

Beyond Numbers: A Qualitative Analysis of Students' Vocabulary Learning Progress Through Weekly Assessment in Weeks 6–8 Of English Speaking 3 Class

Reiner JHG Lawalata

English Departement, STKIP Kristen Wamena, Wamena, Papua Pegunungan, Indonesia
Email: lawalatareiner@gmail.com (Corresponding Author)

ABSTRACT

Vocabulary mastery is essential for English language development, especially for students preparing to become future English teachers. This study explores students' vocabulary learning progress through weekly assessments conducted in Weeks 6–8 of the English Speaking 3 class at STKIP Kristen Wamena. A qualitative approach was applied to investigate students' learning experiences, perceptions, and strategies related to regular and irregular verbs. Nine students from Semester 3, 5, and 7 participated in the study through purposive sampling. Data were collected using semi-structured interviews and supported by weekly vocabulary test documents. Data triangulation was used to strengthen research credibility. The findings reveal that students' learning progress fluctuated across the three weeks. While repeated exposure supported improvement for some students, others experienced difficulty due to limited practice time and reliance on short-term memorization. Weekly vocabulary tests encouraged regular study habits but were insufficient for long-term retention. Therefore, integrating communicative activities, speaking practice, and interactive learning strategies is recommended to enhance vocabulary mastery and speaking performance.

Keywords: Vocabulary learning progress; Weekly vocabulary assessment; regular and irregular verbs; English Speaking class; qualitative research; EFL teacher education

INTRODUCTION

Vocabulary knowledge is widely recognized as one of the most essential components of language learning because it serves as the foundation for communication in speaking, writing, listening, and reading. Without sufficient vocabulary, learners struggle to express ideas, understand messages, and participate effectively in communication activities. According to Nation (2020), vocabulary mastery strongly influences learners' overall language proficiency and communicative competence. Similarly, Schmitt (2020) emphasizes that vocabulary development plays a central role in second language acquisition because words are the primary carriers of meaning in language use.

In the context of English education, vocabulary mastery becomes even more critical for students who are preparing to become future English teachers. English teacher candidates are expected not only to use English accurately but also to model correct language use for their students. Webb, S., & Nation (2020) argue that teachers with strong vocabulary knowledge are better equipped to design meaningful learning activities and provide effective feedback to learners. Therefore, strengthening vocabulary learning among English education students is not

only beneficial for individual academic success but also for the quality of English teaching in the future.

Despite the recognized importance of vocabulary mastery, many English education students still experience serious difficulties in learning vocabulary, especially grammatical word forms such as regular and irregular verbs. At STKIP Kristen Wamena, this problem is evident among students in higher semesters, including Semester 3, 5, and 7. Many students continue to demonstrate limited vocabulary knowledge, particularly in verb usage, which directly affects their speaking performance and grammatical accuracy. This situation is concerning because these students are being prepared to become English teachers who will later teach vocabulary and grammar to school students.

Previous studies have highlighted vocabulary learning difficulties among EFL learners in Indonesian contexts (Laufer, B., & Aviad-Levitzy, 2021; Teng, 2021). However, most existing research focuses on vocabulary size measurement or quantitative test outcomes rather than exploring students' learning experiences and emotional responses to assessment practices. There is a noticeable lack of qualitative studies that investigate how weekly vocabulary assessments influence students' learning processes, struggles, and perceptions. Therefore, this study addresses an important research gap by examining students' lives experiences during weekly vocabulary testing, making this research timely and contextually relevant.

This study aims to explore students' vocabulary learning progress through weekly assessments conducted during Weeks 6–8 of the English Speaking 3 class at STKIP Kristen Wamena. Rather than focusing solely on test scores, this research seeks to understand how students perceive their vocabulary development and how weekly testing contributes to their learning improvement over time. According to Teng (2021), continuous assessment can support vocabulary retention when combined with reflective learning processes, which highlights the importance of investigating how assessment practices shape learning behavior.

In addition, this study aims to identify the learning strategies students use to cope with weekly vocabulary tests, particularly when learning regular and irregular verbs. Understanding these strategies is important because learning approaches directly influence vocabulary retention and language performance (Nation, 2020). Furthermore, this research also explores the impact of weekly vocabulary testing on students' overall English learning experience, including motivation, confidence, and speaking performance.

The findings of this study are expected to provide practical benefits for English lecturers at STKIP Kristen Wamena. By understanding students' perceptions and learning responses to weekly vocabulary assessments, lecturers can evaluate whether frequent testing is effective or whether instructional strategies need adjustment. Webb, S., & Nation (2020) suggest that assessment-driven instruction should be aligned with learners' needs in order to maximize learning outcomes.

Moreover, this study can contribute to the improvement of vocabulary teaching practices by offering insights into students' difficulties and preferred learning strategies. These findings can help lecturers design more student-centered approaches, integrate meaningful vocabulary activities, and improve assessment formats. In the long term, this research can support the development of more effective English teacher preparation programs, particularly in remote and developing educational contexts.

This research is limited to students enrolled in the English Language Department at STKIP Kristen Wamena, specifically those participating in the English Speaking 3 class. The study focuses only on vocabulary learning progress related to regular and irregular verbs as assessed through weekly vocabulary tests conducted in Weeks 6, 7, and 8 of the semester. Furthermore, this study employs a qualitative approach by using interview data and weekly test documents to analyze students' learning experiences. Other aspects of language learning such as pronunciation, listening skills, and writing ability are beyond the scope of this research. By narrowing the focus, this study aims to provide an in-depth understanding of vocabulary learning progress within a specific instructional and institutional context.

METHOD

This study employs a qualitative research approach to explore students' vocabulary learning progress through weekly assessments in the English Speaking 3 class at STKIP Kristen Wamena. The qualitative method is selected because it allows the researcher to obtain an in-depth understanding of students' learning experiences, perceptions, and challenges related to vocabulary mastery, particularly regular and irregular verbs. Rather than focusing solely on numerical test scores, this approach emphasizes students' reflections and interpretations of their learning process. Through interviews, the researcher is able to examine how weekly vocabulary assessments influence students' learning strategies, motivation, and speaking performance during Weeks 6–8 of the semester.

The participants of this study consist of 9 students enrolled in the English Speaking 3 class at the English Language Department of STKIP Kristen Wamena. These students are registered in the odd semester of the 2025/2026 academic year and represent students from Semester 3, 5, and 7. The participants were selected using purposive sampling, as they were actively involved in weekly vocabulary assessments and speaking activities during the research period. This sampling technique ensures that the selected participants are directly relevant to the objectives of the study and have sufficient experience with the weekly vocabulary testing process. Prior to data collection, all participants were informed about the objectives and procedures of the study. They voluntarily agreed to participate and gave permission for their names to be included in the research documentation and discussion of results. Ethical considerations, including transparency and participant consent, were strictly observed throughout the study.

Data were collected through semi-structured interviews using six focused interview questions that were designed to explore students' experiences with weekly vocabulary assessments. The interview questions focused on students' perceptions, learning strategies, progress, and the impact of vocabulary mastery on speaking performance. In addition to interviews, weekly vocabulary test documents from Weeks 6, 7, and 8 were used as supporting data to provide contextual background for students' learning progress. The interviews were conducted after the completion of the vocabulary tests to allow students to reflect on their learning experiences. Each interview was conducted individually to ensure that students could express their opinions freely and honestly.

This study applied data triangulation to enhance the credibility and trustworthiness of the findings. The primary data source consisted of student interview transcripts, while secondary data included weekly vocabulary test results from Weeks 6–8. By comparing students' reflections with their test performance, the researcher was able to gain a deeper understanding of learning progress patterns and challenges. This combination of interview data and assessment documents provided a more comprehensive view of students' vocabulary learning experiences in the English Speaking 3 class.

Ethical principles were strictly applied throughout the research process. All participants were informed about the purpose of the study and their voluntary participation before the interviews were conducted. Students were given the right to withdraw from the study at any time without any academic consequences. The anonymity and confidentiality of participants were maintained by using codes instead of real names in data analysis and reporting. All collected data were used solely for academic research purposes and were securely stored to protect participants' privacy.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

This section presents the findings from weekly vocabulary test results in Weeks 6–8 and qualitative interview data from students in the English Speaking 3 class. The analysis focuses on learning progress, learning strategies, assessment impact, speaking performance, and student perceptions of weekly vocabulary testing.

A. Vocabulary Learning Progress Based on Weekly Test Results (Weeks 6–8)

The weekly vocabulary test results indicate fluctuating learning progress among students. Several students demonstrated strong performance in Week 6, with scores ranging from 90 to 100. For example, Hendrikus Lewar achieved a score of 100, while Derlince Kogoya and Mariana Marian scored 97. These high initial scores suggest that students possessed basic familiarity with vocabulary items related to regular and irregular verbs.

However, a noticeable decline occurred in Week 7 and Week 8 for some participants. For instance, Derlince Kogoya's score decreased from 97 in Week 6 to 63 in Week 7 and further dropped to 57 in Week 8. Similar patterns were observed in other students such as Karel Kolik and Hendrikus Lewar, whose scores declined significantly across the three weeks. This decline may indicate increasing difficulty levels, cognitive overload, or challenges in retaining irregular verb forms over time.

Despite this trend, some students demonstrated improvement. Savira Kosay, for example, increased from 63 in Week 6 to 93 in Week 8, indicating that repeated exposure and practice contributed positively to vocabulary retention. According to Nation (2020) repeated encounters with vocabulary items are essential for long-term retention, which supports the observed improvement among some participants.

B. Students' Perceptions of Weekly Vocabulary Tests

Interview data revealed mixed emotional responses toward weekly vocabulary tests. Most students reported feeling pressured at the beginning of the program but gradually became more familiar with the test format. Several students stated that weekly tests encouraged them to study regularly rather than memorizing vocabulary only before midterm or final examinations.

This finding aligns with Teng (2021) who found that frequent assessment can promote continuous learning habits and improve vocabulary engagement. However, some students also expressed anxiety due to the difficulty of irregular verbs, especially when required to memorize multiple verb forms in a short period. Laufer, B., & Aviad-Levitzky (2021) argue that irregular verb forms often present cognitive challenges for EFL learners due to unpredictable patterns.

C. Learning Strategies Used by Students

Students reported using various strategies to memorize regular and irregular verbs. Common strategies included repetition, writing verb lists, using mobile dictionary applications, creating personal notes, and practicing verb usage in sentences. Some students also mentioned group study and peer discussion as helpful learning techniques. However, they did it inconsistently every week, so the results show unsteady score through up the weeks.

These findings support Schmitt (2020) who emphasizes that vocabulary learning strategies such as repetition and contextual usage significantly enhance word retention. Additionally, Webb, S., & Nation (2020) highlight that active engagement with vocabulary through sentence construction strengthens form-meaning connections, which is crucial for irregular verb mastery.

Despite reporting the use of various learning strategies, the results indicate that most students relied heavily on a single dominant technique, namely short-term memorization. Many

participants practiced memorizing regular and irregular verbs for less than one hour per week, which limited their ability to develop long-term retention and deeper understanding of verb usage. This lack of sustained focus and practice contributed to inconsistent performance and fluctuating weekly scores throughout the research period.

Furthermore, the findings suggest that students tended to prioritize rote memorization rather than combining multiple learning strategies such as spaced repetition, contextual practice, and meaningful sentence production. As a result, their learning process remained surface-level and did not effectively support mastery of irregular verb forms, which require repeated exposure and continuous reinforcement over time.

This result aligns with previous studies indicating that vocabulary learning becomes less effective when students depend solely on short-term memorization without sufficient practice duration. According to Nation (2020) vocabulary acquisition requires repeated encounters and extended practice to ensure stable retention. Therefore, the limited practice time and narrow strategy use observed in this study can be considered major factors contributing to the unstable learning outcomes.

D. Impact of Weekly Tests on Study Behavior and Learning Motivation

Most participants indicated that weekly vocabulary tests changed their study habits. Students reported studying vocabulary more frequently and becoming more disciplined in reviewing learning materials. This behavioral change suggests that weekly assessment functions as a motivational tool that promotes learning responsibility.

According to Panadero, E., Jonsson, A., & Botella (2022), formative assessment practices improve learner self-regulation and motivation when students receive continuous feedback. Similarly, Andrade, H. L., & Brookhart (2020) emphasize that assessment frequency plays a significant role in shaping students' learning routines and academic engagement.

However, interview responses from Questions 4 and 5 revealed that not all students experienced meaningful improvement in their vocabulary ability from Week 6 to Week 8. Several participants admitted that they did not practice consistently outside the classroom due to low motivation and feelings of laziness. As a result, although weekly tests encouraged short-term preparation, they did not always lead to sustained behavioral change or long-term vocabulary development.

In addition, some students reported that learning regular and irregular verbs did not significantly improve their speaking performance during class activities because they rarely applied the verbs in real communication practice. This indicates that limited rehearsal and minimal active use of vocabulary reduced the effectiveness of the learning process. Without

regular speaking practice and repeated exposure, students tended to forget verb forms quickly and struggled to transfer memorized vocabulary into actual spoken communication.

E. Vocabulary Mastery and Speaking Performance

Based on the responses to Interview Question 5, students reported that improved vocabulary mastery, particularly in regular and irregular verbs, helped them speak more confidently during classroom activities. Many participants stated that understanding verb forms enabled them to construct sentences more accurately and respond more quickly during speaking tasks. This indicates that vocabulary knowledge plays an important role in supporting students' oral performance.

However, students also acknowledged that they experienced difficulties in applying this knowledge consistently in real-time speaking situations. Several participants explained that although they understood verb forms in written exercises or examples, they sometimes struggled to recall and use them spontaneously during oral communication. In addition, many students admitted that they were trying to use regular and irregular verbs as much as possible, but their effort was often limited by low motivation and a lack of consistent practice. Some participants reported feeling lazy to memorize verb forms and rarely practiced using them outside the classroom, which resulted in only partial improvement in speaking performance.

These findings support the study by Derakhshan, A., & Shakki (2022), who found a strong relationship between vocabulary knowledge and speaking fluency. Furthermore, Saito, K., Webb, S., Trofimovich, P., & Isaacs (2020) confirmed that lexical competence significantly contributes to oral communication performance in EFL contexts. Nevertheless, the present study suggests that vocabulary knowledge alone is not sufficient to ensure speaking improvement unless it is accompanied by frequent practice and active usage in communicative contexts.

F. Students' Suggestions for Improving Weekly Vocabulary Assessment

Based on the responses to the interview question, "*What suggestions do you have to improve vocabulary learning through weekly assessment in English Speaking class?*", students emphasized the need for more interactive and engaging learning activities. Participants suggested that vocabulary learning would be more effective if weekly tests were combined with interactive activities such as games, group quizzes, speaking-based vocabulary tasks, and the use of digital learning tools. They believed that these activities could make learning more enjoyable and reduce boredom during repetitive testing sessions.

In addition, several students recommended reducing the pressure of memorization by integrating vocabulary practice directly into speaking activities rather than relying solely on written tests. According to the participants, using new vocabulary in real communication contexts

helped them remember words more easily and understand their practical usage. This indicates that students prefer contextual and communicative learning approaches that allow them to apply vocabulary meaningfully instead of focusing only on rote memorization.

These suggestions align with the findings of Alqahtani (2021) who reported that communicative vocabulary activities improve both retention and student engagement. Similarly, Zou, D., & Li (2022) found that digital-supported vocabulary instruction enhances learning outcomes by increasing learner motivation and providing flexible practice opportunities. Therefore, incorporating interactive and technology-assisted strategies into weekly vocabulary assessments may help improve students' learning experiences and overall vocabulary development.

CONCLUSION AND RECOMMENDATION

The findings of this study indicate that weekly vocabulary assessments contribute positively to students' learning discipline and vocabulary awareness. Although some students experienced score fluctuations across Weeks 6–8, repeated exposure to vocabulary items helped several learners improve retention and speaking confidence. Interview data revealed that weekly testing encouraged regular study habits and increased learner responsibility.

However, the results also show that relying solely on written vocabulary tests is not sufficient for mastering complex forms such as irregular verbs. Therefore, it is recommended that weekly vocabulary testing should be maintained but combined with communicative learning strategies such as speaking practice, contextual sentence use, peer discussion, and interactive digital tools. English lecturers at STKIP Kristen Wamena are encouraged to design more balanced assessment models that integrate formative feedback, speaking-based vocabulary activities, and student-centered learning approaches to enhance long-term vocabulary mastery.

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