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The Use of Peer Feedback to Enhance Vocabulary Mastery of Eleventh-Grade Students at SMA Negeri 1 Palasa

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ABSTRACT

This research was conducted to address the persistent issue of limited vocabulary mastery among eleventh-grade students at SMA Negeri 1 Palasa. Vocabulary is a key component of language proficiency, and effective strategies such as peer feedback are increasingly emphasized to support students' independent learning. The study aimed to determine whether implementing Peer Feedback could effectively improve their vocabulary achievement. To investigate this objective, the study employed a quasi-experimental design involving two groups: an experimental group of 20 students who received instruction through Peer Feedback and a control group of 22 students who were taught using conventional methods. This study focused on action verbs and common nouns. A vocabulary test was administered as both a pre-test and post-test, and the collected data were analyzed statistically to identify differences in students' performance before and after the treatment. The findings show that the experimental group improved from a mean pre-test score of 44.83 to a post-test score of 66.15, whereas the control group improved from 48.94 to 58.31. Furthermore, the t-test result (t = 5.17; p = 0.05) indicates that Peer Feedback use had a significant positive effect on students' vocabulary mastery. Based on the results, the study concludes that Peer Feedback is an effective instructional strategy for enhancing vocabulary mastery among EFL learners at the senior high level, and integrating it into classroom activities can further support active learning and strengthen students' vocabulary development.

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1. INTRODUCTION

Vocabulary is a key component of English proficiency and directly influences students' ability to understand texts, express ideas clearly, and communicate effectively. A limited vocabulary often becomes a major obstacle, preventing learners from interpreting meaning and organizing their thoughts. This is consistent with the observation that "students'

difficulties in understanding words stem from limited vocabulary knowledge" Putri et al., [1]. In the EFL classroom, vocabulary mastery must extend beyond memorizing individual terms; it requires the ability to use words appropriately in real contexts.

In the Indonesian curriculum, descriptive text is one of the central genres taught in grade 11. Because this genre demands accurate, detailed descriptions of people, objects, and places, vocabulary is an essential foundation for students to produce successful texts. Because this genre requires precision and clarity, vocabulary is a crucial foundation for producing coherent, meaningful descriptions. Descriptive text is highlighted in this study because vocabulary performance is highly visible in this genre, making it an appropriate context for examining how students use and develop their lexical knowledge in vocabulary mastery at SMA Negeri 1 Palasa.

Initial observations at SMA Negeri 1 Palasa reveal that vocabulary instruction is still dominated by traditional practices such as translation, memorization, and direct teacher correction. These methods provide limited space for active engagement or contextual language use, echoing Lozano Zumba et al. [2], who note that 'traditional vocabulary teaching methods…often fail to engage students or help them use vocabulary effectively in real communication." Consequently, students struggle to apply the vocabulary they learn, feel less confident, and rely heavily on teacher guidance.

This situation presents a clear learning problem: despite years of English exposure, many students still show limited vocabulary mastery and lack motivation toward current learning methods. The passive nature of instruction restricts the development of critical thinking and collaboration, skills considered essential for sustainable language learning [3]. As classroom tasks do not require students to use vocabulary meaningfully, their progress remains slow and unstable.

Peer feedback offers a promising alternative to address this issue. As a learner-centered approach, it encourages students to review and evaluate their classmates' language use, allowing them to identify strengths and weaknesses through social interaction. Grounded in Zhan & Teng's [4] sociocultural theory, peer feedback supports growth through collaborative learning and has been shown to "enhance student autonomy, active engagement, critical thinking, and collaborative learning" [5], [6]. This positions peer feedback as an effective tool not only for improving accuracy but also for forming students' understanding of how vocabulary functions within text.

In vocabulary-focused peer feedback tasks, students analyze word choices, consider alternative expressions, and provide suggestions for clarity and appropriateness. This process strengthens both receptive and productive vocabulary skills and promotes deeper cognitive processing. Collaborative feedback also encourages students to reflect on their own language decisions, which can lead to more consistent vocabulary use in descriptive writing [7]. Thus, peer feedback becomes a space for meaningful practice rather than passive reception.

Although numerous studies have examined peer feedback in language learning, much of the existing work has been conducted with university or adult learners [8], [9]. Research involving senior high school students is still relatively limited, especially studies that position peer feedback as a means to strengthen vocabulary rather than focusing solely on

writing skills [10]. Previous investigations [11] also tend to focus on peer feedback within quiz-based activities, offering little insight into how it operates in genre-based classroom practices.

A growing body of recent studies supports the value of peer feedback in vocabulary- and writing-focused tasks across different educational settings. Fors instance, Oktaviani et al. [12] found that when senior high school students used peer feedback while writing descriptive texts, they reported noticeable improvements in word choice, idea organization, and clarity of expression, underscoring how peer interaction helps refine vocabulary and content simultaneously. Similarly, Dedi Kurniawan et al. [13] showed that online peer feedback via cloud collaboration enabled EFL learners to detect lexical and structural problems in their drafts, revise accordingly, and thereby enhance overall writing quality, evidencing that technologically mediated peer review can extend and strengthen feedback's effect on vocabulary use.

In response to this situation, the present study investigates peer feedback as a strategy to support students' vocabulary development while they engage in descriptive text learning. By bringing together collaborative learning principles, vocabulary-oriented assessment, and genre-based instructional setting, the study offers a perspective that has not been commonly highlighted in earlier research. Through this focus, it seeks to understand whether peer feedback can effectively contribute to improving the vocabulary mastery of grade XI students at SMA Negeri 1 Palasa.

2. METHOD

In designing this research, the researcher used quasi-experimental research design by applying non-equivalent control group design. As highlighted by Capili and Anastasi [14], quasi-experimental design is a flexible yet systematic approach to investigating cause-and-effect relationships without the use of full randomization, balancing control and real-world constraints.

The researcher will teach to the two groups, namely experimental group and control group. In this study, the experimental group and the control group will be given identical pre- test and post-test. The design of this research is based on the ideas put forward by Capili B [14] as follows:

E	O1	X	O2
C	O1		O2

Which:

E : Experimental group

C : Control group

O1 : Pre-test

O2 : Post-test

X : Treatment

In this research, the population consists of all students of SMA Negeri 1 Palasa, specifically in the eleventh grade. It consisted of four parallel classes: XI A, XI B, XI C, and

XI D. The total number of eleventh-grade students is 93. Using purposive sampling, class XI C (22 students) served as the experimental group, and XI A (20 students) as the control group. Purposive sampling was applied because the schools' administrative structure did not allow random reallocation of students, making random sampling impractical. According to Arikunto , if the number of research subjects is less than 100, then it is better to take all so that the research is population research, but if the number is large, then some can be taken as a sample. In this study, classes XI C and XI A were selected because the English teacher confirmed that both classes had similar average performance and comparable English proficiency, making them suitable to represent the population.

The primary instrument used in this study was a vocabulary test consisting of 30 items, designed to measure students' mastery of the target vocabulary. The test included 1-multiple-choice questions, 10 matching items, and 10 fill-in-the-blank questions. Each correct answer was awarded 1 point, resulting in a total possible score of 30. Example items included action verbs and common nouns such as: "Choose the correct verb to complete the sentence: The students_____ their homework yesterday (write/wrote/writing)" and matching nouns with their meanings. The test was developed based on the syllabus and instructional materials used in class to ensure alignment with the curriculum.

The vocabulary test was accompanied by a peer feedback guideline sheet for the the experimental group. This sheet contained structured criteria that guided students in reviewing their partner's vocabulary use during the descriptive text writing activity. The criteria included (1) accuracy of word meaning, (2) appropriateness of vocabulary according to context, and (3) correct spelling. Students provided checkmarks or short comments under each criterion, and the sheet served as a tool to document how they identified and corrected vocabulary errors through the peer feedback process.

In establishing validity and reliability, the vocabulary test and the peer feedback guidline sheet were reviewed by three English teachers who examined content relevance, clarity, and alignment with the senior high school curriculum. Their expert judgment served as the basis for establishing content validity, as they evaluated whether the test items and assessment criteria accurately reflected the targeted learning objectives for vocabulary mastery. While the instruments were not subjected to separate pilot testing stage, the expert review process helped verify that they were aproprate,understandable, and capable of capturing students' vocabulary performance consistenly, allowing them to be considered sufficiently reliable for use in the study.

The experimental group received vocabulary instruction through peer feedback procedurs. After the pre-test, students were introduced to the target vocabulary and completed an individual worksheet pairing action verbs and common nouns. They then exchanged their work, used the provided guidline sheet, and gave feedback on their partener's vocabulary accuracy and relevance. After discussing and revising their work, students practiced using the corrected word pairs in short sentences. Meanwhile, the control group continued with the regular method of vocabulary instruction through translation, memorization, and teacher correction without peer feedback activities.

The study examined the effect of peer feedback as the independent variable, implemented through structured peer-review activities embedded in descriptive text writing sessions. The dependent variable was students' vocabulary mastery, reflected in their performance on vocabulary focused assessments and their ability to apply appropriate lexical choices. Factors such as the learning genre, school environment, instructional materials, and equal exposure time across groups were maintened consistenly to ensure that differences in outcomes could be attributed to the peer feedback intervention rather than external conditional.

Data were collected through a pre-test given before the treatment, a post-test fter the treatment, and students' vocabulary based worksheets and peer feedback results. The pre-test and post-test measured students, mastery of the target vocabulary introduced during the lessons. In addition, students' completed worksheets, peer feedback guideline sheets, and the revisions made after discussion were collected as supporting data show how students improved their vocabulary accuracy, relevance, and spelling through the peer feedback process.

The collected pre-test and post-test scores were analyzed using quantitative procedures. Each student's score was converted into a standard score using the formula proposed by Arikunto [15]. First, students' raw score on the vocabulary test was converted into a percentage by dividing the score obtained by the maximum possible score and multiplying the result by one hundred. After all scores were standardized, the average score for each group was calculated by summing all individual scores and dividing the total by the number of students in the group. The variability of the scores was then examined by determining the standard deviation, which described how far each students's performance deviated from the group average. Following the administration of both the pre-test and post-test, each student's gain score was obtained by subtracting the pre-test result from the post-test, and these gain scpres served as the basis for comparing the improvement between the experimental and control groups.

To determine whether the difference in vocabulary improvement between the two groups was statistically meaningful, an independent samples t-test was applied to compare their gain scores. This test evaluated whether the observed difference in mean improvement reflected a real effect of the peer feedback treatment or merely random variation. The statistical decision was made using a significance level of 0.05. all steps of the analysis including score conversion, calculation of averafes, determination of deviation values, and the t-test procedure were carried out manually without the use of statistical software.

Efforts to minimize the influence of external variables included providing both groups with the same amount of instructional time and teaching the same genre of descriptive text. The classroom procedures, teacher explanations, and general teaching approach were kept consistent so that differences in learning outcomes would not stem from variations in instructional delivery. The learning materials such as examples, worksheets, and practice tasks were also standardized for both groups, ensuring that the only instructional difference between them was the integration of peer feedback in the experimental group.

3. RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

3.1. Results

At the initial stage of data collection, the findings revelead that the experimental and control groups did not begin at exactly the same level of vocabulary mastery. Although their overall proficiency appeared firly similar, the experimental group reached mean score of 44.83, whereas the control group obtained 48.94, indicating a modest gap between them. This slight difference in their starting point offers important context for interpreting how the treatment later shaped students' progress.

Table 1. Pre-Test Score Results of Experimental Group and Control Group

Group	N	Mean	Deviation	Min	Max
Experimental	20	44.83	20.90	23.3	93.3
Control	22	48.94	19.32	13.3	86.7

The pre-test results indicate that both the experimental and control groups had relatively similar initial abilities, although the control group's mean score was slightly higher. Showing that both groups were essentially equivalent before the treatment was applied.

Having conducted the post-test, it is anticipated that the treatment will yield a significant improvement in vocabulary mastery.

Table 2. Post-Test Score Results of Experimental Group and Control Group

Group	N	Mean	Deviation	Min	Max
Experimental	20	66.15	16.63	43.3	96.7
Control	22	58.31	17.47	40	83.3

The post-test results show that the experimental group reached a higher mean scores (66.15) compared to the control group (58.31), indicating stronger improvement. After six meetings in which the experimental group received the treatment, their minimum and maximum scores also increased, suggesting that the intervention effectively enhanced their vocabulary mastery.

Table 3. Comparison of Gain Scores

Group	Pre-Test Mean	Post-Test Mean	Gain
Experimental	44.83	66.15	21.31
Control	48.94	58.31	9.37

Based on the results, the experimental group showed a noticeably greater gain score (21.31) compared to the control group (9.37). this considerable difference suggests that the treatment given to the experimental group had a positive impact on improving students' performance. To further verify whether this difference was statistically significant, a independent *t*-test was carried out.

Table 4. Independent *t*-test findings

t-counted	*t*-table (0.05, df=40)	Decision
5.17	1.68	Ha accepted

The independent *t*-test results revelead a significant difference between the two groups. The *t*-counted value (5.17) exceeded the *t*-table value (1.68) at the 0.05 significance level, indicating that the null hypothesis could not be maintened and the alternative hypothesis was accepted. This outcome confirms that the use of peer feedback had a significant effect on enhancing students' vocabulary mastery.

3.2. Discussion

The findings of this study indicate that structured peer feedback significantly improved students' vocabulary mastery. Students who received peer feedback scored markedly better in the post-test than in the pre-test, demonstrating that peer feedback can effectively enhance lexical acquisition and usage competence. This aligns with research by Elfiyanto & Fukazawa [16], who found that peer-written corrective feedback improved students' vocabulary and organizational performance more effectively than teacher feedback in an EFL writing context. This improvement suggests that peer feedback did not function merely as a correction tool but as a learning mechanism that helped students revisit, evaluate, and refine their lexical choices showing clear evidence of deeper cognitive processing.

The effectiveness of peer feedback observed in the experimental groups is strongly related to the collaborative and interactive nature of peer review. When students commented on one another's lexical choices, they engaged in cognitive comparison analyzing how words were used, why they were used, and whether alternative choices would be more accurated. This aligns with Fang et al [8], who found that reciprocal peer feedback enhances learners' ability to monitor linguistic output, leading to improved lexical precision. The awareness building processes observed in this study reflect metacognitive engagement, in which students not only revised their peers' vocabulary but also evaluated their own language use more critically.

The results also parallel the conclusions of Farahani, Nemati, and Montazer [17], who argue that mobile-assisted peer review generates more focused and specific revision comments that help learners refine their vocabulary use more deliberately. In this study, students who received peer feedback demonstrated clearer, more accurate, and contextually-appropriate vocabulary compared to those in the control group. This indicates that peer input provided additional linguistic exposure and served as supplementary input beyond teacher instruction, giving students opportunities to reconsider and adjust their lexical decisions with more confidence.

Interaction emerged as acrucial factor influencing students' lexical improvement. The findings align with those of Saed, Ghazali, and Aljaberi [18], who highlighted that peer feedback exchanges enable learners to negotiate meaning and test alternative vocabulary options during the review process. Through discussions and clarification, students in the experimental group refine their understanding of word meanings and strengthen their ability to distinguish between closely related lexical items. Such interactional negotiation appeared

to play a key role in shaping students' lexical growth, providing a space where misunderstanding could be resolved collaboratively rather than individually.

Additional evidence from previous research further supports the outcomes of this study. Pham [19] emphasizes that peer feedback not only promotes accuracy but also encourages greater lexical variety during revision, as students are exposed to new vocabulary suggested by peers. Similarly, Dewi and Roki'ah [20] report that peer feedback fosters learner autonomy by encouraging students to take responsibility for evaluating the appropriateness of their own vocabulary choices. These findings are consistent with the increased independence and self monitoring demonstrated by students in the present study, who became more confident in revising their word use. This pattern was evident in the present study as student demonstrated greater independence and self-monitoring, becoming more proactive in revising their word choices without relying solely on teacher direction.

Peer feedback further influenced students' affective engagement with vocabulary learning. As highlighted by Hsu [21], students often feel less intimidated when experimenting with new vocabulary if the feedback comes from peers, which helps reduce anxiety and improves willingness to revise. Likewise, Ningrum and Cahyono [22] found that peer review fosters supportive interaction that builds learner confidence. These insight resonate with student response in this study, many of whom reported feeling more comfortable revising vocabulary after receiving feedback from classmates rather than solely from the teacher.

Although peer feedback offered clear advantages, the process also revelead several challenges in practice. Some students found it difficult to provide accurate and appropriate lexical suggestions, reflecting the concern raised by Kusumaningrum [23] that learners often need explicit training to deliver precise and meaningful feedback. Despite the overall improvement shown by the experimental group, variation in comment quality indicated that peer feedback must be supported by structured guidance to ensure students can contribute effectively and consistently.

Recent empirical evidence suggests that peer feedback can effectively support vocabulary development in EFL settings as long as the feedback is structured and directed toward lexical items. For instance, Ritonga et al. [24] found that students who engaged in peer-assessment outperformed a control group in vocabulary learning, reading comprehension, and motivation. Homayouni [25] found that peer assessment combined with teacher scaffolding improved vocabulary retention and recall significantly more than teacher-led or self-study approaches. These patterns reinforce the notion that peer feedback is most effective when integrated systematically and accompanied by clear instructional support.

The findings of this study reinforce peer feedback as an effective pedagogical strategy for enhancing students' vocabulary mastery, particularly when it is supported by structured guidance and collaborative learning processes. The consistent improvement shown by students suggests that peer review strengthen lexical knowledge while fostering autonomy and deeper engagement with word choice. From a pedagogical perspective, these results imply that teachers should routinely incorporate structured peer review activities into vocabulary instruction, especially in writing baesd tasks where students naturally encounter

lexical decision making. Furthermore, given the growing integration of digital tools in indonesial EFL classrooms, future research may explore how technology mediated peer feedback can be optimized to support long-term vocabulary development and improve the clarity and precision of students' lexical suggestions.

4. CONCLUSION

The quantitative findings of this study show that peer feedback had a meaningful impact on students' vocabulary mastery. Even though both group started with relatively similar levels of vocabulary proficiency, the students who participated in peer feedback activities demonstrated considerably stronger development by the end of the intervention. This overall improvement indocates that peer reviewed learning creates a supportive environment that helps students expand and refine their vocabulary use more effectively than traditional correction alone.

The improvement patterns suggest that peer feedback offered students richer opportunities to engage critically with vocabulary. By analyzing their peers' work, students became more attentive to word selection, lexical appropriateness, and accuracy. This reciprocal process helped students identify mistakes they often overlook in their own writing, while also encouraging them to justify revisions and consider alternative expressions. Compared to one directional teacher correction, peer review fostered a more active and reflective learning experience that supported deeper vocabulary processing.

The pedagogical implications of this findings show that peer feedback is highly suitable as a supplementary strategy in vocabulary instruction. Its collaborative nature encourages students to take greater ownership of their learning, while the structured interaction enables them to negotiate meaning and refine their lexical understanding. While teacher guidance remains important especially in ensuring that feedback remains accurate and constructive peer assessment offers an additional layer of support that can enrich classroom practices. Integrating this approach can make vocabulary learning more participatory and learner centered.

Even so, certain limitations must be acknowledged. The relatively small sample size, the short duration of the intervention, and the focus on a single method of delivering peer feedback all limit the boarder generalizability of the findings. Variability in the quality of students' comments also indicates that not all learners were equally prepared to provide precise lexical suggestions, highlighting the need for systematic trainingin giving effective feedback.

Despite these constaints, this study faced several constraints including the limited duration of the intervention and the varying levels of students' ability to provide accurate lexical comments, it still offers meaningful insights into the role of peer feedback in vocabulary development. The findings illustrate that structured peer-review activities do more than improve lexical accuracy, they also foster learners confidence, engagement, and sense of responsibility toward their own progress. Through collaborative exchange, students became more attentive to word choice and meaning, and this heightened awareness contributed to clearer, more precise vocabulary use. Such outcomes underscore the

pedagogical value of peer interaction in EFL classrooms, particularly when teachers provide guidance that helps students refine the quality of their feedback.

Based on these findings, future research could expand the scope of peer feedback investigations by extending the treatment period, including broader and more diverse leraner groups, and integrating digital tools that allow for richer commentary and iterative revision. It would also be valuable to examine how different modes of peer feedback such as audio-based responses, collaborative online editing, or vocabulary tasks embedded within real communicative contetxs, shape learners' lexical gains. Exploring these dimensions would deepen our understanding of how peer feedback practices can be optimized and adapted across various EFL settings, making them more scalable, sustainable, and effective for long term vocabulary improvement.

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