

UTILIZING MEMES FOR VOCABULARY LEARNING DEVELOPMENT: EFL SENIOR HIGH SCHOOL STUDENTS' VIEWPOINTS

*Pemanfaatan Meme untuk Pengembangan Pembelajaran Kosakata: Pandangan
Siswa SMA EFL*

Callista Amanda^a, K. M. Widi Hadiyanti^b

^{a,b} Atma Jaya Catholic University of Indonesia,
Sudirman St. 51 Jakarta 12930,
Indonesia, Telp. 087808487655,

e-mail: callista.amanda02@gmail.com^a, widi.hadiyanti@atmajaya.ac.id^b

Abstract

The current era, the advancement of technology, digital media, and its contents have become more relevant in teaching and learning activities. One that is close to EFL students and applicable to overcome their problems dealing with vocabulary development is memes. This research aims to investigate the effectiveness of using memes, the ways this activity helps the 26 twelfth graders learn vocabulary with the reasons behind it. This research employed mixed methods. Vocabulary pre and post-tests were exploited to find out the effectiveness of utilizing memes for the students' learning. A questionnaire consisting of eleven statements and five open-ended questions was employed to detect the students' thoughts about the aspects stated and further explanation on how memes influence their vocabulary learning. Using t-tests and descriptive analyses, it was found that exploiting memes can effectively improve students' EFL vocabulary learning, with the mentioned aspects and reasons revealed in their responses to the questionnaire.

Keywords: EFL, meme, senior high school, students' viewpoint, vocabulary learning

Abstrak

Pada era sekarang, kemajuan teknologi, media digital, beserta konten-kontennya semakin relevan dalam kegiatan belajar mengajar. Salah satu yang dekat dengan siswa pembelajar bahasa inggris dan dapat diterapkan untuk mengatasi permasalahan dalam pengembangan kosakata bahasa inggris mereka adalah meme. Penelitian ini bertujuan untuk menyelidiki efektivitas penggunaan meme, serta bagaimana kegiatan ini membantu 26 siswa kelas dua belas mempelajari kosakata bahasa inggris beserta alasan di baliknya. Penelitian ini menggunakan odel mix methode. Tes kosakata sebelum dan sesudah pelaksanaan pembelajaran dipakai untuk mengetahui efektivitas penggunaan meme dalam pembelajaran siswa. Sebuah kuesioner yang terdiri dari sebelas pernyataan dan lima pertanyaan terbuka digunakan untuk mengetahui pemikiran siswa mengenai aspek-aspek yang disebutkan serta penjelasan lebih lanjut tentang bagaimana meme mempengaruhi pembelajaran kosakata mereka. Menggunakan analisis uji-t juga analisis deskriptif, ditemukan bahwa eksploitasi meme dapat secara efektif meningkatkan pembelajaran kosakata bahasa inggris siswa, disertai dengan aspek beserta alasannya terungkap dalam tanggapan mereka terhadap kuesioner

Kata-kata kunci: Bahasa Inggris sebagai bahasa asing [EFL], meme, sekolah menengah atas, sudut pandang siswa, pembelajaran kosakata

INTRODUCTION

The usage of technology and its content are inevitable in this era of digitalization. With the massive consumption of internet content, materials are adopted and adapted to help

educators and learners in the process of teaching and learning. A study conducted by Merkt et al. (2011) showed that the effectiveness of learning using media such as videos was comparable to or even superior to traditional textbooks. With exposure to these media technologies, it is likely for teachers to utilize other Internet media. One of the examples of using the Internet is employing meme, which is also defined as an idea of relaying cultural elements or imitations (Dawkins, 1976). However now, the definition of meme has gained more additional meanings.

The utilization of media as context has been proven effective in the process of vocabulary learning (Krashen, 2004; Komachali & Khodareza, 2012; Fajariani, 2018; Zarfsaz & Yeganehpour, 2021). Conservely, the traditional method such as memorization cards (Acha & Kurnia, 2021) might be considered no longer effective due to the low enjoyment and low retention results if not used daily by the students. This is due to the ever-changing ways the students in this generation, known as the “digital natives” learn in different ways from the “digital immigrants”. As educators, we need to adapt our ways of teaching (Prensky, 2001).

According to Prensky (2001), the people who are living in an era where computers, video games, and the Internet have existed are referred to as “digital natives” individuals. In his article "Digital Natives, Digital Immigrants," Prensky explains that “digital natives” absorb information differently and have a distinct culture and language compared to “digital immigrants” who were born before widespread internet access and had to adapt to the digital age. Hence, the students in this generation are acknowledged as the ‘digital natives.’

In the past, there were a couple of studies that utilized memes in the classrooms, such as, using memes as media of teaching and learning to increase students’ motivation (Purnama, 2017; Kayali & Altuntas, 2021), their participation (Purnama, 2017), effectiveness of using memes in vocabulary learning (Kayali & Altuntas, 2021; Aedo & Millafilo, 2022). However, there were only a few studies investigating the effectiveness of utilizing memes in creating and sharing activities, specifically for senior high school levels. Therefore, this research intends to integrate the utilization of familiar media for the ‘digital native’ students, which are memes to learn English vocabulary.

The scopes and limitations of the study cover, among others, the list of vocabulary used in the current study. It was based on the Academic Vocabulary List (AVL) proposed by Gardner and Davies (2013) covering 65% of the first 3,000 high frequency words used in English. However, the number of words selected in this study was limited to 20 words from the first 500 words in AVL. This research is limited to the grade 12 senior high school ELF learners, located in Tangerang. In this research, memes were utilized in meme creation activity where the students form a group to make captions of memes in the form of pictures taken from Internet and digital sources using various words selected. The second one was the presentation where the students would share the relation of the memes and the words used in the captions to the others. Several topics were also selected to help the students in creating meme, they are families, friendships, dream jobs, schools, and social conditions. The data collection for the students’ opinion was through questionnaire only and due to constraint on time, no interviews were conducted.

The objective of the current study is to investigate the utilization of memes for English vocabulary learning from the point of view of EFL learners, targeted towards senior high school level students. This study provides some insights to see if memes are beneficial in developing EFL vocabulary learning, offering benefits for educators to

facilitate students' learning, and researchers in the field. Educators can try to integrate memes into their teaching methods, adding an element of fun and creativity to the learning process. This way of learning not only enhances vocabulary retention but also provides a familiar and enjoyable learning medium for the students. Additionally, this research sheds light on the effectiveness of memes in vocabulary acquisition for EFL learners, paving ways for further investigation into their applications in language classrooms. Future studies are recommended to dig deeper into the implementations of memes as teaching media to utilize in language classes.

THEORITICAL BASIC

The concept of "meme" was introduced by Dawkins (1976) in his book "The Selfish Gene". Derived from the Greek word "mimeme", meaning 'to imitate', memes are defined as cultural transmissions that replicate like genes. Dynel (2016) expands this definition, describing memes as creations that generate countless variations through imitation, remixing, and widespread use by the participants. Memes were also signified as beliefs, symbols, and behaviors spread through imitation, often facilitated by the internet (Kayali & Altuntas, 2021). To conclude, memes are cultural ideas, symbols, and behaviors that are produced in many ways and imitated by their participants. Memes can appear in various formats, including images, GIFs, and videos, though they are most commonly images (Milosavljević, 2020).

English is a globally dominant language and learning it has become crucial for effective communication in various contexts. Wilkins, as cited in Thornsbury (2002), emphasized that without vocabulary knowledge, effective communication is impossible. Harmer (2007) highlighted the urgency for EFL learners to communicate with English speakers in foreign nations, whether as tourists or in business contexts. Vocabulary is fundamental in mastering listening, reading, speaking, and writing skills (Sihotang, 2017). Consequently, acquiring English vocabulary is essential for EFL learners to enhance their language skills and interact in modern society.

EFL Senior high school students should learn the 3,000 most frequently used words to understand the fundamental and spoken language (Nation, 2013; Thornsbury, 2002). Mustafa (2019) found that these high-frequency terms dominated the Indonesian national test texts for senior high school students. Gardner and Davies (2013) identified that 65% of these 3,000 words are used in academic contexts, serving as the basis for the vocabulary in this study. However, it was impossible to cover thousands of words in a single session, so only 20 words were selected to be assessed in the current research.

Nation (2013) proposes two methods for learning vocabulary: receptive learning and productive learning. Receptive learning involves recognizing words and understanding their meanings through reading and listening. Whereas productive learning involves using words in written or spoken form to retain their meanings. Nation (2013) provides a detailed breakdown of what it means to "know" a word, covering aspects such as form, meaning, and use.

If implemented appropriately, the implementation of memes as a pedagogical tool has proven to be beneficial in language learning. Following the implementation of memes, Altukruni (2022) has made a guideline for memes to be implemented in language classrooms. 1) The learning objective, topic, and the learners' age, gender, culture, proficiency levels, and knowledge of the target culture should be considered before integrating memes into learning. The students may understand and acknowledge the

information in the words equivalent to their proficiency level; 2) the level of humor and the amount of information they contain should be according to the desired objectives. Too much humor and information will hinder the process of language learning, as sometimes the desired learning outcomes will not be achieved; 3) memes can be adapted to the curriculum such as in-class rules, PowerPoint Presentations, and introducing new content in ice-breaking or warm-up activities; 4) memes can be used to summarize a long chapter and stories. Memes can simplify exposition to improve students' retention to the information by showing a simple concept in just a picture, caption, or video; 5) memes may not be able to solve a difficult problem, however, it may simplify the explanation of difficult vocabulary into a mere sentence or picture references making students able to retain the language and learn while having fun; 6) In meme creation activity, the learners can make it to explain a concept, implement new vocabulary in a sentence, and practice their writing. An instructor must make sure to provide information on memes and instructions on what the memes should be like. An example of a meme and creation tools should be specified to ensure that the expected memes they produced aligned with the objectives. In addition, Suswandari (2021) suggested that learning memes should be visually attractive, simple, and invoking reader's interest. Further, Purnama (2017) established a rule to avoid sensitive issues like bullying or body shaming in creating memes which can be sourced from animated scenes, comics, or familiar pictures.

Several studies have explored the practical implementation of memes in EFL classrooms. Research has shown that memes can increase students' motivation and participation (Purnama, 2017; Kayali & Altuntas, 2021) and improve vocabulary learning (Kayali & Altuntas, 2021; Aedo & Millafilo, 2022). These studies found that students had a positive perception of learning with memes, finding it enjoyable and effective in various aspects of learning.

Boonkongsaen (2012) identified factors influencing vocabulary learning, including individual learner factors (belief, attitude, motivation, language learning experience) as well as social and situational factors (field of study, course type, class level, gender, language learning environment). In this study, the focus was on senior high school students learning vocabulary through memes, specifically in the context of creating and sharing captions, following the Indonesian 2013 curriculum (C.13). This curriculum promotes student-centered learning and active participation through a scientific approach (Efriza et al., 2022). Brack (2022) linked meme creation and sharing activities to Higher Order Thinking Skills (HOTS) in Bloom's Taxonomy. During these activities, students applied vocabulary to create captions for memes and elaborated on the connections between the words and images, enhancing their HOTS and aligning with the Indonesian curriculum's goals.

Overall, the integration of memes in EFL classrooms supports productive and receptive vocabulary learning. Students engage in creating and presenting their memes in which these activities will develop their vocabulary through productive learning. These activities also help them not only recognize words but also use them in sentences. While the receptive learning is done through engaging in other students' presentations, as the students learn the words, their meanings, and how they are applied in sentences through meme creations and elaborations. These develop a deeper understanding and retention of vocabulary.

METHOD

This research employed mixed methods, a combination of quantitative and qualitative data collections, to fulfill its objective. The quantitative data were the results of the pre-test, post-test, and Likert-scale questionnaire, while responses to the open-ended questions in the questionnaire were used as the qualitative data. There were 26 grade 12 EFL students majoring in science from a private senior high school participating in this research. They were in their second semester, learning the topic of 'caption' which supported the activities implemented. A timeline was discussed with the English teacher to adjust the teaching schedule. The pre-test, post-test, activities of creating and presenting the memes, and the questionnaire were tried out before the students from a different class. Then, were modified according to the feedback got. Lesson plans were also made to facilitate the data collection.

The words used in the pre-test and post-test were based on the AVL by Gardner and Davies (2013). From the list of 500-high frequency words, 20 of them were randomly selected for learning. There were 2 parts of the tests in which the words were used as the options. The first part of the pre-test was the gap-filling test, related to the usage of the words by filling in the sentences with the appropriate words. The second focused on the meanings, matching the vocabulary with the definitions given in English, sourced from the Oxford English Dictionary (OED) online directory. The words from part one in the pretest were put on the second part of the post-test, and vice versa. A similar kind of test was also conducted by Aedo and Millafilo (2022), by reversing the words in the pre-test and post-test. The whole test was in the form of pen-paper to ease the supervision in class.

The statements in the first part of the questionnaire were adapted from Apriliani's (2021) thematic analysis about students' perception of learning vocabulary using Quizlet. There were 11 statements, each with the value to analyze ranging from 1 to 4: ranging from "strongly disagree" to 'strongly agree.' Meanwhile, the open-ended questions were adapted from Purnama (2017) with 5 questions to enhance further elaborations from the statements provided before.

The data collection followed a pre-experimental design (Nunan, 1992), wherein treatment was administered to a single group undergoing pre-test and post-test evaluations. The collection process went through three sessions, spanning three weeks in total. A pre-test was administered at the beginning of the activity, with students individually completing the test within a 30-minute timeframe. Subsequently, a class discussion was initiated, focusing on the significance of vocabulary acquisition and the integration of memes in the learning process by utilizing a presentation created through Canva, meme concepts, referencing Dawkins (1976) were introduced. This included meme examples, guidelines for meme creation, and topics to help facilitate students' caption development. Following this, students formed groups tasked with crafting two captions for designated words, utilizing the provided vocabulary and images sourced from the Internet or personal collections, catering to the specified topic areas of family, school life, friendships, dream jobs, and social conditions. In the second session, students presented their crafted memes, elaborating the meanings of assigned words, depicted images, and the relation between captions and selected visuals. After that, a 30-minute post-test was administered, followed by a feedback questionnaire via Google Form to gauge students' reflections on the activities.

Upon grading, the scores from pre-tests and post-tests for each student were tabulated in Microsoft Excel to facilitate comparison between pre- and post-treatment, then, were analyzed using SPSS Statistics version 23. Further analysis involved paired

sample t-tests, as recommended by Sugiyono (2013) comparing related samples to assess differences between pre-test and post-test data.

The questionnaire responses were categorized into quantitative and qualitative segments. Quantitative data was the Likert-scale responses in the first section of the questionnaire, initially recorded in a Google Spreadsheet via Google Form. These responses were next imported into SPSS version 23 for analysis using Descriptive Statistics. They were grouped into three categories: students’ opinions on vocabulary knowledge acquisition through meme-based learning, attitudes toward meme-based learning, and views on the future utility of memes as learning aids. The second section of the questionnaire consisted of qualitative data. Respondents provided answers to five open-ended questions, with analysis results presented in tables. Responses to the initial questions were categorized as positive or negative statements, while subsequent questions were grouped into “yes”, “unsure”, and “no” answers, accompanied by the reasons. The final question was related to categorizing proposed topic ideas and tallying their frequencies of mentions among students.

DISCUSSION

The discussions are presented into two parts, the pre-test and post-test results and questionnaire results. The tables illustrate the findings and interpret the data. In the end of discussion, the examples of memes created by the students are also provided.

Pre-test and Post-test Results

The findings from comparing the results of the pre-test and post-test answered the first research question whether vocabulary learning development for EFL senior high school learners was effective or not after the utilization of memes in class. The paired sample T-Test was employed to find the mean differences between the overall pre-test and post-test results. In this test, the P-value was used to determine the statistical significance of the data. The P-value helps decide whether to reject or accept the null hypothesis, with a threshold value typically set at 0.05. If the P-value is less than 0.05, the null hypothesis is rejected, indicating acceptance of the alternative hypothesis. The null hypothesis (H0) suggests no significant difference, effect, or relationship among the variables studied, whereas the alternative hypothesis (Ha) indicates a significant difference, effect, or relationship. Table 1 below presents the descriptive findings of the pre-test and post-test results.

Table 1
Paired Samples Statistic

		Mean	N	Std. Deviation	Std. Error Mean
Pair 1	Pre-test	63.27	26	22.536	4.420
	Post-test	75.96	26	18.763	3.680

According to the table 1, the average pre-test score is 63.27 which is actually below the minimum passing score for the English subject at the school. Whereas the average post-test score is 75.96. This also means that on average, the students managed to get a passing score of 75 (slightly above it), with an increase of 12.96. Further, N represents the total number of participants in this study, which is 26 senior high school students. In this table, the standard deviation of the pre-test result is 22.536, meanwhile, the post-test result

is 18.763. This means that the variation of data in the post-test is less varied than that in the pre-test. In addition, the standard error mean of the pre-test result is 4.420, while the standard error of the post-test result is 3.680. This explains that the data from the post-test result is closer to the true population than that in the pre-test. In short, this table 1 shows that the results differ between the pre-test and post-test, with the post-test having an increase in average score than that in the pre-test.

Table 2
Paired Samples Test

		Paired Differences				t	df	Sig. (2-tailed)	
		Mean	Std. Deviation	Std. Error Mean	95% Confidence Interval of the Difference				
						Lower	Upper		
Pair 1	Pre-test – Post-test	-12.692	13.132	2.575	-17.997	-7.388	-	25	.000
							4.928		

Table 2 is the results of paired sample test that depicts the differences between the pre-test and post-test results. The average difference between the pre-test and post-test is valued as negative, which is -12.692. This means the average score on the pre-test is lower than that in the post-test. The standard deviation of the pair is 13.132, while the standard error mean is 2.575. The 95% confidence interval is ranged between -17.997 and -7.388. The T-value is also valued as negative which signifies that on average, the result of the pre-test is lower than that of the post-test. The degree of freedom is 25. The significance (2-tailed) value is 0.000, which is less than 0.05. Therefore, in this case, the null hypothesis (Ho) is rejected, and the alternative hypothesis (Ha) is accepted. Since the Ha is accepted, we can conclude that there is a significant improvement of the students in the post-test after learning vocabulary by creating and sharing memes in class.

Table 3
Tests Descriptive Statistics

		Mean	Std. Deviation
Test Types	Pre/Post-test		
Gap-filling	Pre-test	7.31	2.413
	Post-test	8.15	2.148
Word-matching	Pre-test	5.35	2.770
	Post-test	7.04	2.144

Table 3 shows the results of the respective parts of the tests. Several interesting aspects were found in the results of two sections of the tests which were the gap-filling and word-matching tests. The students scored an average of 7.31 in the gap-filling pre-test and 8.15 in the post-test results. For the word-matching results, the students scored an average of 5.35 on the pre-test and 7.04 on the post-test. So, in comparison, the mean scores between both tests, the score on the word matching test is generally lower than that in the gap-filling test.

This leads to the consideration that the gap-filling test which is involved in a productive aspect of learning vocabulary due to the utilization of writing, is easier than that in the word matching test which is the receptive aspect that is pairing the words with the given meanings. This finding matched with the students’ statements during the try-out session saying that they found word matching test was more difficult than gap-filling one. On the contrary, this opposes Nation’s (2013) theory of receptive learning as being easier than productive. It was found in his study that the learners scored higher in the receptive vocabulary test than in the production part. A possible reason why the result was so, might be because in the gap-filling test, the students probably saw the sentences as the context to help them sense the appropriate usage of the words. However, in the word-matching test, the students might need to associate the definitions of the words with the corresponding words as well as distinguish other words with different meanings. In addition, the definitions used in the tests were not in their first language, which makes it harder for the students to understand the meanings of the statements.

Regarding the 'grammatical functions' on productive skill from the gap-filling test, it was discovered that the students primarily missed the correct usage of the words. When they were used in a present perfect phrase, the word "establish", for instance, should be spelled as "established". Due to the students' lack of attention to proper grammatical usage, only the base word was provided in the options. However, because grammatical points were not the primary focus of this study, but the vocabulary aspects, utilizing base words was acceptable, as a result, a point was earned when the students used the appropriate words to answer.

Questionnaire Results

Meanwhile, the findings of the questionnaire analysis gave insights into how the utilization of memes helps EFL senior high school students learn vocabulary including the reasons behind the students’ opinion about them. Their perceptions of employing memes in vocabulary learning yielded an overall positive outlook from the participants. The summary of the findings of the Likert-scale questionnaire can be seen in the table 4 below in the form of rankings.

Table 4
Ranking of the Ways in Which Memes Can Help Students in Learning Vocabulary

Rank	Category	Mean	Median	Mode
1	fun enjoyable	3.62	4	4
2	interesting	3.46	3.5	4
3	easy to understand	3.31	3	4
4	Memes help the students understand the definitions of words.	3.12	3	3
	Memes help the students with how to use the words in the sentences.		3	3
5	stimulating	3.04	3	3
6	motivating	2.96	3	3
7	challenging for me to improve my vocabulary learning	2.92	3	3
8	important	2.77	3	3

It can be seen from table 4 that the two highest mean scores of the categories are “fun” and “enjoyable”, with an average value of 3.62. Meanwhile, the lowest mean value is held by the ‘important’ category with a value of 2.77. The highest median value is from the category of being “fun” and “enjoyable” which is 4.00 (for “strongly agree”) and the lowest median value is 3.00 (meaning “agree”) for the categories of “easy to understand”, “helps the students understand the definition of the words”, “helps the students to use the words in the sentences”, “stimulating”, “motivating”, “important”, and “challenging for me to improve”. For the highest mode value is 4 (strongly agree) come from 4 categories, which are “easy to understand”, “interesting”, “fun”, and “enjoyable”. While the lowest mode value is 3 (agree) resembling the 4 categories, they are “helps the students understand the definitions of the words”, “helps the students to use the words in the sentences”, “stimulating”, “motivating”, “important”, and “challenging for me to improve”.

The equally high values of mean, median, and mode from ‘fun’ and ‘enjoyable’ factors suggested that these two aspects most students strongly agreed with meme utilization in the classroom. The students found it this way might be because of the content of the humorous memes they presented in class dealing with the provided vocabulary. This was emphasized later in the open-ended questionnaire about the student’s general opinion of learning vocabulary using memes. This supports the previous studies related to humor in learning using memes (Aedo & Millafilo, 2022; Kayali & Altuntas, 2021; Purnama, 2017). The next most agreeable aspect is ‘interesting’ which may be due to its unusual nature. Memes are generally not that commonly found in learning media, especially in school environments. It is similar to Aedo’s and Millafilo’s (2022) study where the students also found it intriguing when memes were used in language learning. The third aspect the students agreed with was that memes were ‘easy to understand,’ based on the contexts.

The memes aided them in learning vocabulary. The pictures served as the context to give further understanding of how the words could be used. The following aspects related to the utility of memes as they facilitated the students in ‘understanding the definition of words’ and ‘using the words in the sentences’ since in the activity the student’s were tasked with finding the meanings of the words and applying them on the captions along with the pictures. Kayali and Altuntas (2021), also revealed that using the words in the sentences helped the students remember the words with their meanings. The next aspect is ‘stimulating’, as during the observation, the students’ interest was stimulated when they paid attention to their friends’ memes presentations.

After that, the aspects of being ‘motivating’ and ‘challenging for the students to improve vocabulary learning’ almost have similarity in average value. In spite of the fact that the scoring was lower than 3 on average, based on the median and mode value, many of the students still found the statements agreeable. Similar to what Aedo and Millafilo (2022) stated, memes improved students’ intrinsic motivation. The least agreed statement was that the participants thought that memes were ‘important’ in learning. This factor accumulated the mean of the students seeing that there were other media other than memes that could facilitate their English vocabulary learning.

Table 5
Students' Positive Statements

No.	Questions	Opinions and Elaborations
1.	What is your opinion about using memes for vocabulary learning? Elaborate your answer.	- fun - interesting - easy to understand. - enjoyable - motivating - help in learning the words in sentences - help in learning the definition of the words Other keywords: - effective - creative - explore new words - unique - can be used as an ice breaking - improve grammar
2.	Do memes help you to learn vocabulary? Why/why not?	- fun - enjoyable - It makes us understand the words first before using them. - interesting and not boring - help in discovering new words - pictures help to understand. - Meme is a familiar medium. - love memes
3.	Is it enjoyable to make memes using the vocabulary? Explain why/not.	- funny - intriguing - relatable content - help in arranging sentence using new words - new words discovery - rewarding once they manage to create the memes - creative not boring - enjoy that they can see other students' meme
4.	Would you like to have this kind of classroom activity for another topic? Why/why not?	- prefer to learn English through daily conversation (sharing) - fun - enjoyable - study new words and how to use them - relatable moments - not boring

Table 5 shows the results of the answers to the open-ended questions which supported the students' perceptions they responded to the Likert-scale statements. The most occurring reasons regarding the general perceptions of utilizing memes in learning vocabulary were also reflected in their ideas dealing with the Likert-scale statements. Students also gave further opinions such as memes utilization "was effective", "improved their creativity", "helped them explore new words", "was a unique activity", "could be used as ice-breaking", as well as "improved their grammar". The second question revealed the way memes helped the students learn vocabulary when using memes. According to Aeda and Millafilo (2022), comprehending the words and their contexts (memes) will help the students in acquiring words. The unique opinions expressed by the students were that memes helped them with word discovery since they needed to understand the definitions of the words before applying them into the captions. The pictures also helped them

visualize the contexts. And since some students were already familiar with memes as the media, they found it relatable toward the media.

The next questions invoked the student's opinions on the enjoyment of using memes to learn vocabulary. A student found it rewarding once they managed to create the memes, some discovered the activities were creative. One student noticed it was enjoyable that they could see other student's creations. This is like the students' opinion in Purnama's (2017) also Kayali's and Altuntas' (2021) uncovering in which the students also liked seeing other students' memes. The final question is related to the future implementation of memes. Those who wanted meme activities to be implemented in other areas expressed their preference in conversational skill (sharing) to learn the language. They also stated that the activities were not boring because in the previous learning, usually they only learned through books. This finding mirrored Aeda and Millafilo's (2022) study where the students found it unusual that memes were utilized in language learning.

Table 6
Students' Interests and Suggestions in Memes Utilization in English Language Class

No.	Answer	Frequency (f)	Topic Suggestions (Frequency)
1.	Yes	18	another vocabulary (2) grammar (1)
2.	Unsure	3	advertisement/poster (1) politics (1)
3.	No	5	activities related to school/social life (7) no idea (14)

Table 6 revealed the student's opinions on whether they wanted to use memes in another topic in the classroom. It was found that 18 students wanted to use memes again in the classroom, 3 answered "unsure", and 5 answered "no". In other words, 70 % of the students wanted to integrate memes into English language learning again as they thought it was an uncommon but enjoyable activity that held some relatable jokes behind the memes. Some preferred to learn English through the sharing activity, referring to the presentations conducted in the class. In the end, they gave out some suggestions on the topics that should be covered using memes. A total of 14 students either left the question blank or answered with "no idea."

Those who provided answers offered several thematic suggestions to be implemented in the classroom. Seven of the students stated that they would like this activity with a topic related to "social life" or "education" in which these topics are closely related to them. There were also 2 students who answered to teach another kind of vocabulary learning. One student had an idea for memes to be utilized in teaching 'advertisement/poster'. Another student also suggested that s/he would like to express a topic related to politics, which was "the dark side of government". Other than vocabulary, one student also gave their opinion on memes to be used in teaching 'grammar'.

Table 7
Students' Negative Statements

No.	Questions	Opinions and Elaborations
1.	What is your opinion about using memes for vocabulary learning? Elaborate your answer.	- The new vocabulary was difficult. - It was hard to explain the memes.
2.	Do memes help you to learn vocabulary? Why/why not?	- Sometimes the memes are not being used correctly. - not proficient enough in English - prefer to use movies and games
3.	Is it enjoyable to make memes using the vocabulary? Explain it.	- difficult - unfamiliar words - The words in memes are difficult to understand. - not much freedom in choosing words
4.	Would you like to have this kind of classroom activity for another topic? Why/why not?	- not everyone has the same capacity - not every topic can be suited to this method - do not understand how the meme works - got difficult words - cannot make a good meme

Despite the positive perceptions, there were also some drawbacks to the activities. Table 7 describes the difficulties experienced by the students and other concerns for the activities. One of them was the restriction of using the 20 selected words from Academic Vocabulary List by Gardner and Davies (2013). Some students found it hard to create sentences using the selected words. Sometimes students who were also familiar with memes noticed that the memes created by other students were not properly used. A student also raised some concerns regarding the student's proficiency and topic suitability if memes were going to be used in another activity. In this research, the students were working in groups so they could help each other during the activities, but it would be a different matter in dealing with individual work. Related to media to learn vocabulary, a student mentioned that they preferred to use movies and games as other alternatives. For future implementation of meme activity, some also got discouraged they could not make a good meme, whether it was because of not understanding of how the memes work or difficulty in matching the words with the thematic of the memes. These factors need to be considered for future implementation of using memes in language classrooms.

According to Boonkongsaen (2012), class level affects the students' learning styles. In C.13, "caption" was one of the topics taught in the 12th grade. By the time the students began doing the activities, they had already learned how to create captions and were capable of completing the assignment. However, during the sharing phase, it was discovered that not all students could explain the visuals for their memes and the definitions of the words in the captions fluently. This was most likely due to the activity being related to productive skills, assisting in the development of their HOTS (Brack, 2022). Another notable observation was that the students were amused by the memes presented by their friends as they found them relatable to their daily life. This matched their opinion in the questionnaire when they thought that learning using memes was enjoyable. In turn, the memes presented were relatable to them as they stated in response to the reason, they enjoy learning vocabulary using memes. Below are a few examples of the memes made by the students.

The presentation session was interesting because several of the memes developed by the participants contained convention and mechanics mistakes, which were corrected during the evaluation session. Figure 1A and 1B are good examples of memes without convention nor mechanical errors. Figure 1A used the word “cite” as the selected word and figure 1B the word “broad”.

Examples of Memes Created by the Students

When you cite an
information from untrusted
source



Figure 1.A
An Example of a Meme

Me having broad choices to cheat
on my homework:



Figure 1.B
Another Example of a Meme

Examples of Memes with Errors

Me confidently after i employed the
smartest kid in a group work (i didnt
even contribute) :



Figure 2.A
**An Example of a Meme with a Convention
Error**



Figure 2.B
An Example of a Meme with a Spelling Error

Figure 2A used the base word “employ” to be used in the caption. From the caption it was identified that it has a minor mistake in which the letter “i” should be written in capital letters as the subject ‘I’. In Figure 2B the selected word was “perceive”, there is a spelling error on the word “perceive.”. However, some grammatical and conventional

errors were accepted since memes, by definition, defy grammar standards, express a unique message behind the context, and invoke viewers' curiosity (Suswandari, 2021). For example, meme in Figure 3A with a base word "substantial" has correct caption writing. However, the phrase in the picture has full capitalization to give the message of the intense amount of dining given by the grandmother. Another example is on Figure 3B with "fundamental" as the selected word. The meme has an intentional inconsistency of capitalization to give the message of madness behind the context.

Examples of Memes with Intentional Errors



Figure 3A
An Example of a Meme with Full Capitalization in the Picture



Figure 3B
An Example of a Meme with Inconsistency Capitalization

CONCLUSION

In conclusion, utilizing memes can successfully increase English vocabulary learning in high school students. This was determined by the examination of the pre-test and post-test. The overall post-test scores improved significantly following the activities.

Dealing with the ways memes can help the students in learning vocabulary, respective aspects are mentioned with reasons provided from the questionnaire. The students have a strong attitude toward meme creation and sharing in terms of 'fun' and 'enjoyable' characteristics because of their familiarity and humor. Furthermore, they indicated that incorporating memes into language learning is 'interesting' because they do not typically engage in such activities. The students then agreed that the memes assisted them not only in 'understanding the definition' and 'use of sentences', but also in discovering new terms. Memes make vocabulary 'easier to learn' by providing context through images. Sharing memes also 'stimulated' their desire to learn words. The pupils were 'motivated' and 'challenged' throughout the program because of the unfamiliar words and activities. The last being 'important' due to the variations of media that can be utilized in vocabulary learning.

This research further explores the potential of memes as effective tools for vocabulary acquisition in EFL learning, emphasizing their use in fun and creative activities. Due to limitations, such as the vocabulary theme, other variety of topical words may also be considered for memes to be fully utilized in the learning. In addition, as this

research only focused on group-based activities, individually done activities using memes can also be considered in future study in learning vocabulary. Image was the only format used in this research so another research using other variations, such as GIFs and videos can be implemented.

Future suggestions for incorporating memes into language learning methods for ice-breaking activities, and grammar learning. As digitalization holds more influence on education, the study encourages educators to adapt teaching approaches to suit students' preferences (Prensky, 2001) and accommodating the Merdeka Curriculum which recently has been applied to schools. This also highlighted the usage of memes as a pedagogical medium that can enhance language competencies synchronously or asynchronously in EFL classrooms.

DAFTAR PUSTAKA

- Acha, H., & Kurnia, K. (2021). The Vocabulary Memorisation Strategy Before Entering the Classroom And The Usage of the Memorisation Card. *Eternal (English, Teaching, Learning, and Research Journal)*, 7(2), Article 2.
- Altukruni, R. (2022). A Systematic Literature Review on the Integration of Internet Memes in EFL/ESL Classrooms. *Arab World English Journal*, 13, 237–250. <https://doi.org/10.24093/awej/vol13no4.15>
- Aedo, P., & Millafilo, C. (2022). Increasing vocabulary acquisition and retention in EFL Young learners through the use of multimodal texts (memes). *Colombian Applied Linguistics Journal*, 24(2). <https://doi.org/10.14483/22487085.18312>
- Aprilani, D. N. (2021). Students' Perception in Learning English Vocabulary Through Quizlet. *Journal of English Teaching*, 7(3), 343–353. <https://doi.org/10.33541/jet.v7i3.3064>
- Boonkongsaen, N. (2012). *Factors Affecting Vocabulary Learning Strategies: A Synthesized Study*.
- Brack, T. (2022). *HOT and LOT in Bloom's Taxonomy*. Maneuvering the Middle. Retrieved from <https://www.maneuveringthemiddle.com/higher-level-thinking-with-blooms-taxonomy/>.
- Dawkins, R. (1976). *The selfish gene*. New York, Oxford University Press.
- Direktorat SMA. (2020). Modul Bahasa inggris kelas XII KD 3.3 Dan 4 - Kemdikbud. Retrieved from https://repositori.kemdikbud.go.id/22080/1/XII_Bahasa-Inggris_KD-3.3_4.3_Final.pdf
- Dynel, M. (2016) "I has seen image macros!" Advice animal memes as visual-verbal jokes [J]. *International Journal of Communication*, 10, 660-688.
- Efriza, D., Syarif, H., & Zainil, Y. (2022). The Implementation of EFL Curriculum in Indonesia: A Literature Review. *Proceeding of International Conference on Language Pedagogy (ICOLP)*, 2(1), Article 1.
- Fajariani, I. (2018). STUDENTS' PERCEPTION ON THE MEDIA FLASHCARD USED BY TEACHER IN TEACHING ENGLISH AT SMA NEGERI 2 BARRU, 24.
- Gardner, D., & Davies, M. (2013). A new academic vocabulary list. *Applied Linguistics*, 35(3), 305–327. <https://doi.org/10.1093/applin/amt015>
- Harmer, J. (2007). *The Practice of English Language Teaching 4th Edition*. London: Pearson Longman.
- Kayali, N. K., & Altuntas, A. (2021). Using Memes in the Language Classroom. *Shanlax International Journal of Education*, 9(3), 155–160. <https://doi.org/10.34293/education.v9i3.3908>
- Komachali, M. E., & Khodareza, M. (2012). The Effect of Using Vocabulary Flash Card on Iranian Pre-University Students' Vocabulary Knowledge. *International Education Studies*, 5(3), p134. <https://doi.org/10.5539/ies.v5n3p134>
- Krashen, S. D. (2004). *The power of reading: Insights from the research*. Libraries Unlimited.

- Merkt, M., Weigand, S., Heier, A., & Schwan, S. (2011). Learning with videos vs. learning with print: The role of interactive features. *Learning and Instruction*, 21(6), 687–704. <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.learninstruc.2011.03.004>
- Milosavljević, I. (2020). The Phenomenon of the Internet Memes as A Manifestation of Communication of Visual Society Research of the Most Popular and the Most Common Types. *Media Studies And Applied Ethics*, 1. <https://doi.org/10.46630/msae.1.2020.01>
- Mustafa, F. (2019). English Vocabulary Size of Indonesian High School Graduates: Curriculum Expectation and Reality. *IJELTAL (Indonesian Journal of English Language Teaching and Applied Linguistics)*, 3(2), . <https://doi.org/10.21093/ijeltal.v3i2.278>
- Nation, P. (2013). *Learning vocabulary in another language*. Cambridge University Press.
- Nunan, D. (1992). *Research methods in language learning*. Cambridge University Press.
- Prensky, M. (2001). Digital Natives, Digital Immigrants, Part 1. *On The Horizon*, 9, 3-6. <http://dx.doi.org/10.1108/10748120110424816>
- Purnama, A. D. (2017). Incorporating Memes and Instagram to Enhance Students Participation. *LLT Journal: A Journal on Language and Language Teaching*, 20(1). <https://doi.org/10.24071/llt.v20i1.404>
- Sugiyono. (2013). *Metode Penelitian Pendidikan (Pendekatan Kuantitatif, Kualitatif dan R&D)*. Bandung: Alfabeta.
- Suswandari, S., Absor, N. F., & Soleh, M. B. (2021). Meme as a History Learning Media in The Post-Millennial Generation. *Paramita: Historical Studies Journal*, 31(2). <https://doi.org/10.15294/paramita.v31i2.26854>
- Thornbury, S. (2002). *How to teach vocabulary*. Essex: Pearson Education Limited.
- Zarfsaz, E., & Yeganehpour, P. (2021). The Impact of Different Context Levels on Vocabulary Learning and Retention. *Shanlax International Journal of Education*, 9(4), 24–34. <https://doi.org/10.34293/education.v9i4.4049>