EMPLOYING FORMATIVE ASSESSMENT FOR STUDENTS' ENGLISH VOCABULARY MASTERY ON HIGH-FREQUENCY WORDS
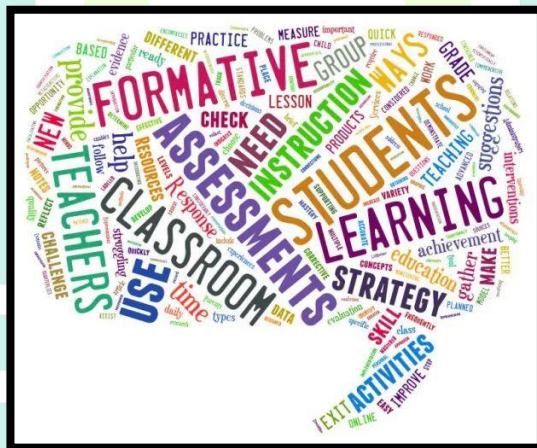

DWI YOGA PRASETYO
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A THESIS

Submitted in Partial Fulfillment of the Requirement for the Degree
of *Sarjana Pendidikan* in English Education

by:

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ngan ini mohon agar skripsi tersebut segera dimunaqosahkan.

Demikian nota pembimbing ini dibuat untuk digunakan sebagaimana estinya. Atas perhatian Bapak/Ibu, saya sampaikan terima kasih.

assalamu'alaikum Wr.Wb.

Pekalongan, 27 Februari 2025

Pembimbing

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dul : **EMPLOYING FORMATIVE ASSESSMENT FOR STUDENTS' ENGLISH VOCABULARY MASTERY ON HIGH-FREQUENCY WORDS**

Has been examined and approved by the panel of examiners on Thursday, ɪch 6th, 2025 as a partial fulfillment of the requirements for the Degree of Sarjana ɪdidikan (S.Pd.) in English Education.

The Examiners,

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MOTTO

"Maka Sesungguhnya bersama kesulitan itu ada kemudahan.
Sesungguhnya bersama kesulitan itu ada kemudahan"
(Q.S. Al-Insyirah, 94: 5-4)

"Allah tidak membebani seseorang melainkan sesuai dengan
kesanggupannya."
(Q.S. Al-Baqarah, 2: 286)

"One day, you'll leave this world behind, so live a life you will
remember."
(Avicii)

"Kami tidak pernah meragukan pelanggan (Examiners) meskipun
permintaannya aneh-aneh"
(Eugene Harold Crabs)

ABSTRAK

Dalam ranah pembelajaran bahasa asing, peran penguasaan kosakata sangat penting untuk memahami materi pelajaran. Akan tetapi, beberapa siswa masih kesulitan dalam menguasai kosakata bahasa Inggris, sehingga penilaian formatif diimplementasikan untuk mengeksplorasi penguasaan siswa terhadap kata-kata berfrekuensi tinggi (HFW). Dengan demikian, tujuan dari penelitian ini adalah untuk menyelidiki penerapan dan tantangan penggunaan asesmen formatif dalam proses pembelajaran untuk penguasaan kosakata bahasa Inggris siswa pada HFW. Peneliti menggunakan metode studi kasus deskriptif dengan melakukan wawancara semi-terstruktur dan observasi untuk mengumpulkan data. Data penelitian diambil di salah satu SMA di Pekalongan dalam kurun waktu dua minggu. Satu kelas XII di sekolah menengah atas ini digunakan sebagai objek observasi, dan guru bahasa Inggris serta empat siswa sebagai partisipan wawancara. Dengan menggunakan analisis tematik, hasil penelitian menunjukkan bahwa variasi penilaian formatif dan pemberian umpan balik perlu diperhatikan dalam implementasi asesmen formatif terhadap penguasaan HFW karena keduanya berkesinambungan dalam kesuksesan formatif asesmen. Sementara itu, ada beberapa tantangan yang muncul ketika melakukan implementasi tersebut yaitu keterbatasan waktu, perbedaan kemampuan siswa, dan keterlibatan siswa, yang masing-masing saling berkaitan.

Kata kunci: *kosakata berfrekuensi tinggi, asesmen formatif, penguasaan kosakata*

ABSTRACT

In terms of foreign language learning, the role of vocabulary mastery is crucial for understanding course materials. However, some students still struggle with mastering English vocabulary, so formative assessment is implemented to explore students' mastery of high-frequency words (HFWs). Thus, the aim of this research is to investigate the implementation and challenges of employing formative assessment in the learning process for students' English vocabulary mastery on HFWs. The researcher used the descriptive case study method by conducting a semi-structured interview and observation to collect the data. The research data were obtained at a high school in Pekalongan over a period of two weeks. One class XII in this high school was used as the object of observation, and the English teacher and four students were used as interview participants. Using thematic analysis, the results of the study showed that variations in formative assessment and providing feedback needed to be considered in the implementation of formative assessment for HFW mastery because all two were continuous in the success of formative assessment. Meanwhile, there were several challenges that arose when carrying out the implementation, such as time constraints, differences in student abilities, and student engagement, each of which is interrelated.

Keywords: *high-frequency words, formative assessment, vocabulary mastery*

PREFACE

Praise and gratitude we offer to the presence of Allah SWT who has bestowed His grace and kinds so that the process of writing a thesis entitled "Employing Formative Assessment for Students' English Vocabulary Mastery on High-Frequency Words" can be completed. This thesis is submitted to the English Language Education Department of UIN K.H. Abdurrahman Wahid Pekalongan to fulfill one of the requirements to obtain a Degree of *Sarjana Pendidikan*. This thesis can be completed thanks to the support of various parties. Therefore, on this occasion, I would like to express my deepest gratitude to:

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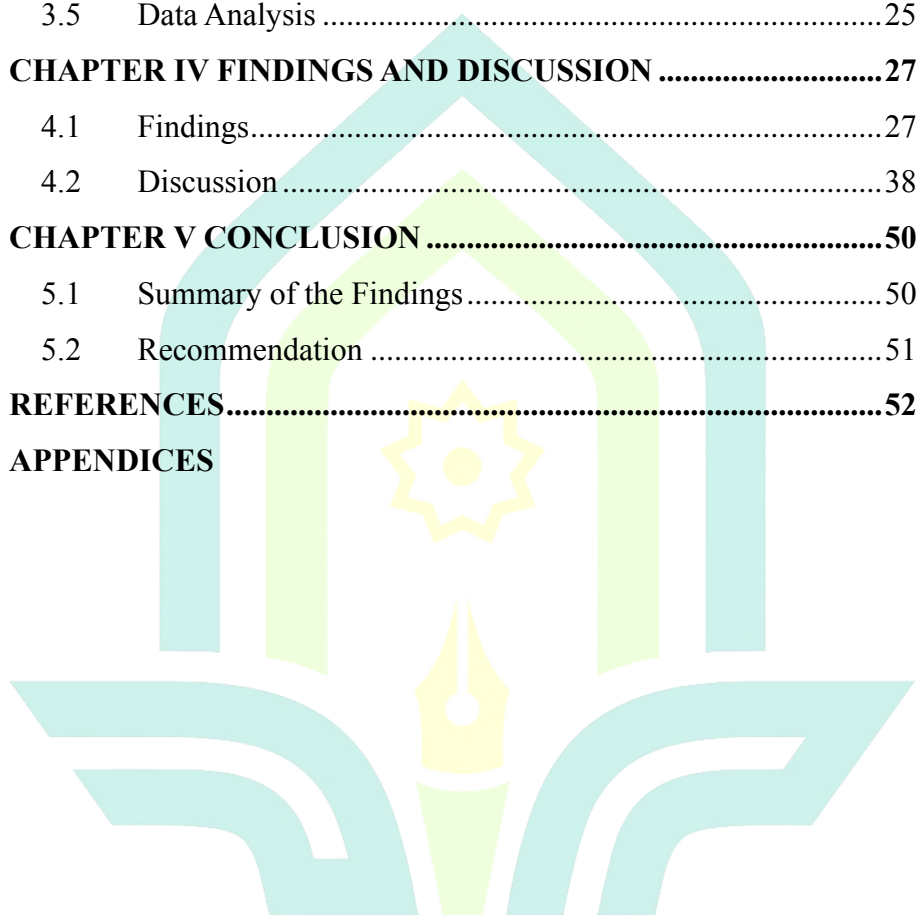
Pekalongan, 27 Februari 2025

Dwi Yoga Prasetyo

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CHAPTER I
INTRODUCTION

1.1 Background of the Study

Vocabulary, or the building blocks of language, includes the words people use to express themselves and understand the world around them. It includes a wide variety of words each with its meaning and nuances. A good vocabulary is necessary for knowing and being understood, whether it is written or spoken. Therefore, vocabulary knowledge is very important for students. This is consistent with the statement from Dakhi and Fitria (2019) that vocabulary knowledge is considered an essential skill that must be learned to develop other language capabilities. Furthermore, developing an intense English vocabulary is crucial for students' success in learning English as a Foreign Language (EFL) and language acquisition. It helps them to understand spoken and written communication, as well as express themselves effectively and clearly. Based on Sardi (2022), because vocabulary is used in communication and interaction, it becomes one of the fundamental elements that have to be learned. Moreover, a strong English vocabulary is beneficial for students' overall English language proficiency covering basic language skills. The more students have many vocabularies, the more they can easily improve the four skills, which are; reading, writing, listening, and speaking (Nunan, 1991). In addition, on the way to mastering a high level of English vocabulary, students need to master words that often appear in learning so that students' understanding of learning and vocabulary can develop. Therefore, vocabularies that are frequently used in learning are crucial in this regard.

Discussing vocabulary, in English vocabulary, three types of words are divided based on their frequency of occurrence, one of which is high-frequency words. High-frequency words (HFWs) are those that appear most frequently in a language. They have been considered significant in helping students to be efficient readers

(Johns & Wilke, 2018). Also, Wu et al. (2021) stated that word lists of HFWs are crucial in academic settings. This word has a great influence on students' understanding in language learning. This is in line with an argument from Johns and Wilke (2018) that a list of 100-200 high-frequency words will make up over 50% of the words in school texts. This indicates that HFWs play an important role in language learning at school, especially in school textbooks. Therefore, frequent learning of HFWs through specific assessments i.e. formative assessment can develop students' vocabulary mastery.

Formative assessment is a process used by teachers and students during learning that provides feedback to adjust ongoing teaching and learning to improve students' achievement of intended learning outcomes (Bennett, 2011). This assessment is one type of assessment that is most often used in the teaching-learning process because this assessment can monitor students' ability levels as well as develop students' understanding of learning. This is following what was stated by Black and William (1998) that formative assessment monitors students' learning and improves students' understanding. Additionally, formative assessment is an effective method for improving student learning and teaching processes. By offering frequent and specific feedback, students can identify areas for growth and take control of their learning. Teachers can use formative assessment data to personalize the way they teach, modify lessons to individual necessities, and create more engaging learning environments. Furthermore, formative assessments can promote a good learning environment in which students feel supported and triggered to succeed. Thus, from several benefits of formative assessment, Schildkamp et al. (2020) stated that based on its promising benefit for developing students learning, formative assessment has become a "policy pillar of educational significance".

Formative assessment provides numerous benefits, but it also poses certain barriers. A number of challenges in implementing formative assessment have been identified, one of which is when teachers and students engaging in the assessment lack an equal

comprehension of its aims (Rahman et al., 2021). One important disadvantage is that implementing successful formative assessment procedures takes a significant amount of time, particularly for teachers with high-class sizes. Furthermore, the highly subjective nature of some assessment procedures, such as peer assessment and self-assessment, might have an impact on feedback accuracy. This is in line with the statement from Gamlem and Vattoy (2023) that limited time and resources make it challenging for teachers to provide appropriate and outstanding feedback to students, particularly during important learning moments. Therefore, in this research, formative assessment, which involves ongoing and continuous evaluation of student learning and several challenges therein, plays an important role in identifying strengths and weakness areas in vocabulary development. This research employs the formative assessment to explore students' English vocabulary mastery of high-frequency words. That way, the implementation and challenges in employing formative assessment for students' English vocabulary mastery on HFWs were investigated.

Previous studies (Zelenska et al., 2022; Estaji & Mirzaii, 2018; and Nurhasanah & Khasanah, 2020) have shown the crucial role of formative assessment in improving student learning and the importance of vocabulary mastery in English language learning. These studies show that feedback provided through formative assessments can help students identify errors, improve their understanding, and increase motivation to learn. However, research regarding the application of formative assessment specifically to master HFWs is still limited. This research gap indicates the need for further study to understand how formative assessment can be used effectively to help students master high-frequency vocabulary. Apart from this research gap, the researcher in this study also had previously been involved at a senior high school in Pekalongan and taught as a pre-service teacher. The researcher notices that there are some students that still struggle with mastering English vocabulary. In line with that, the researcher is interested in investigating the students' English vocabulary mastery at this high school through

formative assessment and HFWs with the title "Employing Formative Assessment for Students' English Vocabulary Mastery on High-Frequency Words".

1.2 Formulation of the Problem

This study is narrowed down to focus on two research questions i.e. the researcher explores:

1. How is formative assessment implemented for students' English vocabulary mastery on high-frequency words?
2. What are the challenges of employing formative assessment for students' English vocabulary mastery on high-frequency words?

1.3 Operational Definitions

To avert misunderstandings and facilitate understanding of the terms used in this study, the researcher provides several definitions related to this study, which are listed below:

1.	High-frequency words	:	High-frequency words (HFWs) are words that include the majority of vocabularies that exist in spoken and written texts and appear in all types of language use (Nation, 2001)
2.	Formative Assessment	:	Formative assessment can be concluded as a fundamental assessment carried out during learning to adapt learning to students' abilities and to provide feedback that can trigger the growth of students' abilities (Bennett, 2011).
3.	Vocabulary	:	Vocabulary can be described as knowledge about words, including their construction and arrangement

into different meanings, which play an important role in language and communication skills (Alizadeh, 2016; Moghadam et al., 2012).

1.4 Aims of the Study

There are two aims in this research. These aims are:

1. Investigate the implementation of employing formative assessment for students' English vocabulary mastery on high-frequency words.
2. Investigate the challenges of employing formative assessment for students' English vocabulary mastery on high-frequency words.

1.5 Significance of the Study

Based on the aim of this study, which is to investigate the implementation and challenges of employing formative assessment for students' English vocabulary mastery on high-frequency words (HFWs), the findings are intended to be used theoretically, empirically, and practically:

1. Theoretical Significance

    The results of this research notify readers about the implementation of employing formative assessment for students' vocabulary mastery, as well as the challenges of it for students' vocabulary mastery. This research supports the theory from Brown, Black & William about formative assessment integrated with Nation's theory about HFWs.

2. Empirical Significance

    This research provides a new perspective on employing formative assessment in teaching vocabulary, especially in HFWs. This research provides a new picture of the importance of students' mastery of HFWs in the success of their vocabulary mastery.

3. Practical Significance

    This research provides field data on the implementation and challenges of employing formative assessment for

students' HFWs mastery. Therefore, teachers as readers can integrate formative assessment for students' vocabulary mastery by paying attention to the challenges contained in the integration process. Thus, students' strong English vocabulary mastery of HFWs was achieved.

CHAPTER V
CONCLUSION

5.1 Summary of the Findings

The results of this study have addressed two research questions that have been mentioned in chapter one. The question about how to implement formative assessment (FA) in high-frequency word (HFW) mastery has been answered with two points of findings that need to be considered during implementation. In addition, the question about challenges in implementation has also been answered with three findings mentioned by participants and recorded in class observations.

Based on the results and discussion, it was found that there are two prominent points in the implementation of FA in HFW mastery: variations in formative assessment methods and providing feedback in teaching HFWs. The two points interrelate with each other. Variations in formative assessment found, such as written quizzes, impromptu quizzes, guessing games, completing sentences, matching items, true-false, group discussions, written assignments, and others, have a positive effect on HFWs learning. Likewise with the provision of feedback, the provision of varied feedback, such as direct or written feedback containing justification, motivation, and appreciation, builds good learning conditions. From the variation of formative assessment and the provision of constructive feedback, teaching HFWs becomes more effective. In addition, through variations in formative assessment and teaching HFWs contextually in learning materials accompanied by constructive feedback, students get meaningful HFWs learning.

On the other hand, there are three things that stand out, such as time constraints, diverse students' ability levels, and student engagement, which are challenges in the implementation. These challenges arise from other sides of the implementation above. These three challenges are also interrelated with each other. Time

constraints can be triggered by differences in students' abilities and lack of student involvement in learning, as well as in-depth feedback. Meanwhile, differences in students' abilities also vary student involvement in learning. With a lack of student engagement, the flow of HFWs learning will also be hampered.

5.2 Recommendation

The researcher suggests that educators, teachers, or pre-service teachers understand and apply the findings of this research as a reference and source to improve their teaching skills. By paying attention to how formative assessment is implemented in students' mastery of HFWs, teachers can imitate or revise the findings to improve their learning. Teachers should consider the factors, such as variations in formative assessment methods, providing feedback, and teaching HFWs, affect the FA success. In addition, teachers who have understood the challenges listed can design more effective assessments and learning. Teachers should understand the challenges of time constraints, diverse students' ability levels, and student engagement, as well as alternative strategies such as mastering classroom management and time management, implementing differentiated learning, and paying attention to students physically and psychologically, in order to design more effective assessments and learning.

The limitations of this study, such as only focusing on the implementation and challenges in teaching HFWs and having few participants in this study, can be improved and updated in further research. Thus, it is recommended for further research to discuss in depth the strategies in dealing with the challenges in implementation that have been listed. In addition, it is also recommended to investigate the same thing but on low-frequency words (LFWs) mastery by paying more attention to its difficulties, or simply add research participants with different data collection and method approaches.

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