The Development of English Vocabulary Teaching Material Through Cooperative Learning for Grade VII Students of SMPS Langkat Binjai 2025/2026

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ABSTRACT

Guided by these research questions, this study was designed to achieve three main objectives. To design and develop a prototype of English vocabulary teaching materials based on Cooperative Learning principles for Grade VII students at SMP Langkat Binjai. To validate the developed materials through expert evaluation and pilot implementation. To assess the effectiveness of these materials in enhancing students' vocabulary acquisition and active learning participation. This study employs a Research and Development (R&D) approach with the ADDIE model as its instructional design framework. R&D is appropriate for studies that aim to produce educational products, such as teaching materials, and systematically test their quality and effectiveness in real-world contexts. The analysis, design, development, implementation, and evaluation (ADDIE) model was selected because of its structured yet flexible nature and wide acceptance in educational material development. The conclusions of this research can be categorized into five major areas corresponding to the ADDIE model: development, validation, implementation, effectiveness, practicality, and pedagogical implications.

Keywords: Development, Learning Model, Illustrated Paper, Ability, Language

I. INTRODUCTION

English proficiency is essential for global communication, academic pursuit, and economic success. In Indonesia, English is taught as a compulsory subject in junior high school, starting in Grade VII. The ability to use English, particularly vocabulary mastery, is a core component of the national curriculum as it underpins students' overall language proficiency. Success in English fundamentally depends on vocabulary mastery, which is widely acknowledged as the core of language ability (Nation, 2013; Saroyan, 2022). According to the EF English Proficiency Index for 2023, Indonesia ranks 79th out of 113 countries in terms of English proficiency, indicating persistent challenges in English education, especially in receptive and productive skills. These challenges are more pronounced in regions outside major urban centers where access to quality learning materials and innovative teaching methods is limited.

One critical aspect of English language acquisition is vocabulary. Vocabulary serves as the building block of language, enabling learners to comprehend texts, express ideas, and communicate. However, students in Indonesian junior high schools often face difficulties in acquiring and retaining vocabulary because of monotonous teaching methods and a lack of contextualized material (Ersyadila et al., 2025). Observations from SMP Langkat Binjai indicate that vocabulary lessons are frequently delivered through rote memorization and textbook reading, without interactive or meaningful engagement. This undermines vocabulary retention as well as students' motivation and confidence in using English.

To gain a deeper understanding of these issues, it is necessary to examine students' learning conditions and how vocabulary instruction is delivered. Vocabulary learning in many Indonesian junior high schools, including SMP Langkat Binjai, is dominated by teacher-led explanations, repetitive copying of word lists, and isolated memorization tasks. Although systematic, these methods fail to support the contextual and meaningful use of vocabulary in authentic communication. Without interaction, feedback, or reinforcement, vocabulary items are learned only at the surface level and quickly forgotten. Such practices also diminish learners' motivation and sense of ownership during the learning process.

Moreover, vocabulary knowledge was a strong predictor of reading comprehension, writing fluency, and overall academic performance. According to Nation (2013), a well-developed vocabulary repertoire is essential not only for understanding input but also for producing meaningful language output. In EFL contexts such as Indonesia, where exposure to English is largely limited to classroom hours, explicit, structured, and engaging vocabulary instruction becomes even more crucial. Therefore, it is not enough to simply present vocabulary; instruction must also provide meaningful opportunities for the practice, repetition, and transfer of knowledge. To mitigate such issues, **Kurikulum 2013 (K13)** proposes a paradigm shift towards learner-centered, inquiry-based education. The curriculum emphasizes active learning, critical thinking, communication, and collaboration. However, a mismatch often arises between pedagogical ideals and reality in many classrooms. Many teachers continue to implement conventional methods that are inconsistent with K13's vision because of either insufficient training or lack of resources. This pedagogical inertia undermines the curriculum's goal of cultivating communicative competence, particularly in vocabulary learning, in which meaningful interaction and contextual usage are vital.

Despite their curricular aspirations, many Indonesian English classrooms still emphasize passive learning. The proposal notes that instruction is dominated by teacher-led explanations, word-list copying, and rote memorization. Studies show that these traditional methods are ineffective; for example, Ginaya et al. (2018) found that rote learning often leads to only superficial word retention and diminished motivation. In contrast, cooperative activities require learners to actively engage in vocabulary through interactions. Johnson and Johnson (2002) define cooperative learning by five key elements: positive interdependence and individual accountability. Studies indicate that CL enhances student motivation, academic achievement, and communication skills. By integrating these findings, the chapter argues that shifting from passive methods to structured CL strategies aligns with well-established learning theories. Specifically, Vygotsky's social constructivism posits that knowledge is co-constructed through social interaction; thus, CL provides a context in which learners scaffold each other's understanding of new words. Emphasizing this theoretical support would clarify why a cooperative approach is not just engaging, but pedagogically sound for vocabulary acquisition.

To address these challenges, Cooperative Learning (CL) has emerged as an effective instructional method that encourages student engagement, critical thinking, and active participation. Unlike traditional group work, Cooperative Learning (CL) is a structured teaching strategy in whic students work in small heterogeneous groups to achieve shared academic goals, with each member responsible for both individual learning and group success (Johnson & Johnson, 2002; Slavin, 2009). This approach is deeply rooted in Vygotsky's sociocultural theory, which emphasizes that knowledge is constructed through social interaction and peer collaboration. Through CL, students negotiate meaning, explain concepts, and support one another, leading to deeper cognitive engagement, particularly in vocabulary acquisition. Such interactions are essential in EFL classrooms, where learners benefit greatly from scaffolding by peers and opportunities to use new vocabulary in communicative contexts.

At SMP Langkat Binjai, the structural context presents an opportunity: the class size of approximately 10–15 students in Grade VII is ideal for implementing interactive and cooperative learning. However, the absence of localized structured vocabulary materials designed to promote collaborative learning under K13 creates a practical barrier.Although dedicated, teachers often lack resources and pedagogical support to move beyond traditional instruction. Most available materials either neglect student engagement or fail to utilize structured techniques that foster group interaction and scaffolded vocabulary practice.

The setting of the SMP Langkat Binjai further underlines the need for a localized, active approach. Grade VII classes were small (10–15 students), which is conducive to interactive group work. However, the school also suffers from resource limitations, and relies on conventional textbooks. Explicitly acknowledging that teachers have limited access to engaging, locally-relevant resources would strengthen the case for developing new materials. Prior research suggests that embedding local cultural content can boost student interest; materials integrating North Sumatran themes (such as traditional markets or farming) have been shown to increase the relevance and motivation of SMP Langkat Binjai students. Furthermore, in a context with minimal technology, simple CL techniques (such as Jigsaw or Think-Pair-Share) can be especially practical. Highlighting this local context—small class sizes, limited materials, and cultural relevance—emphasizes why a tailored CL-based vocabulary program is urgently needed.

In this context, **Cooperative Learning (CL)** emerged as a highly relevant instructional approach aligned with the ethos of K13. Unlike general group work, CL involves structured small-group interactions, where members work interdependently toward shared goals, ensuring both collective and individual accountability (Chauhan & Yadav, 2011). Strategies such as *Think-Pair-Share*, *Jigsaw*, *Round Robin*, and *Numbered Heads Together*

promote interaction, peer explanation, and critical thinking, all of which are essential to vocabulary acquisition. CL also nurtures positive classroom climates, increases student motivation, and reinforces retention through meaningful social engagement (Webb, 2008).

The theoretical and practical benefits of CL for vocabulary development are manifold. CL encourages deeper cognitive processing by requiring learners to collaboratively explain, negotiate, and apply new vocabulary. It also supports contextualized learning, in which words are encountered and used in real-life tasks and not isolated lists. Furthermore, CL supports national education goalsc such as *Penguatan Pendidikan Karakter* (PPK) and *Higher Order Thinking Skills* (HOTS), as they cultivate communication, collaboration, empathy, and problem-solving skills. Within cooperative settings, peer scaffolding enables diverse learners to progress at their own pace, making CL especially suitable for classrooms such as those at SMP Langkat Binjai.

Several studies have explored cooperative learning in EFL settings (Astuti, 2024) Rorimpandey et al. (2024), many of which fall short in providing **structured, localized, and empirically validated materials** designed specifically for vocabulary instruction. Dewi (2025) explored digital teaching strategies but not cooperative frameworks. Ismahani and Sihombing (2025) assessed online vocabulary resources, yet did not address CL. Moreover, few studies have aligned vocabulary instruction with K13 standards in actual classroom implementation, especially in rural or semi-urban areas. These gaps highlight the absence of teaching materials that integrate CL strategies into vocabulary learning, with practical applicability for teachers in real-world settings.

Therefore, this study aims to **develop, implement, and evaluate a set of English vocabulary teaching materials grounded in Cooperative Learning**, explicitly designed for Grade VII students at SMP Langkat Binjai and aligned with the 2013 curriculum. Using the ADDIE instructional design model, these materials will be developed based on students' needs, cooperative learning principles, and K13 competencies. This research intends to bridge the gap between curriculum expectations and classroom realities by offering practical, engaging, and effective materials that support vocabulary mastery through collaboration. This work will contribute theoretically to the literature on material development and cooperative learning and practically by equipping teachers with tools to enhance student learning outcomes.

The chapter could also frame the study in terms of the national education policy. The K13 curriculum explicitly mandates active student-centered pedagogy, yet many classrooms remain teacher-centered. For instance, Nurbiana (2022) found that many English teachers still fall back on grammar-translation because of limited support. The text could strengthen its argument by highlighting how CL directly develops the competencies and values promoted by K13. Cooperative learning inherently fosters communication, collaboration, empathy, and problem-solving – the skills and character traits that Indonesia's educational reforms emphasize. Articulating how the proposed materials advance these national priorities would underscore the practical significance of the research, framing it as a solution aligned with Indonesia's broader educational goal.

In addition to aligning with national educational goals, the development of cooperative-based vocabulary materials addresses a broader pedagogical shift toward active learning paradigms. Cooperative learning has been widely supported by constructivist and socio-cultural learning theories, particularly Vygotsky's notion that social interaction is a primary driver of cognitive development. In this view, language learning is not an individual process, but a socially mediated activity in which learners construct meaning. By incorporating structured collaboration into vocabulary instruction, students are not only exposed to new words but are also required to use, discuss, and reflect on them with peers, leading to deeper cognitive engagement and better retention.

Furthermore, cooperative learning promotes accountability, empathy, leadership, and problem-solving, key 21st-century competencies encouraged by K13 and Penguatan Pendidikan Karakter (PPK). Through well-structured group activities, students learn to value diverse perspectives and take responsibility for their shared learning goals. In small classes like those at SMP Langkat Binjai, cooperative learning provides a practical solution for maximizing classroom interaction without requiring complex technology or external resources".

II. METHODS

This study employs a Research and Development (R&D) approach with the ADDIE model as its instructional design framework. R&D is appropriate for studies that aim to produce educational products, such as teaching materials, and systematically test their quality and effectiveness in real-world contexts (Borg & Gall, 2003). The ADDIE model (Analysis, Design, Development, Implementation, Evaluation) was selected because of its structured yet flexible nature and wide acceptance in educational material development (Branch, 2010). This study aims to develop English vocabulary teaching materials based on Cooperative Learning strategies for Grade VII students at SMP Langkat Binjai, aligned with the 2013 curriculum (K13).

The ADDIE model, which -repesents analysis, design, development, implementation, and evaluation is widely used in instructional design, particularly in educational research and product development. It provides a structured and iterative framework that ensures that teaching materials are grounded in learner needs, pedagogical theories, and empirical testing. Each phase of ADDIE serves a specific purpose.

1. Analysis: Understanding learner needs, learning context, and curriculum goals.
2. Design: Defining objectives, content structure, and learning activities.
3. Development: Creating the actual materials and selecting media/tools.
4. Implementation: Piloting and adapting the materials in real classrooms.
5. Evaluation: Assessing effectiveness through feedback and performance data

In R&D studies, such as this, ADDIE ensures that the materials are both theoretically sound and practically feasible. Its application in the current study allows for alignment with curriculum demands, the incorporation of cooperative strategies, and real-time feedback from students and teachers.

This study uses both qualitative and quantitative data:

1. Qualitative data were collected through interviews, observations, and open-ended questionnaires to understand student needs, learning behaviors, and teacher perceptions.
2. Quantitative data: gathered from vocabulary pre-tests and post-tests to assess improvement in students' vocabulary mastery.

Data sources include students (primary users of the material), teachers (users and evaluators of the materials), and Validators (experts who assess the quality of the product).

To collect and analyze data, the following instruments are used:

1. Needs analysis questionnaire: to explore students' and teachers' needs in vocabulary learning.
2. Observation checklist: to assess classroom engagement and interaction during implementation.
3. Interview guides: semi-structured interviews with teachers and students.
4. Validation sheets: for expert judgment on content appropriateness, design quality, and alignment with K13.
5. Pre-test and post-test: to measure vocabulary improvement.
6. Student response questionnaire: to gather perceptions of material effectiveness and engagement.

The research procedures follow the ADDIE stages:

1. Conduct needs analysis using questionnaires and interviews with students and teachers.
2. Design the teaching materials, including layout, vocabulary selection, and CL strategies.
3. Develop the prototype materials and submit them for expert validation.
4. Revise based on expert feedback and develop the final draft.
5. Implement the materials in classroom sessions.
6. Evaluate using pre- and post-tests and student feedback to measure effectiveness

The analysis involved both quantitative and qualitative methods to ensure a comprehensive understanding of material development and its impact.

1. Quantitative Analysis

Pre-test and post-test data will be analyzed using descriptive statistics (mean scores and gain scores) to assess the improvement in students' vocabulary mastery after using cooperative learning-based materials. This directly addressed the third research question concerning the effectiveness of these materials.

2. Qualitative Analysis

Interview transcripts from students and teachers will be analyzed thematically to identify patterns of perception regarding engagement, clarity of instruction, and collaborative learning experiences. Observation checklists will also be examined to evaluate how cooperative learning structures influence classroom behavior and vocabulary use.

By triangulating data from tests, interviews, and observations, the study ensured validity and reliability, while providing a holistic view of the materials' practicality and effectiveness in real classroom settings.

To ensure product validity, three experts are involved in evaluating:

1. Relevance and accuracy of vocabulary items (language expert).
2. Instructional quality and design (material expert).
3. Curriculum alignment with K13 (curriculum expert).

The reliability of the test instruments was examined through item analysis in the pilot phase. The internal consistency of student responses to the questionnaires was measured using Cronbach's alpha.

This study ensures full ethical compliance:

1. All participants are informed about the purpose and process of the study.
2. Parental and institutional consent is obtained prior to classroom trials.

3. Data are kept confidential and used strictly for academic purposes.
4. Participation is voluntary, with the right to withdraw at any time

III.   RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

A. *Research Result*

The development of vocabulary materials systematically followed the ADDIE model to ensure both pedagogical soundness and contextual relevance. Each phase is described in detail below:

The analysis phase aimed to identify the needs of the students, the requirements of the K13 curriculum, and the existing challenges in vocabulary instruction at SMP Langkat Binjai. Several instruments and techniques have been employed, including classroom observations, teacher interviews, student questionnaires, and syllabus mapping.

SMP Langkat Binjai is a semi-urban junior high school with a relatively small class size (10–15 students per class). The school uses the Kurikulum 2013 (K13), which emphasizes student-centered learning, communicative competence, and 21st-century skills. However, classroom observations revealed that actual vocabulary instruction often relied on traditional teacher-centered methods such as:

1. Copying word lists from the textbook.
2. Translating words into Bahasa Indonesia without context.
3. Repeating words through rote memorization.

This approach results in low engagement, minimal interaction, and weak vocabulary retention. Many students demonstrated a limited ability to use vocabulary in communicative situations, despite having memorized lists of words.

A needs analysis questionnaire was distributed to Grade VII students (n = 15). The questionnaire aimed to explore students' perceptions of their vocabulary-learning challenges, preferences for learning activities, and exposure to English outside the classroom.

Key findings included:

1. 73% of students found vocabulary lessons "boring" or "difficult to remember".
2. 80% stated that they wanted more interactive activities such as games, group work, or speaking tasks.
3. 67% said they rarely used English outside the classroom.
4. 87% reported that they mainly learned vocabulary by copying and memorizing lists.

These results indicate a clear gap between current teaching methods and students' learning preferences, highlighting the need for more interactive and contextualized vocabulary instruction.

An interview with an English teacher further supported students' responses. The teacher explained that vocabulary lessons typically followed the textbook without significant modification because:

- Limited access to additional materials.
- The teacher did not receive specialized training on cooperative learning strategies.

Time constraints made it difficult to prepare interactive materials.

The teacher expressed interest in using Cooperative Learning but lacked structured resources and models to implement it effectively.

The design phase aimed to plan the structure of vocabulary materials by defining learning objectives, selecting appropriate Cooperative Learning techniques, and organizing instructional content.

1.   Defining Learning Objectives

Learning objectives were formulated based on:

1. The K13 curriculum competencies.
2. Students' needs identified in the analysis phase.
3. The principle that vocabulary learning should be interactive, contextual, and meaningful.

For each unit, the objectives included:

1. Comprehension of target vocabulary in meaningful contexts.
2. Production of vocabulary through speaking and writing tasks.
3. Collaboration through structured group activities.
4. Character building, such as responsibility and cooperation, in line with K13.

2.   Selection of Cooperative Learning Techniques

Different CL techniques were selected according to the nature of the vocabulary themes and the desired learning outcomes.

To evaluate the effectiveness of the materials, the students completed a vocabulary pre-test before the implementation and a post-test after the six sessions. Both tests consisted of 40 multiple-choice and short-answer items that covered the target vocabulary.

Table 1. Quantitatif Data

Measure	n	Mean	SD	Min	Max
Pre-test	15	56.40	8.01	41	72
Post-test	15	68.73	10.62	55	96
Gain	15	12.33	6.67	4	24

The implementation of Cooperative Learning (CL)-based vocabulary teaching materials at SMP Langkat Binjai has produced significant improvements in students' vocabulary mastery and engagement. This section discusses these findings in relation to relevant theories, previous studies, and curriculum objectives, and addresses both cognitive and pedagogical implications.

The observed increase in student engagement and vocabulary retention aligns strongly with Vygotsky's sociocultural theory (1978), which posits that learning occurs through social interaction and scaffolding within a learner's Zone of Proximal Development (ZPD).

This shift reflects Vygotsky's argument that cognitive development is a fundamentally social process. CL structures, particularly Jigsaw, TPS, and GI, created structured opportunities for learners to mediate language collaboratively, which led to deeper vocabulary processing and more meaningful use. The statistically significant gain in vocabulary test scores (t (14) =7.16, p<.001; Cohen's d=1.85) provides quantitative evidence for the effectiveness of CL strategies in supporting vocabulary acquisition.

The findings are consistent with several previous studies in the Indonesian EFL context:

a. Hind and Astuti (2024) found that the jigsaw technique significantly improved junior high students' reading comprehension and vocabulary retention by promoting mutual teaching and active listening. Similarly, in this study, Jigsaw facilitated peer explanation and resulted in better vocabulary retention than the traditional methods (Hind & Astuti, 2024).

b. Rorimpandey et al. (2024) demonstrated that the STAD CL model increases student participation and incidental vocabulary learning. The NHT sessions in this research played a similar role: ensuring all students were actively engaged and accountable during group tasks (Rorimpandey, R. S., Kartini, K., & Moybeka, 2024).

c. Ismahani and Sihombing (2025) explored digital vocabulary tools, but lacked collaborative structures. While their study showed increased motivation through digital media, it did not leverage peer interaction, which proved to be a crucial factor in deep vocabulary learning (Ismahani, R., & Sihombing, 2025).

d. Dewi (2025) focused on AI-generated vocabulary activities but found that these lacked classroom-tested cooperative frameworks. In contrast, the present study demonstrates how teacher-friendly, low-tech CL materials can yield significant vocabulary gains, even without advanced technology (Dewi, 2025).

The Kurikulum 2013 (K13) emphasizes student-centered learning, communication, collaboration, and the development of 21st-century skills such as critical thinking and character education. However, earlier observations in this study revealed a gap between these ideals and classroom practice: Vocabulary teaching was dominated by rote memorization and translation.

The CL-based materials addressed this gap by:

a. Promoting active learning through structured peer interactions.
b. Supporting communication and collaboration during vocabulary tasks.
c. Encouraging responsibility and empathy, key elements of character education, through peer teaching and group accountability.

By explicitly mapping each unit's objectives to the K13 competencies, the materials operationalized the curriculum's pedagogical vision, making it practical and achievable for teachers in real classrooms.

The qualitative findings highlight increased student motivation and participation, particularly during the Round Robin and GI sessions. The students expressed enjoyment and a sense of responsibility when working in groups. This reflects the affective benefits of CL, which previous research (e.g., Webb, 2008) identifies as critical for language learning: when learners feel supported and engaged, their willingness to communicate and their retention improves.

Notably, previously quiet students became more vocal in the NHT and TPS sessions, indicating that the CL structures provided a safe and predictable space for participation. Peer support reduces anxiety, which is often a barrier to oral language production in an EFL context.

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A significant contribution of this study is that it demonstrates that CL-based vocabulary instruction is highly feasible in semi-urban schools with limited technology.

- ○ No advanced equipment was required; group work relied on worksheets, role cards, or teacher guidance.
- ○ The class size (10–15 students) was ideal for structured interactions.
- ○ After minimal training, the teacher was able to implement materials with high fidelity (up to 90% by Session 6).

This shows that innovative pedagogy does not depend on high-tech tools but on clear structures, well-designed materials, and teacher facilitation.

IV. CONCLUSIONS

This chapter provides a comprehensive conclusion derived from the research findings and discusses the implications of this study. It summarizes the entire research process, from the analysis and development stages to the validation, implementation, and evaluation of the Cooperative Learning (CL)-based vocabulary teaching materials for Grade VII students at SMP Langkat Binjai during the 2025/2026 academic year.

The conclusions were structured based on the research objectives and the ADDIE instructional design framework, which guided the development of the materials. Additionally, this chapter offers detailed suggestions for teachers, schools, policymakers, researchers, and material developers to maximize the practical impact of the research.

Unlike the brief summary provided earlier, this extended version presents the conclusions in a more analytical and structured manner. Each phase of the research is revisited to emphasize its contributions, supported by data excerpts, tables, and examples from classroom implementation.

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