

THE TEACHING OF ENGLISH VOCABULARY TO YOUNG LEARNERS

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Abstract

This study is aimed to describe the techniques used by the teacher in teaching English vocabulary for young learners in SD Negeri Padasuka 2 in Soreang. The method used in this study is descriptive study. This study was conducted by using three techniques of data collection: observation and interview. The source of the data was the English teacher and the subjects were the four grade students of SD Negeri Padasuka 2 Soreang. The findings revealed that the teacher applied various techniques in teaching vocabulary which divided into two stages. For presenting new words, using flashcards and miming are preferred by the teacher in this study. And the final in getting students to practice the words they have learnt, the teacher mostly employed identifying and matching task.

Keywords: Techniques, Vocabulary Teaching, and Young Learners.

INTRODUCTION

It is very important for all people who learn a language to understand and improve vocabularies because the more vocabulary we know the better we can understand the meaning of the words. To improve and enrich our vocabularies there are some ways, for example by vocabulary. Name animal, media picture to get many words. Teachers have the important role to build children's vocabularies. They should know the factors in teaching such as methods, strategies, techniques, and materials, so that the teacher can convey the materials well in accordance with children's characteristics.

According to Evan and Lang (2006) said that a good method was useless in teacher's hand who did not know how to use it and a good teacher could not be effective if she/he used a bad method. Some experts have formulated some possible techniques that can be considered good and can be implemented to the TEYL, class especially in teaching vocabulary. The research is intended to discover of the teaching English vocabulary to young learners in a Elementary Padasuka 2, and to investigate the "The Teaching of English Vocabulary to Young Learners.

Based on the description above, this study highlights teacher's difficulties in teaching English vocabulary to young learners in the classroom. And to cope with the difficulties English teacher can possibly design suitable teaching techniques to be implemented in their classes. Some experts have formulated some possible techniques that can be considered good and can be implemented to the TEYL, class especially in teaching vocabulary. The research is intended to discover of the teaching English vocabulary to young learners in a Elementary Padasuka 2, and to investigate the techniques used by some the teaching of English vocabulary to young learners.

1. Vocabulary

Vocabulary is the stock of words which are at disposal of speaker or writer. The term of vocabulary may refer to all words in the whole language, at the words or phrase used in particular varieties such as dialect, register and terminology. Along the lines of Hartman's statement, Spencer (1992) mentioned vocabulary as the highest ability to master for a reader or a writer, words which are used in the subject of knowledge, and a list of words which is arranged such as in dictionary, complete with a clear and short explanation.

In teaching vocabulary, teachers should know what of vocabulary to be taught. According to Finocchiaro (1989: 21, cited from Fadillah, 2011) vocabulary is divided into two types: Function word. It needs to be learned as quickly as feasible (in a logical order and sequence, however) and Content word. It can be learned in small groups around "life" situations.

There are some aspects in teaching vocabulary namely, pronounce, spelling, meaning and word use. As Ur (1999: 23) states that form (pronounce and spelling), grammar, collocation, meaning, and word formation are the aspects of vocabulary which are needed to be taught. This research was limited to three aspects. They are meaning, pronunciation, grammar and part of speech specially noun.

Vocabulary mastery can be defined as a number of vocabulary (words) in a language which contains information about its meaning, form, and usage in context of communication. It is the basic knowledge that students should master first before mastering English. According to Read, the term of vocabulary knowledge refers to knowing the word meanings then the word should be similar to synonym, dictionary, or an equivalent word in learners' language.⁶ In learning vocabulary automatically they have to know the meaning of words themselves and can use it in sentences.

According to Jackson, there are two types of vocabulary, namely active vocabulary and passive vocabulary.¹² Active vocabulary refers to the words the student understands, can pronounce correctly and use them constructively in speaking and writing.¹³ It means that to use the productive vocabulary, the students are supposed to know how to pronounce it well, they must know and be able to use grammar of the language target, they are also hoped to familiar with collocation and understand the connotation meaning of the words.

2. Techniques of Teaching Vocabulary

As mentioned above, there are three main stages in teaching vocabulary. In other word, there is some common techniques used in each stage as follow:

Techniques in Presenting. Yet it is the important stage that the student is introduced with the new words. As an English teacher, we should know the techniques of teaching vocabulary which are suitable for the students.

Techniques in Practicing. In practicing stage, there are a variety of tasks which can be used in order to help move words into long-term memory.

Media is a main instrument in teaching and learning process. It is used to attract the students' attention and deliver the information easily. Teachers of young learners have to use some visuals in their teaching activities to facilitate their teaching. According to Wright, there are various kinds of media, but visual is appropriate media for young learners in learning vocabulary.

3. Young Learner

Young learners mean children from the first year of formal schooling (5 or 6 year old) to eleven or twelve year age. Young learners have own special characteristic that differentiate them from adult learners. It should be know and understood by the teacher to give contribution to improve their quality of teaching process (Halliwell, 1992).

Characteristic of young learners are different from old learners. They are five to fourteen years of age (Pinter, 2006: 1). In this age they find difficulty to know abstract thing because they have a limited knowledge about the word.

In teaching vocabulary to young learners. As teacher we all know what we should do in our preparation before teaching in the classroom such as make lesson plan, preparesome aid for teaching and many else. Every teacher will do their own way to teaching English but basically they do the same thing like others as their method in teaching English.

METHOD

This study employs a descriptive-qualitative design. According to Bogdan and Biklen (1984) qualitative research has the natural setting as the direct source of data and the researcher is the key instrument. The aim of qualitative methods is to describe the result of this research. The writer would like to describe “ The Teaching of English Vocabulary to Young Learner”. In this study qualitative research wanted to know what makes the techniques vocabulary of young learner. Regarding to objective of the research, the researcher used a qualitative research study entitled.

In this study, the teacher was observed and interviewed was done by the researcher. The result of this study is in the form of description which focused more on the process than the product of the study because the objective of the study is to know the techniques used in teaching vocabulary to young learners at *SDN Padasuka 2 Soreang*. This study used the English teacher at *SDN Padasuka 2 Soreang* as the source of data and the students as the objects.

The data was taken by observing the teaching and learning process, interviewing the English teacher. The observation was conducted in the attempt to identify and describe the techniques used by the English teacher in teaching vocabulary in every grade. According to Observation has been described by Clough and Nutbrown in Lowe (2007: 59) as a way of ‘seeing’ familiar and routine events in a new way.

In this research, the writer collecting of the data by interviewing with ask open-ended questions that encourage respondents to express their feeling, attitudes, and perceptions. The aim all of those instruments to do analyses of teacher’s strategies in teaching English vocabulary and students responses’ toward the implementation the teaching of English vocabulary at *SDN Padasuka 2*.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

Results

The data of this study were gathered through 2 instruments, they were the observations, interview with the teacher. The observations were conducted during the English class held by the teacher. The function of the observation is to give more supporting information to the data obtained from the respondents in the interview. The writer observed a class four taught by an English teacher and consisted of 26 students. There were three times observations in the whole.

Meanwhile, the data from interview with the teachers were used to confirm and to Add the information on the vocabulary teaching techniques held in English lesson for grade four students in *SDN Padasuka 2* in *Soreang*.

a. Techniques Used by the Teacher in Teaching Vocabulary

Listen and Do technique was used by the teacher when she made introduction to the lesson or asked the students to do something. In this activity the teacher gave instruction and the students did what the teacher said. The teacher used this technique many times. This

activity was used to know students' comprehension of the instruction and the students showed their comprehension by doing the instruction. During the observation, the use of this technique was not varied. The teacher always used the same instruction, such as; sit down and listen to the teacher before she made introduction to the lesson.

Listen and Repeat technique was used by the teacher to introduce new vocabulary. In this technique the teacher asked the students to repeat after the words she read. The words were read slowly and repeatedly, so the students could follow well. It was done continually and it made the students familiar with the new words. Cameron (2005) states that in the development of children's vocabulary for teaching, the students need to meet word again and again in new context that help increase what they know about words. The findings showed that the most essential part was the teacher and students' voice. However the teacher made some pronunciations problem. As the model, the teacher should be careful in pronouncing the words. However, based on the observation, the teacher made some mistakes. For example when she pronounced "rabbit" it sounds /'ræbit/, it should be /'ræbɪt/. Since the teachers become good model for the young learners, it means that the teacher should have capability in speaking English, especially in pronunciation. The children hear and imitate what the teacher says. In this case, the use of dictionary is recommended to minimize the risk of pronunciation problem.

Modeling and Demonstration technique was only used by the teacher when she taught how to say something. For example, the teacher gave example how to pronounce words and the students followed her. During the observation, the teacher's voice was clear and the students can hear her voice clearly. But some pronunciation problems were made by the teacher. Children are great imitators. They don't need to be asked to imitate all the time in order to learn. They naturally catch everything they see and hear including how the teacher speaks the language.

Question and Answer technique was used by the teacher several times. Based on the observation, this technique was usually used by the teacher to make students more active and check their ready before the lesson was started. The questions that were given by the teacher successfully awakened the students' motivation to find the answers of the questions.

In SDN Padasuka 2 the use of visual aids were applied by the teacher in every meeting to get the students' attention. In introducing the theme the teacher always shows pictures that are related to the theme. Picture or realia were used by the teacher to show the meaning of the word with the real object. In line with the teacher interviews transcriptions, "Untuk mengajarkan kosakata baru saya menggunakan alat peraga seperti kartu kata dan gambar" (See Appendix 2). The teachers used these kinds of techniques because she thought this technique is easy to be implemented. The use of games was purposed to make the students easy to keep new words in their mind. The students looked happy when they played game. They like to move their bodies, such as playing game "Guess my pet" that occurred in meeting three (See Appendix 1).

Singing songs technique was applied by the teacher in every meeting to make the students enjoy the English learning. The use of songs was good concept to make them enjoy because children have short attention. As Scott & Ytreberg (2000), stated that there are several characteristics of young learners which affect the language learning, such as children's attention or concentration is considerably shorter than adult. To get children's attention, teacher has been provided enjoyable activities. One of enjoyable activities for young learners is singing together. Singing song could enrich their vocabulary, most of them are very enthusiastic when they were asked to sing English songs. According to the data, the teacher had many kinds of songs. Indirectly, there are some new words have been taught to the students. As stated in teacher interview transcription: *Saya rasa teknik ini merupakan teknik yang paling efektif dan mudah untuk diterapkan ke anak usia mereka. Teknik ini saya*

kombinasikan dengan lagu. Ketika mereka diberikan lagu-lagu bahasa Inggris, contohnya lagu I love everybody di laguitu ada 15 kosa kata bahasa Inggris dan secara tidak langsung itu sudah menambah vocabulary mereka". Based on the data gathered, it can be analyzed that the use of song technique seemed dominating the classroom activity.

b. The Teaching Techniques in Teaching Vocabulary

From the observation, the teaching procedures are elaborated in two stages, they are:

Presentation Stage. The result of the study showed that the teacher employed some techniques in presenting new words. The following tables show the result of five observations on the teacher’s techniques in presenting the vocabulary. The findings on kind of techniques in presentation stage can be seen in:

Table 1
Techniques in Presentation Stage

| No | Vocabulary Teaching Techniques | Meeting | | |
|----|---|-----------------|-----------------|-----------------|
| | | 1 st | 2 st | 3 st |
| 1. | Translation | | √ | √ |
| 2. | Real Objects a. Pictures, flashcard, photo, etc. b. Gesture, mime, action c. Realia | √ √ | √ | √ |
| 3. | Definition a. Full definition b. Analytical definition c. Example d. Synonym, antonym | √ √ | √ | |
| 4. | Context a. Example of situation b. Example of sentence | √ | | |
| 5. | Active Involvement a. Elicitation b. Personalization | | √ | √ |

In presenting new vocabulary item, the teacher used more than one technique, instead of employed one single technique. This research confirms previous finding that teachers are suggested to employ planned vocabulary presentation as various as possible. The findings showed that the teacher combined more than one technique to maximize the possibility of the students’ understanding of the vocabulary item and to help store the vocabulary to their long term memory retention.

Practice Stage. The findings on kind of techniques in practicing stage can be seen in the following table:

Table 2
Techniques in Practice Stage

| No | Vocabulary Teaching Techniques | Meeting |
|----|--------------------------------|---------|
| | | |

| | | 1 st | 2 st | 3 st |
|----|------------------------|-----------------|-----------------|-----------------|
| 1. | Identifying Task | √ | √ | √ |
| 2. | Selecting Task | | | |
| 3. | Matching | | | √ |
| 4. | Sorting | | | |
| 5. | Ranking and Sequencing | | | |

It was clearly shown that the most outstanding are using identifying and matching tasks. The least commonly used is sorting and sequencing task. Such task as “showing the order of event” turns out to be least preferred by the teacher. In contrast, based on the interview, the teacher said that she usually used matching and sequencing task. She said that one of the task is she asked the students to write the number to sequence the action. It conclude, in practicing vocabulary items to young learners, matching and sorting tasks are the two most preferable ways that teacher often use.

CONCLUSION

Concerning the result of the findings and discussion of the study, it could be concluded that at SDN Padasuka 2 Soreang the teacher taught vocabulary by using many techniques such as; listen and do, listen and repeat, question and answer, in pair or group discussion, modeling and demonstration, concept mapping, brainstorming, outdoor activity and other techniques; singing song, game, and using pictures. The techniques of listen and do, listen and repeat, question and answer, modeling and demonstration were more dominant than the other techniques.

The first major finding that the researcher got is the answer to the research question. It can be conclude that there is some inappropriateness between the theory and the teacher did in teaching English vocabulary. Then common techniques in teaching vocabulary to young learners can be divided into two groups. For presenting new words, using flashcards and miming are preferred by the teacher in this study.

The techniques used in teaching vocabulary at *SDN Padasuka2* Soreang were various, it made the students enjoy the English lesson. She tried to make her students understand easily by using many techniques in teaching and learning process. The selection techniques were adjusted to the level, time and theme. The teacher used simple vocabulary that was appropriate to the theme.

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