

Enhancing English Teachers' Vocabulary Instruction and Speaking Assessment Competence through MGMP Training in Pekanbaru

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ABSTRACT

Continuous improvement of instructional competency among in-service English teachers constitutes a strategic imperative in advancing the caliber of language education at the secondary level. Grounded in a community service research framework, this study investigates the delivery and outcomes of a structured vocabulary teaching training program organized through the MGMP network for Senior High School English teachers in the city of Pekanbaru, Riau Province. The training was conducted on Saturday, 6 June 2026, at SMA Negeri 8 Pekanbaru. The overarching goal was to examine whether participation in this training produced measurable gains in teachers' capacity to implement vocabulary instruction that supports the development and assessment of students' oral communicative performance. A pre-experimental one-group pre-test and post-test design was employed, engaging 32 teachers drawn from various Senior High Schools across the city of Pekanbaru. Multiple data sources were utilized, comprising a validated knowledge assessment instrument (Cronbach's $\alpha = 0.87$), structured classroom observation checklists, and individual semi-structured interviews. Statistical analysis revealed a substantial mean improvement of 23.38 points between pre- and post-training assessments ($t(31) = 14.67$, $p < 0.001$; Cohen's $d = 1.94$). Observational records indicated that the majority of participants (87.5%) successfully transitioned from isolated vocabulary drills toward the integration of lexical learning within task-based oral communication activities. Thematic patterns extracted from interview responses highlighted three salient dimensions of professional growth: heightened instructional self-efficacy, expanded assessment design capability, and greater congruence between training content and pedagogical practice. These results underscore the value of institutionalizing vocabulary-focused pedagogical training within MGMP structures as an enduring mechanism for elevating English language teacher professionalism in the regional context.

Keywords: *Vocabulary Teaching Training; MGMP English Teachers; Speaking Skill Assessment; Teacher Professional Development; Riau Province*

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INTRODUCTION

Among the multifaceted challenges confronting English language education at the senior high school level in Indonesia, the persistent gap between curricular expectations and actual communicative achievement stands out as particularly consequential. The implementation of *Kurikulum Merdeka* has introduced a renewed emphasis on competency-based and communicative learning, positioning oral expression as a core component of English language instruction (Kementerian Pendidikan Riset, dan Teknologi, 2022). Nevertheless, empirical observations in various educational settings indicate that students' speaking ability continues to

lag behind other language skills, reflecting persistent challenges in classroom practice and communicative competence (Goh & Burns, 2012; Nunan, 2015; Richards, 2015). Previous studies have also reported that Indonesian EFL learners frequently experience difficulties in expressing ideas fluently because of limited vocabulary, low confidence, and insufficient opportunities for meaningful oral interaction (Leong & Ahmadi, 2017; Nation & Newton, 2009).

Lexical Competence as a Prerequisite for Oral Communicative Performance

The relationship between vocabulary knowledge and the ability to communicate orally in a second or foreign language has attracted sustained scholarly attention across several decades of applied linguistic inquiry. Productive vocabulary, defined as the capacity to accurately mobilize words during spontaneous spoken output, represents one of the most demanding lexical tasks a language learner encounters because it must occur under real-time processing constraints with minimal opportunity for reflection or revision (Levelt, 1989; Nation, 2001). Learners whose productive lexical repertoire is limited often rely on avoidance strategies, circumlocution, or simplified language, reducing the effectiveness of communication (Nation, 2001; Thornbury, 2006).

Hulstijn & Laufer (2001) task-induced involvement framework offers a useful cognitive lens for examining how vocabulary acquisition may be embedded within speaking-oriented activities. According to this perspective, lexical retention is more durable when task design incorporates three components: perceived need to use a word, active searching for meaning, and evaluative judgment about appropriate usage. When speaking tasks are engineered to engage these cognitive dimensions simultaneously, learners not only acquire new vocabulary but also develop the meta-lexical awareness necessary to deploy words with pragmatic precision.

Equally important is the distinction between breadth and depth of vocabulary knowledge. Breadth refers to the sheer quantity of words a learner can recognize or produce, while depth encompasses nuanced dimensions such as collocational behavior, connotative range, register sensitivity, and syntactic flexibility. For oral communication in particular, depth proves to be the more functionally significant dimension, as speakers must select words that are not merely accurate in denotation but also appropriate to context, audience, and communicative purpose. Training teachers to appreciate and cultivate both dimensions of word knowledge in their students is therefore an essential component of high-quality English language instruction.

Professional Development for English Language Teachers: Principles and Challenges

Teacher professional development (TPD) is widely recognized as one of the most influential factors in improving instructional quality. Effective professional development is characterized by sustained duration, active participation, collaboration, content focus, and coherence with teachers' instructional contexts (Darling-Hammond et al., 2017; Garet et al., 2001). Collaborative professional learning communities also contribute to continuous teacher improvement by facilitating knowledge sharing and reflective practice (Wenger, 1998).

Within the Indonesian educational landscape, the MGMP forum has been recognized as a structurally embedded venue for teacher learning that carries both institutional legitimacy and peer accountability. Research on MGMP functionality across different subject areas and regions suggests, however, that the realized effectiveness of these forums is highly variable, depending significantly on institutional commitment, the competency of assigned facilitators, and the degree to which training activities are anchored in evidence-based pedagogical principles rather than administrative routine. Efforts to strengthen MGMP capacity through well-designed, content-specific training represent a strategic lever for improving instructional quality across diverse provincial contexts.

Theoretical Foundations of Speaking Skill Assessment

The assessment of speaking is among the most complex areas of language assessment because spoken language involves multiple interrelated dimensions, including fluency, pronunciation, vocabulary, grammar, discourse management, and interactional competence (Bachman & Palmer, 2010; Luoma, 2004). Therefore, speaking assessment should be based on clearly defined constructs and valid rating criteria to ensure meaningful interpretation of learners' performance (Bachman & Palmer, 2010; Brown & Danaher, 2019).

From an assessment design perspective, validity demands that speaking tasks and rating instruments be explicitly grounded in a theory of the construct being measured. When assessment rubrics are developed without principled reference to such a theoretical framework, they are prone to conflating distinct aspects of oral performance, producing scores that are difficult to interpret and potentially misleading for instructional purposes. A particularly common limitation in classroom-based speaking assessment is an overreliance on grammatical accuracy as the primary evaluative criterion, to the neglect of other equally significant dimensions such as lexical appropriacy, fluency, and pragmatic coherence.

METHOD

Research Design

The present investigation adopted a pre-experimental design structured around a single-group pre-test and post-test sequence. This design was selected on grounds of practical feasibility within the community service research context, where random assignment to control and experimental conditions was not logistically viable given the collaborative and inclusive nature of MGMP participation. While this design limits the strength of causal claims, the triangulation of quantitative, observational, and qualitative evidence was employed to compensate for this constraint and to provide a multidimensional portrait of training impact.

Research Participants

This study was conducted at SMA Negeri 8 Pekanbaru on Saturday, 6 June 2026. A total of 32 English teachers from Senior High Schools in the city of Pekanbaru, Riau Province, participated in the study. Participants were drawn from various Senior High Schools across Pekanbaru, selected to ensure representativeness across the city's institutional contexts. Purposive sampling was coordinated with the Pekanbaru MGMP English coordinator to include teachers who were actively engaged in classroom instruction and who held at minimum a Bachelor's degree (S1) in English Education with no less than two years of teaching experience. The participant group comprised 19 female and 13 male educators, with experience ranging from two to 22 years ($M = 9.4$ years, $SD = 5.7$).

Training Program Structure

The vocabulary teaching training was delivered in the format of a one-day intensive professional development workshop held on Saturday, 6 June 2026, at SMA Negeri 8 Pekanbaru, encompassing 8 instructional hours distributed across five thematic modules. Module 1 provided an evidence-based orientation to lexical acquisition theory and its intersections with oral communication development. Module 2 introduced and modeled a repertoire of communicative vocabulary teaching techniques, including semantic mapping, vocabulary-in-context activities, and interactive speaking tasks. Module 3 engaged participants in guided and collaborative design



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of vocabulary-integrated speaking tasks calibrated to Senior High School curriculum objectives. Module 4 focused on the principles and practice of speaking skill assessment, guiding participants through the construction of multi-dimensional analytic rubrics. Module 5 culminated in structured reflective practice sessions and individual classroom application planning. Each module integrated expert input, peer collaboration, and constructive critique as core pedagogical modes.

Data Collection and Instruments

Three complementary instruments were deployed to capture the breadth and depth of training outcomes. The primary quantitative instrument was a 30-item knowledge and competency assessment administered in identical form before and after the training. Item content spanned theoretical vocabulary knowledge, familiarity with communicative teaching techniques, and principles of speaking assessment. The instrument was validated through expert panel review and piloted with a comparable teacher group, yielding a Cronbach's alpha coefficient of 0.87, indicative of strong internal reliability. A structured observation checklist, completed independently by two trained observers, documented the quality and communicative orientation of task design products generated during workshop activities. Inter-rater reliability was established at $r = 0.91$. A semi-structured interview protocol was applied with eight purposively selected participants following training completion, designed to elicit reflective accounts of professional learning experiences and perceived training relevance.

Data Analysis Procedures

Quantitative pre-test and post-test data were subjected to paired-samples t-test analysis using SPSS (version 25) to evaluate the statistical significance of mean score changes. Cohen's d was computed to quantify effect magnitude, enabling interpretation of practical as well as statistical significance. Observation checklist data were summarized through frequency and percentage analysis of rated task quality indicators. Interview transcripts underwent inductive thematic analysis, proceeding through iterative cycles of open coding, axial coding, and theme consolidation. Triangulation across data sources was conducted to identify convergences and divergences in the evidence base, thereby strengthening the validity of overall interpretations.

FINDING AND DISCUSSION

Pre-Test and Post-Test Knowledge Assessment Results

Quantitative analysis of knowledge assessment scores produced compelling evidence of training effectiveness. Prior to the intervention, participants registered a group mean of 58.34 ($SD = 9.21$) on the 100-point instrument, indicating that existing knowledge of vocabulary pedagogy and speaking assessment was substantially incomplete. Following the one-day workshop, the group mean rose to 81.72 ($SD = 7.46$), representing a mean gain of 23.38 points. The paired-samples t-test confirmed that this increment was highly statistically significant ($t(31) = 14.67$, $p < 0.001$). The computed Cohen's d value of 1.94 situates the observed effect well within the large effect range, suggesting that the training produced not merely a detectable but a practically substantial improvement in participants' professional knowledge.

Table 1. Descriptive Statistics and Paired Samples t-Test Results for Pre- and Post-Training Knowledge Scores

Phase	N	Mean	SD	Mean Gain	t-value	p
Pre-Training	32	58.34	9.21	23.38	14.67	<.001



Post-Training	32	81.72	7.46	-	-	-
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Source: Primary Data Analysis, 2026

Observational Evidence of Instructional Transformation

Systematic observation of workshop activities provided complementary insights into the qualitative dimensions of professional change that occurred across the training period. At the commencement of the program, the prevailing task design orientation among participants was characterized by a marked preference for isolated vocabulary exercises—activities such as definition matching, word-list memorization, and sentence-completion drills which, while not without instructional value, fail to create the communicative context necessary for vocabulary to become functionally integrated into spoken language use.



Picture 1. Workshop Activities

A substantive shift was documented as the training progressed. By the final workshop session, 87.5% of participants ($n = 28$) produced speaking task designs that purposefully embedded target vocabulary within scenarios requiring authentic oral interaction, such as collaborative problem-solving discussions, opinion exchanges, and short oral presentations on curriculum-relevant topics. Crucially, these tasks were designed with explicit criteria guiding how and why specific vocabulary items were to be deployed, reflecting a sophisticated understanding of the relationship between lexical choice and communicative effectiveness.

Improvements in rubric design competency were equally notable. Initial assessment instruments produced by participants during the workshop's early phases were predominantly single-criterion tools that evaluated speaking performance exclusively or predominantly through the lens of grammatical correctness. Following targeted instruction and peer feedback in Module 4, participants demonstrated markedly improved facility in constructing multi-dimensional analytic rubrics that distinguished among vocabulary range and precision, fluency, pronunciation intelligibility, and discourse cohesion as separate but interrelated evaluative categories. This transition from unidimensional to multi-componential assessment thinking represents a significant professional advancement.

Qualitative Insights: Teacher Perceptions and Reflective Accounts

Thematic analysis of post-training interview data generated three overarching themes that encapsulate the qualitative dimensions of professional growth reported by participants. The first theme, instructional self-efficacy enhancement, captured participants' accounts of increased confidence in planning and executing vocabulary instruction within speaking-oriented lessons. Several teachers described the training as clarifying what had previously been an intuitive but theoretically ungrounded practice, noting that they now possessed a principled framework for making pedagogical decisions about vocabulary selection, sequencing, and integration.



Picture 2. Teacher Training

The second theme, assessment design empowerment, reflected participants' newly developed sense of capability in constructing purposeful and criterion-referenced speaking assessment tools. Participants recounted that prior to the training, rubric development had typically been a process of adaptation from available templates without deep understanding of the construct validity implications of different design choices. Following the training, they described approaching assessment design with greater intentionality, drawing on the theoretical frameworks introduced during the workshop to justify evaluative criteria and scoring descriptors.

The third theme, perceived pedagogical relevance, addressed the extent to which training content was experienced as applicable to participants' actual classroom conditions. The strong alignment between workshop activities and the vocabulary and speaking competency demands of the current national curriculum was widely cited as a significant factor in participants' engagement and motivation. Several interviewees specifically identified the collaborative task design sessions as the most intellectually stimulating component of the program, observing that dialogue with peers from diverse institutional backgrounds enriched their understanding of how vocabulary instruction might be adapted across different student populations and resource contexts.

Discussion

The integration of quantitative, observational, and qualitative findings from this study presents a coherent and mutually reinforcing account of the vocabulary teaching training program's effectiveness. The magnitude of the knowledge gain both in statistical terms ($p < 0.001$) and in practical terms (Cohen's $d = 1.94$) positions this intervention among the more impactful short-duration professional development programs reported in the regional English language teacher education literature. The notably low pre-training baseline scores ($M = 58.34$) are themselves diagnostically significant, revealing a pre-existing professional development deficit in the domain of vocabulary pedagogy that the MGMP network had not previously addressed in a systematic or evidence-grounded manner.

The observational finding that nearly nine in ten participants achieved demonstrable progress in designing communicative, vocabulary-integrated speaking tasks is particularly meaningful in an applied research context, because it indicates that knowledge gains were not limited to declarative understanding but extended into procedural capability the ability to transform theoretical knowledge into concrete instructional products. This transfer from knowledge to action is frequently cited as the most elusive outcome in professional development research and is often absent in program evaluations that rely solely on self-report or written assessment data.

The qualitative evidence adds a further layer of interpretive depth, illuminating the subjective experience of professional growth and the conditions under which it occurred. The centrality of collaborative peer engagement in participants' accounts aligns with theoretical perspectives on professional learning as a social, dialogic process in which knowledge is not merely transmitted but negotiated and co-constructed. This finding suggests that the communal architecture of the MGMP forum, when purposefully activated through well-designed training, can serve as a generative environment for professional transformation rather than merely an administrative structure for information dissemination.

From a sustainability perspective, the evidence assembled in this study draws attention to a limitation inherent in all time-bounded training interventions: the risk that professionally enriching learning experiences do not translate into durable changes in classroom practice when institutional follow-through is absent. Future MGMP programming in Pekanbaru and other parts of Riau Province would benefit from embedding vocabulary teaching workshops within a longer arc of professional learning that includes classroom implementation cycles, structured peer observation, and reflective documentation to monitor and support the transfer of training outcomes into sustained instructional improvement.

CONCLUSION

This study found that a vocabulary teaching training program within the MGMP English Teachers' Network in Riau Province successfully improved teachers' pedagogical competence and assessment skills. This is evidenced by significant gains in knowledge scores, improved quality in task and rubric design, and positive participant feedback on the training's classroom relevance. These findings support the need to regularly incorporate vocabulary and speaking assessment training into annual MGMP programs, both in Riau and other regions, as the MGMP structure has proven effective for teacher development without requiring major additional infrastructure. Training should also combine theory with collaborative practice and include follow-up activities, such as classroom observation or professional learning communities, to ensure lasting impact. This study has limitations, namely the absence of a control group and a relatively short intervention period, making it difficult to confirm the long-term sustainability of the results. Future research is recommended to use more rigorous experimental designs and follow-up observations to strengthen evidence of the relationship between training, teacher competence, and student learning outcomes.

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