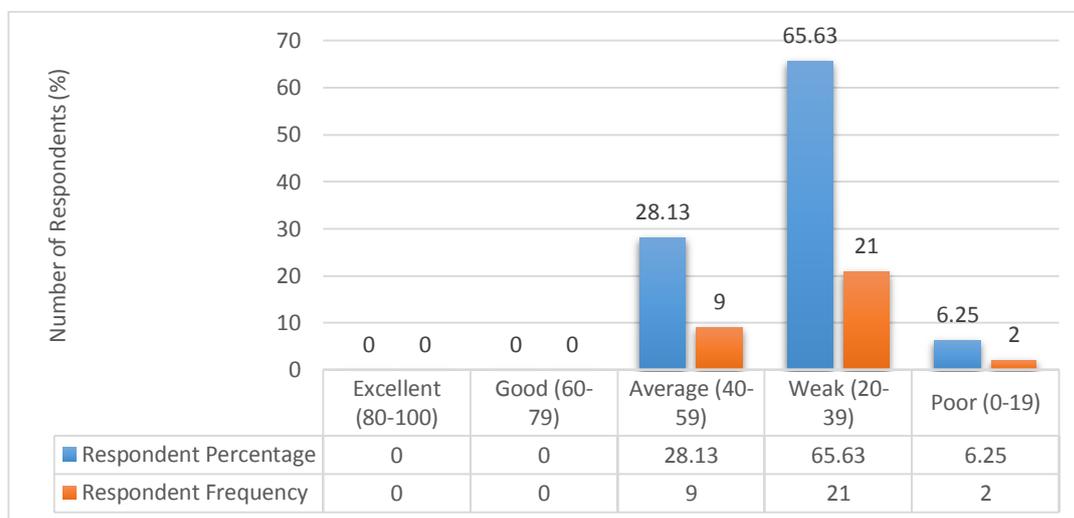


Figure 3: Pre- test Result Chart

The Pre Test result showed that the prevalent problem faced by the respondents was lack of vocabulary. They have already learned the subject and the vocabulary tested has been taught in their classroom. After the Pre Test have been done, the researcher hand in 32 sets of DIYWODY to the respondents and they were briefly taught on how to use it. They were given a week to do the activities in the DIYWODY before they were asked to returned it back to the researcher. As soon as the researcher collected the DIYWODY, the Post Test then were given to the respondents by the researcher as a tool to determine the effectiveness of the DIYWODY in enhancing the respondents' vocabulary.

#### 4.1.2 Post- Test

Referring to Figure 3, for the Poor Grade with the rank of marks were below 19%, the result showed zero respondent (0%). This indicated an improvement of the pre- and post-tests of the experimental group which in previous data, there were 6.25% of respondents were ranked in this grade. Meanwhile, there were two out of 32 respondents achieved Weak Grade with the percentage of 6.25%. The researcher found that this was a significant growth of improvement because the result differed from the previous test which showed a huge number of respondents decreasing in the Weak Grade which the ranking marks were between 20% to 39%. In the Average Grade, the percentage was 37.5% which the total number of respondents were 12 out of 32. Compared to the previous test, it showed an increasing number of respondents achieved better grade with the total of three respondents. The marks they have obtained were between 40% to 59%. On the other hand, referring to the Good Grade with the marks were between 60% to 79%, the increasing number of 17 respondents with the percentage of 53.13% indicated a terrific achievement. In the pre- test, there were none of the respondents obtained the Good Grade. Focusing on the Excellent Grade in the post- test, which the mark ranked were between 80% up until 100%, there was one respondent (3.13%) have achieved the grade. Although the total number was very small, but it indicated a vast different achievement as in the previous test, there were none of the respondents obtained both Good and Excellent Grade.

The post- test result was as follows:

Figure 4: Post Test Result

MARKS	GRADE	TOTAL	PERCENTAGE
80-100	EXCELLENT	1	3.13%
60-79	GOOD	17	53.13%
40-59	AVERAGE	12	37.5%
20-39	WEAK	2	6.25%
0-19	POOR	0	0%

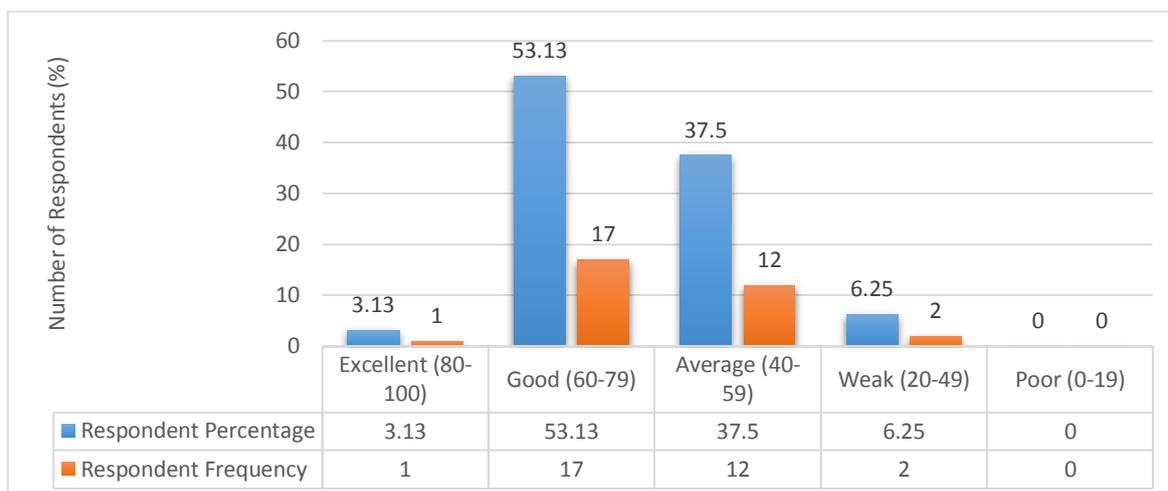


Figure 5: Post- Test Result Chart

#### 4.1.3 Feedback Form

The researcher would like to figure out feedback from the respondents regarding DIYWODY. The feedback form consisted of five questions were self- developed by the researcher and have been handed out to respondents right after they have seated the post- test. In the feedback form, the researcher found out that all 32 respondents (100%) like to use DIYWODY and all of them also agreed that it is easy to be used. Meanwhile, 28 out of 32 respondents (87.5%) stated that they understand how to do the activities in DIYWODY but the remaining four (12.5%) do not understand how to use it. On the other hand, they think DIYWODY helps them to improve their vocabulary.

#### 5.0 RECOMMENDATION

As stated in the feedback form given to the respondents, eight (8) respondents (25%) suggested that more interesting activities could be included in the future. Seven (7) out of 32 respondents (21.88%) suggested that there could be more games on vocabulary to attract students' attention to do the activities in the DIYWODY. Meanwhile five (5) of them (15.63%) implied to added up more graphics and cartoons to make it interesting and another five (5) respondents (15.63%) pointed on added up more challenging activities in DIYWODY. On the other hand, four (4) of them (12.4%) mentioned that there should be more pages for vocabulary strategies template and the remaining three (3) respondents (9.38%) left the form blank.

The researcher concluded that DIYWODY will be improvised based on the feedback received from the respondents in order to meet their needs and help them in enhancing their vocabulary. The pages will be included more interesting and fun vocabulary activities in the future. Luu (2012) stated that vocabulary games provide an enjoyable learning experience. Creating a fun and enjoyable learning environment is a large first step toward motivating students. Among the suggestions of the alternative vocabulary activities were reader's theatre, thesaurus, sentence completion and lyrics writing.

Another recommendation is to consider on the utilizing a vast number of sample to investigate the effectiveness of using DIYWODY to teach vocabulary to students. This sample can be selected from community college around Malaysia with the goal that all learners will have the chance to participate in such study.

In the near future DIYWODY will be transformed into mobile application as people today prefer book application because it takes a ton lot of weight from their shoulders. Moreover, the ease of access

and a scope of highlights that any learners can use with DIYWODY application will enhanced the reading and writing experience. Eventually, DIYWODY application will prompts a more noteworthy number of individuals to install the application and jotting down their vocabulary anytime and anywhere.

## 6.0 CONCLUSION

The study has yielded the conclusion that the use of DIYWODY was effective in helping these semester one and semester two Tangga Batu Community College Tourism students learn new vocabulary. The result furthermore shown that the learners has given vital improvement in their vocabulary through the use of DIYWODY. The new words were stored in their long-term memory and they could recall the words easily.

Teachers have an important role in making students learn vocabulary. (Thornburr, 2002). As for this reason, educators should encourage students to use strategies and instruct them about how they should benefit from the strategies. An educator thoughtful consideration of the content, purpose, and strategies identified to vocabulary teaching is basic to the scholastic accomplishment of students who struggle to learn, understand, recall, and utilize new vocabulary decisively. The strategies partook in this DIYWODY provide the methods by which educators can help at-risk students extend their general vocabularies and the specific words to their meaning. These skills are basic to scholastic achievement in every single content area.

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