



The Effectiveness of Hots-Based Activities Using Harry Potter Novel for Vocabulary Mastery of Idiomatic Expressions

Niken Ardella Wahyu Pamungkas, Saptanto Hari Wibawa, Dwi Rahayu

Jurusan Pendidikan Bahasa Inggris, STKIP PGRI Pacitan

ardelaniken10@gmail.com, saptantohariw@gmail.com, dwirahayu6357@gmail.com

Abstrak

Penelitian ini bertujuan untuk menganalisis efektivitas penerapan aktivitas berbasis Higher Order Thinking Skills (HOTS) dengan memanfaatkan novel *Harry Potter and the Sorcerer's Stone* dalam meningkatkan penguasaan kosakata dan pemahaman ungkapan idiomatik siswa. Penelitian menggunakan pendekatan kuantitatif dengan desain kuasi eksperimen berbentuk pretest-posttest control group design. Subjek penelitian berjumlah 59 siswa kelas VIII SMP Negeri 2 Tulakan yang dibagi ke dalam kelas eksperimen sebanyak 30 siswa dan kelas kontrol sebanyak 29 siswa. Pengumpulan data dilakukan melalui tes penguasaan kosakata sebagai pretest dan posttest, observasi proses pembelajaran, serta angket untuk mengetahui respons siswa terhadap penerapan pembelajaran. Analisis data dilakukan menggunakan IBM SPSS Statistics 25 melalui statistik deskriptif, uji normalitas, uji homogenitas, dan uji Independent Samples t-test. Hasil penelitian menunjukkan bahwa kelas eksperimen memperoleh peningkatan hasil belajar yang lebih tinggi dibandingkan kelas kontrol setelah mengikuti pembelajaran berbasis HOTS. Hasil pengujian hipotesis menunjukkan nilai t hitung sebesar 19,575 dengan nilai signifikansi 0,000 ($<0,05$), sehingga hipotesis alternatif diterima. Hasil observasi juga menunjukkan keterlibatan siswa yang sangat baik selama pembelajaran, sedangkan hasil angket mengindikasikan bahwa siswa memberikan respons positif terhadap penggunaan novel sebagai media pembelajaran. Temuan ini menunjukkan bahwa integrasi teks sastra autentik dengan aktivitas berbasis HOTS mampu menciptakan pengalaman belajar yang lebih kontekstual, meningkatkan penguasaan kosakata, memperkuat pemahaman ungkapan idiomatik, serta mengembangkan kemampuan berpikir kritis dan partisipasi aktif siswa dalam pembelajaran bahasa Inggris.

Kata kunci: Keterampilan Berpikir Tingkat Tinggi, Novel *Harry Potter*, Ungkapan Idiomatik, Pembelajaran Berbasis Sastra, Penguasaan Kosakata.

1. Introduction

English has become the dominant international language in education, science, technology, business, and intercultural communication. As globalization continues to accelerate, the ability to communicate effectively in English has become an essential competence for students, particularly those learning English as a Foreign Language (EFL). In many countries, including Indonesia, English is taught as a compulsory subject at the secondary school level because it equips learners with the linguistic competence required to access global knowledge, pursue higher education, and participate in international communication. To achieve communicative competence, students must develop proficiency in the four fundamental language skills—listening, speaking, reading, and writing—which are strongly supported by adequate vocabulary mastery. Without sufficient vocabulary knowledge, learners encounter difficulties in understanding spoken and written texts, expressing ideas accurately, and interacting confidently in various communicative situations (Ndraha et al., 2023).

Vocabulary mastery extends beyond the ability to memorize isolated words or their dictionary definitions. It encompasses understanding the form, meaning, pronunciation, grammatical functions, collocations, and contextual use of words in authentic communication. Effective vocabulary learning enables students to recognize how lexical items change meaning depending on context, register, and communicative purpose. Consequently, learners with rich vocabulary knowledge are more capable of comprehending complex texts, producing meaningful written compositions, and participating actively in classroom discussions. Conversely, limited vocabulary often prevents students from understanding reading materials, following classroom instruction, and conveying ideas effectively, thereby reducing their confidence and overall language achievement (Schmitt, 2019).

Among the various aspects of vocabulary learning, understanding idiomatic expressions remains one of the greatest challenges for EFL learners. Idioms represent figurative expressions whose meanings cannot be interpreted literally from the meanings of individual words. Instead, their meanings are culturally and contextually constructed, requiring learners to infer intended messages through textual and situational clues. For example, expressions such as *break the ice*, *keep an eye on*, or *his heart sank* convey figurative meanings that differ substantially from their literal interpretations. Students who rely solely on word-for-word translation frequently misunderstand such expressions, resulting in inaccurate comprehension of authentic English texts. Therefore, effective vocabulary instruction should promote contextual interpretation, inferencing skills, and critical analysis rather than emphasizing rote memorization alone (Alshumrani, 2024; Sadiqzade, 2025).

Despite the recognized importance of contextual vocabulary learning, English instruction in many classrooms continues to emphasize conventional teaching approaches. Teachers commonly introduce vocabulary through bilingual word lists, direct translation, repetitive drills, and memorization activities that prioritize short-term recall instead of meaningful language use. Although these techniques may help students remember vocabulary temporarily, they often fail to encourage learners to analyze contextual meanings, identify figurative language, or apply newly acquired vocabulary in authentic communicative situations. Consequently, students tend to develop only superficial lexical knowledge, making it difficult for them to comprehend literary texts, infer implicit meanings, and interpret idiomatic expressions encountered in real-life communication (Graham et al., 2024).

To address these limitations, contemporary language education increasingly emphasizes the integration of Higher Order Thinking Skills (HOTS) into English instruction. HOTS encourages students to move beyond remembering factual information toward higher cognitive processes, including analyzing, evaluating, and creating, as described in Bloom's Revised Taxonomy developed by Anderson and Krathwohl (2001). Rather than passively receiving information, students become active constructors of knowledge by examining contextual clues, comparing alternative interpretations, evaluating evidence, solving linguistic problems, and generating original ideas. In vocabulary learning, HOTS enables learners to identify semantic relationships, distinguish literal and figurative meanings, interpret idiomatic expressions within authentic contexts, and justify their interpretations using textual evidence. Such learning processes not only strengthen vocabulary acquisition but also foster critical thinking, problem-solving abilities, and independent learning, all of which are essential competencies for twenty-first-century education (Brookhart, 2010; Khoiruddin et al., 2023).

The successful implementation of HOTS in English language learning requires instructional materials that naturally stimulate students to analyze, interpret, evaluate, and create meaning. One of the most effective learning resources for achieving these objectives is authentic literary text. Literary works expose learners to natural language use, diverse vocabulary, realistic dialogues, figurative expressions, and meaningful communicative situations that cannot easily be found in simplified instructional materials. Through literature, students are encouraged to infer meanings from context, identify implicit messages, evaluate characters' actions, and construct interpretations supported by textual evidence. Such activities transform vocabulary learning from mechanical memorization into an interactive cognitive process that promotes both language acquisition and critical thinking (Suoth et al., 2023).

Among various literary genres, novels offer particularly rich opportunities for contextual vocabulary learning because they present language in continuous and meaningful discourse. Narrative texts provide repeated exposure to vocabulary items across different contexts, allowing learners to observe how words and expressions function naturally in communication. Moreover, novels frequently contain idiomatic expressions, collocations, and figurative language that reflect authentic English usage, enabling students to develop deeper lexical knowledge while simultaneously improving their reading comprehension. Literature-based instruction also encourages learners to discuss characters, predict events, justify interpretations, and connect textual information with their own experiences, all of which align closely with the principles of Higher Order Thinking Skills (Graham et al., 2024).

In this study, *Harry Potter and the Sorcerer's Stone* was selected as the primary instructional medium because it contains abundant contextual vocabulary, authentic dialogues, and numerous idiomatic expressions suitable for junior high school students. As one of the most widely read literary works among adolescents, the novel provides engaging storylines that can increase students' motivation and participation during English learning. Instead of studying isolated vocabulary lists, students encounter unfamiliar words and idiomatic expressions through conversations, descriptions, and character interactions. They are expected to analyze contextual clues, distinguish literal from figurative meanings, evaluate alternative interpretations, and construct logical conclusions based on

textual evidence. Consequently, vocabulary learning becomes more meaningful, enjoyable, and cognitively demanding than conventional classroom practices (Gultom et al., 2022).

Several previous studies have demonstrated the positive contribution of HOTS-oriented instruction and literature-based learning to English language education. Brookhart (2010) explains that HOTS-based learning promotes deeper cognitive processing because students actively analyze, evaluate, and create knowledge instead of merely recalling information. Likewise, Graham et al. (2024) reported that literary texts significantly enhance second-language vocabulary acquisition by providing authentic contexts that facilitate meaningful lexical learning. Furthermore, Suoth et al. (2023) found that novels effectively improve students' English language skills by increasing motivation, reading engagement, and contextual understanding of vocabulary. Research conducted by Erdiana and Panjaitan (2023) also indicates that integrating HOTS into English instruction supports learners' analytical thinking and encourages more student-centered classroom interaction. These findings collectively suggest that combining HOTS with authentic literary texts has considerable potential to improve both linguistic competence and higher-order cognitive skills.

Nevertheless, despite the growing body of literature on HOTS and literature-based instruction, relatively few studies have specifically investigated the effectiveness of HOTS-Based Activities for teaching vocabulary mastery of idiomatic expressions through authentic novels among Indonesian junior high school students. Most previous research has examined vocabulary learning, reading comprehension, or critical thinking separately, while limited attention has been given to the integration of these elements within a single instructional framework. Consequently, empirical evidence regarding the implementation of HOTS-based vocabulary learning using literary texts in Indonesian EFL classrooms remains insufficient. Addressing this gap is important because junior high school learners require instructional approaches that simultaneously strengthen vocabulary knowledge, improve idiomatic expression comprehension, and foster critical thinking abilities. Therefore, this study aims to investigate the effectiveness of HOTS-Based Activities using *Harry Potter and the Sorcerer's Stone* in improving eighth-grade students' vocabulary mastery and understanding of idiomatic expressions. In addition, the study examines the implementation of the learning activities and explores students' perceptions toward the HOTS-oriented instructional approach, thereby contributing practical and empirical evidence for English language teaching in Indonesian secondary schools.

2. Research Method

This study employed a quantitative research approach using a quasi-experimental design with a pre-test and post-test control class. The design was selected to examine the effectiveness of Higher Order Thinking Skills (HOTS)-Based Activities in improving students' vocabulary mastery and understanding of idiomatic expressions. Two classes were involved in the study: an experimental class, which received instruction through HOTS-Based Activities integrated with *Harry Potter and the Sorcerer's Stone*, and a control class, which received conventional vocabulary instruction. Both classes completed a pre-test before the treatment and a post-test after the treatment to measure learning improvement. (Ndraha et al., 2023)

The research was conducted at SMP Negeri 2 Tulakan, Pacitan, East Java, during the 2025/2026 academic year. The participants were eighth-grade students selected through cluster random sampling. The population consisted of all eighth-grade students, while two classes with relatively similar English proficiency levels were chosen as the research sample. The experimental class consisted of 30 students, whereas the control class consisted of 29 students, resulting in a total of 59 participants. The similarity of the two classes before treatment was ensured through the administration of a pre-test.

Three research instruments were employed to collect the data. The primary instrument was a vocabulary mastery test administered as both a pre-test and a post-test. The test was designed to assess students' mastery of vocabulary and idiomatic expressions based on three vocabulary aspects: form, meaning, and use. The items included multiple-choice and short-answer questions derived from vocabulary and idiomatic expressions found in *Harry Potter and the Sorcerer's Stone*.

In addition to the vocabulary test, classroom observation was conducted throughout the implementation of the learning activities. Observation sheets were used to record students' participation, engagement, responsiveness, and interaction during the teaching and learning process. These observations provided supporting qualitative evidence regarding the implementation of HOTS-Based Activities in the classroom. Furthermore, a questionnaire

was distributed to students in the experimental class after the treatment. The questionnaire aimed to investigate students' perceptions of the learning activities, including their interest, motivation, perceived effectiveness, and perceived difficulty in learning vocabulary and idiomatic expressions through the novel (Suoth et al., 2023).

The experimental treatment was implemented through four instructional meetings using HOTS-Based Activities based on *Harry Potter and the Sorcerer's Stone*. During the lessons, students were encouraged to identify unfamiliar vocabulary, analyze contextual meanings, distinguish literal and figurative meanings of idiomatic expressions, evaluate the appropriateness of language use, and construct interpretations based on textual evidence. Classroom discussions, collaborative learning, contextual questioning, and analytical tasks were employed to stimulate higher-order thinking processes. In contrast, the control class received vocabulary instruction through conventional techniques emphasizing explanation, memorization, translation, and individual exercises (Nisa et al., 2023).

The collected data were analyzed using IBM SPSS Statistics version 25. Descriptive statistics were first calculated to determine the mean scores and score distributions of both classes. Before hypothesis testing, normality and homogeneity tests were conducted to ensure that the data satisfied the assumptions required for parametric statistical analysis. After the assumptions had been fulfilled, an Independent Samples t-test was employed to determine whether a statistically significant difference existed between the experimental and control class after the implementation of HOTS-Based Activities. Classroom observation data and questionnaire responses were analyzed descriptively to complement the quantitative findings and provide a more comprehensive interpretation of the effectiveness of the instructional approach.

3. Result And Discussion

The study involved 59 eighth-grade students consisting of 30 students in the experimental class and 29 students in the control class. Before the implementation of the treatment, both classes completed a pre-test to identify their initial vocabulary mastery and understanding of idiomatic expressions. The pre-test results indicated that the two classes possessed relatively similar levels of English vocabulary proficiency, suggesting that they were comparable before the instructional intervention was implemented. Following the treatment, both classes completed a post-test using equivalent test items to evaluate students' learning achievement after the instructional process.

Descriptive Statistics

Table 1. Descriptive Statistics

Descriptive Statistics					
	N	Minimum	Maximum	Mean	Std. Deviation
Pre-Test	59	45	75	60.23	9.014
Valid N (listwise)	59				
Descriptive Statistics					
	N	Minimum	Maximum	Mean	Std. Deviation
Post-Test	59	53	96	73.03	10.802
Valid N (listwise)	59				

Source: (Data Processed by Researchers, 2026)

The descriptive statistics demonstrated a noticeable improvement in students' achievement after the implementation of HOTS-Based Activities. The experimental class obtained a mean score of **60.23** on the pre-test, which increased to **73.03** on the post-test after participating in four meetings of HOTS-oriented learning activities integrated with *Harry Potter and the Sorcerer's Stone*. Meanwhile, the control class also experienced improvement after conventional instruction, although the increase was considerably lower than that of the experimental class. These findings indicate that the implementation of HOTS-Based Activities contributed positively to students' vocabulary mastery and understanding of idiomatic expressions.

The improvement observed in the experimental class suggests that contextual learning activities enabled students to process vocabulary more meaningfully. Rather than memorizing isolated words, students analyzed vocabulary within authentic situations presented in the novel, discussed possible meanings collaboratively, and interpreted idiomatic expressions based on textual evidence. Such learning experiences encouraged students to build deeper conceptual understanding while simultaneously developing critical thinking skills.

Normality and Homogeneity Tests

Table 2. Normality and Homogeneity Tests

Tests of Normality							
	Kelas	Kolmogorov-Smirnov ^a			Shapiro-Wilk		
		Statistic	df	Sig.	Statistic	df	Sig.
Post-Test	Experiment	.109	30	.200*	.972	30	.595
	Control	.109	30	.200*	.972	30	.595
*. This is a lower bound of the true significance.							
a. Lilliefors Significance Correction							
Tests of Normality							
	Kelas	Kolmogorov-Smirnov ^a			Shapiro-Wilk		
		Statistic	df	Sig.	Statistic	df	Sig.
Pre-Test	Experiment	.109	30	.200*	.972	30	.595
	Control	.109	30	.200*	.972	30	.595
*. This is a lower bound of the true significance.							
a. Lilliefors Significance Correction							

Source: (Data Processed by Researchers, 2026)

Before hypothesis testing, the data were analyzed to determine whether they fulfilled the assumptions required for parametric statistical analysis. The normality test indicated that the significance value exceeded 0.05, demonstrating that the data were normally distributed. Similarly, the homogeneity test showed that the significance value was also greater than 0.05, indicating that the variances of the experimental and control classes were homogeneous. Since both assumptions were satisfied, the data were considered appropriate for further analysis using the Independent Samples *t*-test.

Hypothesis Testing

Table 3. Hypothesis Testing

Test	t	Sig. (2-tailed)	t-table
Pre-test	1.631	.108	2.001
Post-test	19.575	.000	2.001

Source: (Data Processed by Researchers, 2026)

The effectiveness of HOTS-Based Activities was examined through an Independent Samples *t*-test. The statistical analysis produced a *t*-value of **19.575** with a significance value of **0.000**, which was lower than the predetermined significance level of 0.05. Furthermore, the obtained *t*-value exceeded the critical *t*-table value (**2.001**). Therefore, the null hypothesis was rejected, while the alternative hypothesis was accepted. These findings indicate that HOTS-Based Activities using *Harry Potter and the Sorcerer's Stone* significantly improved students' vocabulary mastery and understanding of idiomatic expressions compared with conventional vocabulary instruction.

Classroom Observation

Table 4. Classroom Observation Results

No.	Observation Aspect	Observation Result
1	Students paid attention to the teacher's explanation.	Very Good
2	Students actively participated in classroom discussions.	Very Good
3	Students worked collaboratively in groups during HOTS-Based Activities.	Good
4	Students were able to identify vocabulary based on contextual clues from the novel.	Very Good
5	Students analyzed the meanings of idiomatic expressions critically.	Good
6	Students expressed their opinions and answered questions confidently.	Good
7	Students completed the assigned learning tasks independently and collaboratively.	Very Good
8	Students showed enthusiasm throughout the learning activities.	Very Good

Source: (Data Processed by Researchers, 2026)

DOI: <https://doi.org/10.69693/ijmst.v4i3.13232>

Lisensi: Creative Commons Attribution 4.0 International (CC BY 4.0)

Classroom observations revealed that students in the experimental class actively participated throughout the learning process. Students showed greater enthusiasm during reading activities, vocabulary discussions, and idiomatic expression analysis. They frequently exchanged ideas, justified their answers using textual evidence, and demonstrated increasing confidence in expressing opinions. Compared with the control class, students in the experimental class exhibited higher engagement and were more willing to participate in collaborative learning activities.

Students' Perceptions

Table 5. Summary of Students' Questionnaire Results

No.	Questionnaire Indicator	Students' Response
1	Interest in learning English	Positive
2	Learning motivation	Positive
3	Vocabulary mastery	Positive
4	Understanding of idiomatic expressions	Positive
5	Critical thinking and classroom participation	Positive

Source: (Data Processed by Researchers, 2026)

The questionnaire results indicated that students responded positively to the implementation of HOTS-Based Activities. Most participants agreed that learning vocabulary through *Harry Potter and the Sorcerer's Stone* was more enjoyable than traditional vocabulary instruction. Students reported that contextual learning helped them understand unfamiliar words and idiomatic expressions more effectively because vocabulary was introduced naturally through meaningful situations. They also perceived that the learning activities encouraged them to think more critically, participate actively in classroom discussions, and become more confident when interpreting English texts.

Discussion

The findings of this study demonstrate that the implementation of Higher Order Thinking Skills (HOTS)-Based Activities using *Harry Potter and the Sorcerer's Stone* significantly improved students' vocabulary mastery and understanding of idiomatic expressions. The statistical analysis revealed a significant difference between the experimental and control groups, as indicated by the Independent Samples *t*-test ($t = 19.575$, $p = 0.000$). The experimental class showed greater improvement than the control class after participating in four meetings of HOTS-oriented learning, confirming that the instructional treatment had a positive effect on students' English vocabulary achievement. These findings indicate that learning activities emphasizing contextual analysis, interpretation, and collaborative reasoning are more effective than conventional vocabulary instruction, which generally focuses on memorization and translation. The classroom observation and questionnaire results further support the quantitative findings, showing that students became more active, confident, and motivated throughout the learning process.

The effectiveness of the treatment can be explained by the characteristics of HOTS-based learning, which encourages students to become active constructors of knowledge rather than passive recipients of information. According to Anderson and Krathwohl (2001), Higher Order Thinking Skills involve cognitive processes at the levels of analyzing, evaluating, and creating, allowing learners to process information more deeply than simple remembering or understanding. In the present study, students were required to interpret unfamiliar vocabulary and idiomatic expressions by examining textual evidence, character interactions, and narrative situations presented in the novel. Instead of immediately consulting dictionaries, they relied on contextual clues and logical reasoning to infer meanings. This learning process promoted deeper cognitive engagement because students actively connected prior knowledge with new linguistic information, enabling them to construct meaningful interpretations independently. Such meaningful learning contributes to stronger vocabulary retention and greater ability to apply newly learned expressions in different communicative situations.

The implementation of HOTS was clearly reflected in each stage of the classroom activities conducted during the experimental treatment. At the analyzing stage, students identified unfamiliar vocabulary and idiomatic expressions appearing in selected passages from *Harry Potter and the Sorcerer's Stone*. They examined surrounding sentences, character behaviours, and plot development to infer the intended meanings of unfamiliar

words without relying solely on literal translation. For instance, when students encountered the expression *his heart sank*, they initially interpreted it literally as a physical movement of the heart. However, after analyzing the emotional context of the scene, they concluded that the expression describes a sudden feeling of disappointment or hopelessness rather than a physiological event. This activity illustrates how contextual analysis encourages students to understand figurative language more accurately while strengthening their inferencing abilities (Sadiqzade, 2025).

The evaluating stage further strengthened students' critical thinking by requiring them to compare different interpretations and justify their conclusions using evidence from the text. During classroom discussions, students often proposed different meanings for idiomatic expressions before reaching a consensus. For example, when interpreting the expression *keep an eye on him*, some students initially believed that it meant continuously looking at someone, while others argued that it referred to protecting or supervising a person. Through collaborative discussion, students carefully examined the surrounding dialogue and narrative context before concluding that the expression means to watch or monitor someone carefully. This process required learners to defend their opinions logically and evaluate alternative interpretations based on textual evidence rather than personal assumptions. Such analytical discussions are consistent with Schmitt (2019), who argues that meaningful vocabulary learning occurs when learners actively negotiate meaning and evaluate contextual information instead of memorizing isolated lexical items.

The highest level of HOTS was represented through creating activities that required students to transfer their understanding into authentic language production. After identifying and interpreting vocabulary and idiomatic expressions, students were instructed to construct original sentences, short conversations, or alternative story endings using the target expressions appropriately. For example, after understanding the figurative meaning of *keep an eye on*, students produced dialogues involving parents, teachers, and friends in various everyday situations while maintaining the correct idiomatic meaning. This activity demonstrated that students were able not only to recognize vocabulary but also to apply it flexibly in new communicative contexts. Such productive language use indicates deeper vocabulary mastery because learners can integrate new lexical knowledge into meaningful communication rather than merely recalling definitions. This finding is consistent with Ndraha et al. (2023), who emphasize that vocabulary learning becomes more effective when students actively use newly acquired words in realistic communication.

Another important factor contributing to students' improvement was the use of authentic literary texts as the primary instructional medium. *Harry Potter and the Sorcerer's Stone* presents vocabulary and idiomatic expressions naturally through dialogues, narration, and character interactions, allowing students to encounter language in meaningful communicative contexts. Unlike isolated vocabulary lists, authentic literary texts expose learners to how words function within complete discourse, enabling them to understand semantic relationships, figurative meanings, and pragmatic usage simultaneously. Throughout the learning process, students analyzed characters' emotions, inferred speakers' intentions, and interpreted figurative language by considering the overall storyline. Consequently, vocabulary learning became a process of constructing meaning rather than memorizing translations. Graham et al. (2024) argue that literature-based instruction provides richer linguistic input than traditional vocabulary exercises because literary texts encourage contextual interpretation, inferencing, and critical engagement with language. These characteristics explain why students in the experimental class demonstrated higher achievement than those who received conventional instruction.

The positive learning outcomes obtained in this study are also supported by the classroom observation results, which indicated that students demonstrated high levels of participation, enthusiasm, and confidence during the implementation of HOTS-Based Activities. Students actively engaged in group discussions, exchanged ideas with classmates, and justified their interpretations using evidence from the novel. These behaviours reflect the characteristics of student-centred learning, in which learners assume an active role in constructing knowledge through interaction and reflection rather than passively receiving information from the teacher. Collaborative learning further encouraged students to communicate their opinions, evaluate alternative viewpoints, and refine their understanding of vocabulary through meaningful discussion. Such learning experiences create an interactive classroom atmosphere that supports both language acquisition and critical thinking development. The positive responses reported in the students' questionnaires also indicate that learners perceived the activities as enjoyable, motivating, and helpful for understanding unfamiliar vocabulary and idiomatic expressions.

The findings also reinforce the theoretical perspective that vocabulary acquisition is most effective when words are learned in meaningful contexts instead of through isolated memorization. Throughout the instructional process,

students encountered unfamiliar vocabulary repeatedly within different chapters, dialogues, and narrative events in *Harry Potter and the Sorcerer's Stone*. This repeated contextual exposure enabled students to recognize semantic relationships, infer meanings, and understand how vocabulary functions in authentic communication. Moreover, encountering idiomatic expressions within realistic situations helped students distinguish between literal and figurative meanings more accurately. Consequently, students developed not only broader vocabulary knowledge but also greater communicative competence because they learned how expressions are appropriately used in context. This finding supports Graham et al. (2024), who argue that literature-based instruction provides authentic linguistic input that promotes contextual vocabulary acquisition, while authentic reading experiences encourage learners to construct meaning actively through interaction with texts.

Another important contribution of this study is its emphasis on idiomatic expressions, which remain one of the most challenging aspects of English vocabulary learning for Indonesian learners of English as a Foreign Language. Conventional vocabulary instruction often emphasizes single-word meanings while paying limited attention to figurative language. As a result, students may possess adequate vocabulary knowledge but still experience difficulties interpreting authentic English texts containing idioms. Through HOTS-Based Activities, students were encouraged to distinguish literal meanings from figurative interpretations by analysing context, identifying speakers' intentions, and examining supporting textual evidence. These analytical processes reduced students' dependence on word-for-word translation and improved their ability to infer intended meanings independently. Therefore, the integration of HOTS with authentic literary texts represents an effective pedagogical strategy for developing both lexical competence and interpretative skills simultaneously (Sadiqzade, 2025).

The present findings are consistent with previous studies reporting the positive influence of HOTS-oriented instruction and literature-based learning on English language achievement. Erdiana and Panjaitan (2023) explain that integrating HOTS into English instruction encourages learners to analyse information critically, evaluate evidence, and apply knowledge creatively in different situations. Similarly, Brookhart (2010) emphasizes that higher-order thinking activities promote deeper cognitive processing, resulting in more meaningful learning and longer knowledge retention. In addition, Graham et al. (2024) demonstrate that literary texts provide authentic contexts that facilitate vocabulary acquisition and reading comprehension more effectively than decontextualized language exercises. While earlier studies primarily investigated vocabulary mastery or reading comprehension independently, the present study extends previous research by demonstrating that HOTS-Based Activities implemented through *Harry Potter and the Sorcerer's Stone* can simultaneously improve vocabulary mastery and understanding of idiomatic expressions among Indonesian junior high school students. This contribution enriches the existing literature by highlighting the complementary relationship between higher-order thinking and literature-based language instruction.

Despite these positive findings, several limitations should be acknowledged. The study involved only 59 eighth-grade students from one junior high school, limiting the generalizability of the results to broader educational settings. In addition, the instructional treatment was conducted over four classroom meetings, which may not fully represent the long-term impact of HOTS-Based Activities on vocabulary retention and language development. Future studies should involve larger and more diverse samples, extend the duration of the intervention, and investigate additional language skills such as reading comprehension, speaking, and writing. Researchers may also compare different literary genres, including short stories, digital literature, or graphic novels, to determine whether similar learning outcomes can be achieved through alternative authentic materials. Such investigations would provide a more comprehensive understanding of the effectiveness of HOTS-oriented literature-based instruction across various English learning contexts.

Overall, the findings demonstrate that integrating Higher Order Thinking Skills with authentic literary texts creates a meaningful and effective approach to English vocabulary instruction. Rather than relying on rote memorization, students actively analysed contexts, evaluated alternative interpretations, and applied newly acquired vocabulary in authentic communicative situations. These learning experiences improved vocabulary mastery, enhanced understanding of idiomatic expressions, strengthened critical thinking, and increased classroom participation. Therefore, English teachers are encouraged to incorporate authentic literary works into vocabulary instruction through HOTS-oriented activities that promote analysis, evaluation, and creation. Such an instructional approach not only supports students' linguistic development but also prepares them to become independent, reflective, and critical language learners capable of interpreting authentic English texts with greater confidence and accuracy (Rosmawati, 2023; Latif et al., 2025).

4. Conclusion

This study concludes that the implementation of Higher Order Thinking Skills (HOTS)-Based Activities using *Harry Potter and the Sorcerer's Stone* is effective in improving students' vocabulary mastery and understanding of idiomatic expressions. The findings revealed that students in the experimental class achieved significantly higher post-test scores than those in the control class, indicating that HOTS-oriented instruction provided more meaningful learning experiences than conventional vocabulary teaching methods. By engaging students in activities that required them to analyze contexts, interpret figurative language, evaluate textual evidence, and discuss their ideas collaboratively, the learning process promoted not only vocabulary acquisition but also the development of critical thinking skills. Furthermore, the use of an authentic literary work created an engaging learning environment that encouraged students to understand vocabulary and idiomatic expressions in meaningful contexts rather than through rote memorization. The positive classroom observations and students' responses also suggest that HOTS-Based Activities increased students' participation, motivation, and confidence during English learning. Overall, this study provides empirical evidence that integrating Higher Order Thinking Skills with literature-based instruction can serve as an effective strategy for enhancing English vocabulary learning among junior high school students. These findings are expected to contribute to English language teaching practices by encouraging teachers to adopt more interactive, contextual, and student-centred approaches to vocabulary instruction.

References

1. Alshumrani, H. A. (2024). Unveiling vocabulary teaching and learning beliefs of teachers and learners in an EFL context. *Asian-Pacific Journal of Second and Foreign Language Education*, 9, 20. <https://doi.org/10.1186/s40862-023-00242-0>
2. Anderson, L. W., & Krathwohl, D. R. (2001). A taxonomy for learning, teaching, and assessing: A revision of Bloom's taxonomy of educational objectives. Longman.
3. Azzahra, M. D. (2025). *Studi Literatur Penggunaan Media Pop-Up Book pada*. *JIIP (Jurnal Ilmiah Ilmu Pendidikan)* (EISSN: 2614-8854) Volume 8, Nomor 3, Maret 2025 (2464-2469), 8, 2464–2469. Retrieved from <http://jiip.stkipyapisdompupu.ac.id/jiip/index.php/JIIP/article/download/7174/5226>
4. Brookhart, S. M. (2010). How to assess higher-order thinking skills in your classroom. ASCD.
5. Erdiana, N., & Panjaitan, S. (2023). How is HOTS integrated into the Indonesian high school English textbook? *Studies in English Language and Education*, 10(1), 60–77. <https://doi.org/10.24815/siele.v10i1.26052>
6. Graham, S., Zhang, P., Hofweber, J., Fisher, L., & Krüsemann, H. (2024). Literature and second language vocabulary learning: The role of text type and teaching approach. *The Modern Language Journal*, 108(3), 579–600. <https://doi.org/10.1111/modl.12946>
7. Josafat Gultom, R., Nuari Simarmata, J., Risnawati Purba, O., & Saragih, E. (2022). Teachers' Strategies in Teaching English Vocabulary in Junior High School. Print) *Journal of English Language and Education*, 7(1), 2022. Retrieved from <https://mail.jele.or.id/index.php/jele/article/download/182/124>
8. Khoiruddin, M. H., Baharin, Z. H. Z., Kaka, M. S., & Saenpich, S. (2023). Development of Visual Novel Games as Learning Media for the History of Indonesia's Independence. *Journal of Educational Technology and Learning Creativity*, 1(1), 33–41. <https://doi.org/10.37251/jetlc.v1i1.622>
9. Labaree, D. F. (2020). On the Nature of Teaching and Teacher Education. *Journal of Teacher Education*, 51(3), 228–233. <https://doi.org/10.1177/0022487100051003011>
10. Latif, S., Bahara, S. R., Ayu, S., Lestari, B., Latif, T., & Asmiranda, B. (2025). Students' Critical Thinking Skills in Analyzing Literary Works in the Form of Digital Short Stories. 4778, 1673–1684. <https://doi.org/10.24256/ideas>
11. Ndraha, M. P., Naibaho, T. T., Purba, M. A., Debora, G., Klara, A., Manurung, R., ... Artikel, I. (2023). The Importance of Learning English "Vocabulary" for Elementary School Age Children. 2(3), 114–125. Retrieved from <https://www.journalstkipgrisutubondo.ac.id/index.php/join/article/download/992/655>
12. Nisa, H., Isnaini, M., Utami, L. S., & Islahudin, I. (2023). Collaborative Learning Effect on Improving Students' Creativity and Critical Thinking in the Independent Curriculum. *AL-ISHLAH: Jurnal Pendidikan*, 15(3), 4038–4048. <https://doi.org/10.35445/alishlah.v15i3.3538>
13. Rosmawati, W. (2023). Efektivitas Penggunaan E-Book untuk Melatih Kemampuan Berpikir Kritis Peserta Didik. *Jurnal Didaktika Pendidikan Dasar*, 7(3), 979–1002. <https://doi.org/10.26811/didaktika.v7i3.1172>
14. Sadiqzade, Z. (2025). Idiomatic Expressions and Their Impact on Lexical Competence. *Journal of Azerbaijan Language and Education Studies*, 2(1), 26–33. <https://doi.org/10.69760/jales.2025001002>
15. Schmitt, N. (2019). Understanding vocabulary acquisition, instruction, and assessment: A research agenda. *Language Teaching*, 52(2), 261–274.
16. Suoth, A. A., Wuntu, C. N., & Rorintulus, O. A. (2023). The Effectiveness of Using Novels in the Learning Process to Improve the English Language Skills: A Systematic Review. *Journal of English Language Teaching, Literature and Culture*, 2(1), 84–95. <https://doi.org/10.53682/jeltec.v2i1.6250>