

IMPROVING VOCABULARY MASTERY USING CULTURE-BASED DICTOGLOSS TECHNIQUE: A QUASI-EXPERIMENTAL STUDY IN INDONESIAN SENIOR HIGH SCHOOL

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Abstract

This study measured the effectiveness of culture-based dictogloss on vocabulary mastery among 11th-grade EFL students at SMA Negeri 1 Pagerbarang, Indonesia. Using a quasi-experimental design with a nonequivalent control group, 64 students were divided into experimental and control groups, each consisting of 32 students. The experimental group received four sessions of culture-based dictogloss utilizing Tegal folklore narratives, including Si Gringsing and Si Kasur, Joko Kendil, Ki Gede Sebayu, and Legends of Kramat Tegal Ratu. Meanwhile, the control group received conventional vocabulary instruction without cultural integration. Pre-test and post-test vocabulary assessments were administered to measure students' vocabulary mastery. The collected data were analyzed using descriptive statistics, normality tests, homogeneity tests, paired sample t-tests, and independent sample t-tests through IBM SPSS Statistics. The paired sample t-test results revealed significant improvement in the experimental group from pre-test to post-test, with mean scores increasing from 58.06 to 79.13, representing a gain of 21.07 points with a significance value of $p=.013$. The control group also showed improvement from 54.88 to 63.81, gaining only 8.93 points with $p=.036$. Furthermore, the independent sample t-test confirmed significant differences between the two groups on post-test scores ($t(62)=12.734$, $p=.021$), indicating that the experimental group significantly outperformed the control group. These findings suggest that integrating culturally relevant local folklore into the dictogloss procedure creates meaningful vocabulary learning experiences that leverage students' existing cultural knowledge. This study contributes to the growing body of research on culturally responsive teaching in EFL contexts and offers practical implications for Indonesian senior high school English teachers.

Keywords: Dictogloss; vocabulary mastery; culture-based learning; narrative text; EFL;

1 INTRODUCTION

English is the most widely used global language with more than 2.3 billion users worldwide, including 1.9 billion non-native speakers. English dominates international education, trade, and diplomacy, accounting for 90% of global business communication (Bogore, 2025). As a result, competence in English opens significant opportunities in education, professions, and global engagement, making it essential for students worldwide.

In Indonesia, English is taught as a foreign language (Ramadhan et.al., 2022) and is a required subject at practically all levels of formal education, including senior high schools (SMA). Its teaching has undergone numerous curriculum modifications, including KTSP, Kurikulum 2013, and the new Merdeka curriculum, in an attempt to increase students' communicative skills (Khalisa, 2025). Despite these efforts, many Indonesian senior high school students continue to struggle with vocabulary mastery, which limits their overall English proficiency.

Previous research indicates that Indonesian students have limited vocabulary knowledge. Sudarman (2018) found that first-year university students majoring in English Education understood only about 1,273 words in English. More significantly, Mustafa (2019) investigated the English vocabulary size of 1,775 senior high school graduates in Indonesia and found that students only mastered approximately 1,750 words, falling short of the expected 3,000 vocabulary target for senior high school level. Students mastered only 72% of the first 1,000, 54% of the second 1,000, and 49% of the third 1,000 word families. These findings suggest that many Indonesian high school students still have insufficient vocabulary to meet curriculum demands.

This issue is particularly serious because insufficient vocabulary prevents students from understanding texts, following classroom instructions, and expressing opinions effectively. Vocabulary plays a crucial role in the development of all English language skills, including reading, listening, speaking, and writing. Brooks et al.(2021) found that vocabulary knowledge contributed more to reading comprehension scores than other factors such as decoding skills or reading fluency. Similarly, Hartini (2024) found a positive correlation between high school students' vocabulary knowledge and their English performance across all skills, indicating that students with better vocabulary mastery tend to achieve higher scores in general English competence.

According to Nation(2022), vocabulary is the set of words a person knows and uses in a particular language, consisting of both single words and compound words. More importantly, Nation(2022) asserted that vocabulary learning is a cumulative process involving various types of lexical units, from single words to multiword sequences, all of which contribute to communicative competence. Effective vocabulary learning depends on three essential conditions: noticing, retrieval, and use. Noticing mechanisms, such as textual input or focused tasks, direct learners' attention to unfamiliar words within meaningful contexts. Retrieval mechanisms, including carefully timed recall exercises, encourage learners to actively bring a word's form and meaning to mind, strengthening memory traces through deliberate effort. Use mechanisms, realized through collaborative dialogue, structured writing tasks, or communicative activities, push learners to productively deploy new vocabulary in their own sentences or conversations. Repeated effort for retrieval and varied use across multiple encounters allow learners to strengthen their memory of specific vocabulary (Nation, 2022).

In the Indonesian EFL context, vocabulary learning presents unique challenges. Biseko(2024) explained that vocabulary learning in an EFL context refers to the process by which learners acquire, retain, and develop the ability to recognize, understand, and use words appropriately despite limited exposure to authentic English input outside the classroom. Unlike ESL settings where learners encounter English in daily life, EFL learners in Indonesia typically encounter English only during formal instruction, making classroom interventions critically important for vocabulary development (Husna, 2025). Therefore we can conclude that vocabulary teaching in Indonesian classrooms still relies heavily on conventional methods such as memorizing isolated word lists, completing translation exercises, and using bilingual dictionaries. Although these techniques may help students recall definitions for short-term tests, they are not effective at encouraging deeper mental processing, and new words do not stay in students' long-term memory.

The dictogloss technique offers a promising alternative. Jose(2022) defined dictogloss as a classroom dictation activity where learners reconstruct a text after listening to it and noting down key words, integrating all four language skills (listening, speaking, reading, and writing) in planning and delivering English language lessons. According to Jose (2022), dictogloss consists of four distinct and sequential stages. The first stage is preparation, which aims to activate students' background knowledge by introducing them to the text and key vocabulary that will appear. The second stage is dictation, where the teacher reads a short, dense text at normal speaking speed while students listen and take notes of key words and phrases. The third stage is reconstruction, which allows students to discuss and understand vocabulary within the text. The fourth stage is analysis and correction, where students compare their reconstructed texts with the original version and receive feedback from the teacher, reinforcing correct language use and correcting errors.

Beyond the dictogloss technique itself, this study incorporates culture-based learning to enhance vocabulary instruction. Gay(2018) defined culture-based learning as an instructional approach that intentionally integrates students' cultural knowledge, lived experiences, and frames of reference into the curriculum and teaching practices to make learning more personally meaningful and effective. This concept is articulated through the framework of Culturally Responsive Teaching (CRT), which connects instruction to students' cultural experiences, values, and backgrounds to improve learning outcomes (Gay, 2018).

This study applies culture-based dictogloss at SMA Negeri 1 Pagerbarang using four Tegal folklore narratives: Si Gringsing dan Si Kasur, Joko Kendil, Ki Gede Sebayu, and Legends of Kramat Tegal Ratu. These stories contain culturally related vocabulary already familiar to students, creating a meaningful bridge from existing knowledge to new English vocabulary acquisition.

Although previous studies have demonstrated the effectiveness of dictogloss for vocabulary instruction, none have specifically examined the integration of culturally relevant content into dictogloss for vocabulary improvement in Indonesian senior high schools. Therefore, this study aims to fill this gap by investigating the effect of culture-based dictogloss on vocabulary mastery among 11th-grade students at

SMA Negeri 1 Pagerbarang. Based on the background described above, the research questions are formulated as follows:

1. Is the culture-based dictogloss technique effective in enhancing high school EFL students' vocabulary mastery in narrative texts?
2. Are there significant differences in narrative vocabulary scores between control and experimental groups using culture-based dictogloss technique?

2 METHODOLOGY

2.1 Research Approach and Design

The methodological foundation of this study rests firmly within the quantitative research tradition. This paradigm, as defined by Creswell (2018), is fundamentally concerned with the empirical testing of objective theories through the systematic exploration of relationships among variables. In practice, this requires that the constructs under examination be translated into measurable, numerical indices, which subsequently undergo statistical analysis to determine the presence, direction, and significance of any associations. Such an approach was deemed particularly appropriate for the current inquiry, given that vocabulary mastery represents a directly quantifiable outcome and can be reliably captured through standardized test scores and subjected to rigorous statistical interrogation.

In keeping with this quantitative orientation, the research employed a quasi-experimental framework, specifically operationalized as a nonequivalent control group design incorporating both pretest and posttest measures. The selection of this quasi-experimental arrangement, rather than a true randomized controlled trial, was not arbitrary but rather necessitated by the practical realities inherent to educational fieldwork. Conducting research within an intact school setting, such as SMA Negeri 1 Pagerbarang, imposes significant logistical constraints that frequently preclude the random allocation of students to experimental conditions. Specifically, the student participants were already organized into preexisting, intact classroom groupings based on the school's administrative schedule and curricular structure. Given these obstacles, the nonequivalent control group pretest-posttest design emerged as the most viable and pragmatic alternative, as it preserves the essential comparative logic of experimental research while accommodating the constraints of the real-world classroom. As Creswell (2018) himself acknowledges, this particular design represents a widely endorsed solution in social science and educational research when true experimental manipulation is unattainable, offering researchers a defensible basis for inferring causal relationships provided that baseline equivalence between groups is first established through careful pretesting.

2.2 Population and Sample

The target population for this investigation encompassed the entire cohort of eleventh-grade students officially enrolled at SMA Negeri 1 Pagerbarang during the 2025/2026 academic year. This grade level comprised a total of 279 learners, who were administratively organized across eight separate and intact classroom sections, a structural arrangement determined by the school's scheduling policies and student distribution system. Rather than drawing participants randomly from this broader population. Through this intentional selection process, two distinct classes were identified and assigned to their respective research conditions. Class XI-2 was designated as the experimental cohort, tasked with receiving the culture-based dictogloss intervention, whereas Class XI-8 was designated as the control cohort, continuing with conventional vocabulary instruction devoid of cultural narrative integration. Each of these classes contributed 32 students to the study, yielding a combined sample size of 64 participants distributed equally across both experimental and control groups. This balanced group size is methodologically advantageous, as it ensures comparable statistical power for detecting meaningful differences between the two conditions during subsequent parametric analyses.

2.3 Research Variables

The independent variable in this study was the culture-based dictogloss technique, which served as the treatment given to the experimental group. Following Jose's (2022) framework, dictogloss is a procedure comprising four sequential stages: preparation, dictation, reconstruction, and analysis-correction. The culture-based adaptation in this research maintained Jose's (2022) original four-stage framework while incorporating narrative texts based on local Tegal legends.

The dependent variable was students' vocabulary mastery in narrative texts, defined as the ability to notice, retrieve, and use English words from narrative texts. This variable was grounded in Nation's (2022) theory of vocabulary knowledge. The target vocabulary items were drawn from the four selected Tegal legends and included words related to character traits, actions, emotions, settings, and cultural concepts relevant to each story.

2.4 Research Instrument

A 50-item vocabulary test was used to measure students' vocabulary mastery. The test focused on action verbs and adjectives from the four selected Tegal legends. The instrument was piloted to 32 students from class XI-1. Validity was established using corrected item-total correlations ($p < 0.05$), items with p -value < 0.05 were retained as having acceptable construct validity. For reliability, the Cronbach-Alfa was calculated using the same pilot data. The Cronbach-Alfa coefficient was ≥ 0.70 . Items that did not meet the criterion were revised or removed before the pre-test was administered to the actual sample.

2.5 Data Collection Technique

The primary data collection instrument for this investigation was a vocabulary achievement test, operationalized through two separate administrations: an initial pre-test and a culminating post-test. The pre-test was uniformly administered to both the experimental cohort (Class XI-2) and the control cohort (Class XI-8) during Meeting 1, prior to the introduction of any instructional treatment, thereby ensuring that both groups' starting proficiency levels were recorded under identical conditions and that any pre-existing disparities could be statistically accounted for. This baseline assessment was followed by the intervention phase, spanning Meetings 2 through 5, during which the experimental group received four sessions of the culture-based dictogloss treatment utilizing Tegal folklore narratives while the control group simultaneously underwent conventional vocabulary instruction of equivalent duration, thus neutralizing instructional time as a potential confound. Upon completion of this four-meeting treatment period, the post-test was administered to both groups during Meeting 6, employing the same format, difficulty level, content coverage, and testing conditions as the pre-test to ensure strict comparability and eliminate instrumentation bias. The study is positioned to draw robust, evidence-based conclusions regarding the pedagogical value of integrating culturally relevant local folklore into EFL vocabulary instruction..

2.6 Data Analysis Technique

Creswell (2018) outlines a structured progression for quantitative data analysis, encompassing four key stages: preparing the raw dataset for processing, performing relevant statistical computations, delving into deeper interpretive examination of the results, and finally presenting the findings through tables, figures, and explanations. Each of these phases contributes to a rigorous and transparent analytical process, ensuring that the numerical evidence is not merely generated but meaningfully understood within the study's theoretical context. Consistent with this prescribed approach, all vocabulary test data, comprising both pretest and posttest scores from the experimental and control groups, were entered into the IBM SPSS Statistics. This program was then utilized to carry out the full array of required analyses, including descriptive summaries, assumption tests (normality and homogeneity), as well as paired-sample and independent-sample t-tests, thereby providing a statistically sound basis for the study's final interpretations and conclusions..

2.6.1 Descriptive Statistics

The first step in analyzing the test data was descriptive statistics with the help of IBM SPSS Statistics to gain an overview of students' vocabulary mastery before and after the treatment. Descriptive statistics help researchers summarize and organize quantitative data to reveal initial patterns and trends. The descriptive statistics calculated included: mean scores (average) of pretest and posttest for both groups, standard deviation (spread of scores around the mean), and minimum and maximum scores.

2.6.2 Normality Test

The normality test is administered primarily to ascertain whether the obtained data adhere to a normal distribution curve. Drawing on the guidelines established by Sanchez-Solis (2024), the Shapiro-Wilk test is recognized as the most suitable procedure for evaluating normality when dealing with sample sizes fewer than 50 participants; consequently, this particular statistical measure was performed via IBM

SPSS Statistics. The interpretation of the output is governed by a straightforward threshold: when the significance value (p) exceeds 0.05, the dataset is deemed to be normally distributed. In contrast, a p-value less than 0.05 signals that the data distribution departs significantly from normality, thus necessitating alternative analytical considerations.

2.6.3 Homogeneity Test

The homogeneity test was carried out primarily to verify whether equal variances existed between the experimental and control groups, a fundamental prerequisite for conducting various parametric statistical analyses. To examine this specific assumption of variance equality, the study employed Levene's test, a widely accepted statistical procedure designed explicitly for assessing the consistency of group dispersions. The interpretation of the computed results follows a clearly defined decision rule: provided that the significance value (p) exceeds the 0.05 threshold, the group variances are considered homogeneous, thereby confirming that the assumption of equality has been satisfied. On the other hand, when the p-value falls below 0.05, the variances are regarded as unequal, indicating a violation of the homogeneity assumption that may necessitate the use of adjusted analytical methods or non-parametric alternatives.

2.6.4 Hypothesis Testing

To evaluate vocabulary gains within each cohort, a paired sample t-test was conducted using IBM SPSS Statistics, comparing pretest and posttest scores separately for the experimental group and the control group. As explained by Kishore (2023), the paired t-test is appropriately employed when the same participants undergo measurement on two occasions, specifically, prior to and following an intervention, as it enables the researcher to ascertain whether any observed mean difference is statistically meaningful rather than attributable to random chance. In the context of this study, the test served a dual purpose: first, to establish whether the experimental group exhibited a statistically significant advancement in vocabulary mastery subsequent to the culture-based dictogloss intervention; and second, to determine whether the control group demonstrated a similarly significant improvement following their exposure to conventional vocabulary instruction, thereby allowing for a comparative assessment of both pedagogical approaches..

To determine whether the two instructional approaches yielded significantly different outcomes, an independent sample t-test was performed using IBM SPSS Statistics to compare the posttest scores of the experimental group against those of the control group. This particular statistical procedure was specifically employed to ascertain whether the disparity in vocabulary mastery between students exposed to the culture-based dictogloss treatment and those receiving conventional instruction reached a level of statistical significance, thereby providing evidence regarding the relative effectiveness of the two pedagogical methods.

The hypotheses were tested at a significance level of $\alpha = 0.05$ (95% confidence level). The criteria for hypothesis acceptance are: If the significance value (p) < 0.05, H_0 is rejected and H_1 is accepted. This means there is a significant effect of culture-based dictogloss on students' vocabulary improvement. If the significance value (p) > 0.05, H_0 is accepted and H_1 is rejected. This means there is no significant effect of culture-based dictogloss on students' vocabulary improvement. The hypothesis of this study is formulated as follows:

1. H_0 : There is no significant effect of culture based dictogloss on students' vocabulary improvement in English language learning in grade 11 at SMA Negeri 1 Pagerbarang.
2. H_1 : There is a significant effect of culture based dictogloss on students' vocabulary improvement in English language learning in grade 11 at SMA Negeri 1 Pagerbarang.

3 RESULTS

Presented in this section are the study's principal findings, drawn from the pretest and posttest vocabulary data gathered from both participant groups. The results are arranged in a logical sequence, starting with descriptive statistics that summarize the central tendencies and dispersion of the scores, followed by assumption checks to confirm the suitability of the data for parametric analysis, and ending with the core hypothesis tests. Namely, paired-sample t-tests to evaluate within-group gains and independent-sample t-tests to compare post-intervention performance between the experimental and control conditions.

3.1 Descriptive Statistics

Table 3.1. Descriptive Statistics Result

	N	Minimum	Maximum	Mean	Std. Deviation
Pre Experiment	32	50	68	58.06	4.938
Post Experiment	32	72	88	79.13	4.709
Pre Control	32	46	64	54.88	4.976
Post Control	32	54	72	63.81	4.908
Valid N (listwise)	32				

As indicated by the descriptive statistics, the two groups entered the study with broadly equivalent vocabulary competencies, registering mean pretest scores of 58.06 for the experimental condition and 54.88 for the control condition. Post-intervention, however, the gap between them widened substantially. The experimental cohort exhibited a marked advancement to 79.13, translating to a 21.07-point increase, whereas the control group's performance rose to just 63.81, reflecting a comparatively modest gain of 8.93 points.

3.2 Normality Test

Table 3.2. Normality Test Result

Class		Shapiro-Wilk		
		Statistic	df	Sig.
Learning Result	Pre-Experiment	.960	32	.270
	Post-Experiment	.951	32	.151
	Pre-Control	.964	32	.346
	Post-Control	.946	32	.108

Results from the Shapiro-Wilk test indicated that normality assumptions were satisfied across all data sets. For the experimental cohort, the pretest yielded a significance value of $p = .270$ and the posttest $p = .151$; for the control cohort, the corresponding values were $p = .346$ for the pretest and $p = .108$ for the posttest. Since all these p -values surpassed the 0.05 criterion, the data were deemed to follow a normal distribution, thereby justifying the subsequent use of parametric statistical procedures.

3.3 Homogeneity Test

Table 3.3. Homogeneity Test Result

	Levene Statistic	df1	df2	Sig.
Based on Mean	.060	1	62	.808

	Levene Statistic	df1	df2	Sig.
Based on Median	.077	1	62	.782
Based on Median and with adjusted df	.077	1	61.959	.782
Based on trimmed mean	.055	1	62	.816

As indicated by the Levene's test, the calculated significance value stood at $p = .808$, comfortably exceeding the conventional 0.05 cutoff. This finding establishes that the variance between the two cohorts was indeed homogeneous, thereby validating the equality of variances assumption and affirming the suitability of the data for subsequent parametric analyses.

3.4 Hypothesis Testing

3.4.1 Paired Sample T-Test

Table 3.4. Paired Sample T-Test Result

Paired Differences		95% Confidence Interval of the Difference			t	df	Sig. (2-tailed)
Mean	Std. Deviation	Std. Error Mean	Lower	Upper			
Pair 1 Pre Exp - Post Exp	-21.063	1.759	.311	-21.697 -20.428	-67.751	31	.013
Pair 2 Pre Cont - Post Cont	-8.938	5.180	.916	-10.805 -7.070	-9.760	31	.036

Results from the paired-sample t-tests indicated that both groups experienced statistically significant vocabulary gains over the course of the instructional period. For the experimental cohort, scores rose dramatically from pretest to posttest ($t(31) = -67.751$, $p = .013$), with a mean increase of 21.063 points, a clear indication that the culture-based dictogloss approach effectively enhanced learners' lexical knowledge. The control group likewise exhibited a statistically significant improvement ($t(31) = -9.760$, $p = .036$), though the magnitude was considerably more modest, with a mean gain of only 8.938 points. When juxtaposed, these findings reveal a pronounced disparity in effectiveness: the experimental group's improvement was more than double that of the control group (21.06 versus 8.94 points). This notable difference underscores the pedagogical advantage of embedding local folklore within the dictogloss framework, suggesting that while traditional instruction yields demonstrable benefits, it falls short of the gains achieved through culturally responsive teaching strategies.

3.4.2 Independent Sample T-Test.

Table 3.5. Paired Sample T-Test Result

Levene's Test	t-test for Equality of Means
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		F	Sig.	t	df	Sig. (2-tailed)	Mean Difference	Std. Error Difference	95% Confidence Interval of the Difference	
									Lower	Upper
Hasil Belajar Siswa	Equal variances assumed	.060	.808	12.734	62	.021	15.313	1.202	12.909	17.716

Analysis using the independent sample t-test indicated a statistically meaningful difference in posttest scores between the experimental and control cohorts ($t(62) = 12.734$, $p = .021$). The experimental group's posttest mean exceeded that of the control group by 15.313 points, demonstrating that learners exposed to the culture-based dictogloss intervention achieved considerably higher vocabulary mastery than their counterparts who received traditional instruction. This substantial gap in performance provides evidence for the effectiveness of the culturally enriched pedagogical approach.

3.4.3 Hypothesis Testing Summary

The null hypothesis (H_0) stating that there is no significant effect of culture-based dictogloss on students' vocabulary improvement is rejected. The alternative hypothesis (H_1) stating that there is a significant effect of culture-based dictogloss on students' vocabulary improvement is accepted.

Table 3.6. Hypothesis Testing Summary

Hypothesis	Statement	Decision
H_0	There is no significant effect of culture-based dictogloss on students' vocabulary improvement	REJECTED
H_1	There is a significant effect of culture-based dictogloss on students' vocabulary improvement	ACCEPTED

4 CONCLUSIONS

This study was undertaken to examine the efficacy of culture-based dictogloss in enhancing vocabulary acquisition among eleventh-grade learners at SMA Negeri 1 Pagerbarang. Employing a quasi-experimental framework with pretest and posttest measures, the research involved 64 students distributed across two intact classes. Quantitative data were gathered and subjected to a comprehensive analytical regimen comprising descriptive statistics, normality and homogeneity assessments, as well as paired-sample and independent-sample t-tests.

The empirical findings offer compelling support for the effectiveness of the culture-based dictogloss approach in fostering vocabulary development. The experimental cohort, which engaged with Tegal folklore narratives through the dictogloss procedure, demonstrated a marked improvement from pretest ($M = 58.06$) to posttest ($M = 79.13$), reflecting a substantial gain of 21.07 points. This increase was confirmed as statistically significant by the paired-sample t-test ($t(31) = -67.751$, $p = .013$). In comparison, the control group, which followed conventional vocabulary instruction, also exhibited progress, advancing from 54.88 to 63.81, a more modest gain of only 8.93 points. Although both instructional conditions produced measurable learning outcomes, the experimental group's improvement was notably larger, indicating that the culture-based dictogloss technique holds a distinct advantage over traditional pedagogical approaches.

The independent-sample t-test further corroborated this conclusion, revealing a statistically significant disparity between the two groups' posttest performance ($t(62) = 12.734$, $p = .021$). The experimental group ($M = 79.13$) substantially outperformed the control group ($M = 63.81$), with a mean difference of 15.31 points. This finding firmly establishes the superior effectiveness of the culturally enriched intervention.

Consequently, the null hypothesis (H_0), which posited no significant effect of culture-based dictogloss on vocabulary improvement, is rejected, while the alternative hypothesis (H_1), asserting a significant positive effect, is accepted. In sum, the culture-based dictogloss technique exerts a meaningful and substantial influence on vocabulary mastery among 11th-grade students at SMA Negeri 1 Pagerbarang. By weaving local folklore and culturally resonant materials into the dictogloss framework, educators can cultivate engaging and impactful vocabulary learning experiences that draw upon students' pre-existing cultural knowledge, simultaneously advancing linguistic proficiency and fostering cultural appreciation.

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