

Picture Game: Vocabulary Dissemination to Elementary Students

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ABSTRACT: Learning vocabulary is quite different from learning of other aspects of a language such as grammar and phonetics that denotes to a learning the rules constantly. Learning vocabulary is a perpetual task for any language learner (Changhong, 2010). This is a descriptive study to explore the use of picture game in learning vocabulary to elementary students. The data collection technique is in the form of observation and documentation in one of state Elementary School (SDN) in Surabaya. Picture game is a strategy that make learners enjoy in learning. The learners learn new vocabulary and play game as well. Findings of this study suggest the application of picture game is valuable to assist students learning vocabulary.

Keywords: **vocabulary, picture, game**

Introduction

Vocabulary is a fundamental aspects in learning English. Since it is one of the components in teaching and learning a language. Stanovich (1981) explains that it is impossible for learners to perform English well when their vocabulary is very poor. This indicates that students with low vocabulary mastery will have difficulties in comprehending the text, unable to speak English, and express their ideas. This in line with Edward (2006) who points out that students with an inadequate vocabulary also read slowly because they do not understand the words. In addition, Thornbury (2002, p.13) declares that when students pay attention on grammar, their English will not improve significantly. However, students will have improvement when they learn more words and expressions. In other words, students will only say very little with grammar, but they can say almost anything with words.

Learning vocabulary is not an easy process. The way of learning vocabulary is different from learning of grammar and phonetics that denotes to a learning the rules constantly. Learning vocabulary is an everlasting task for any language learner (Changhong, 2010). This signifies a never-ending process of learning. Since vocabulary mastery will determine person to “opens or closes access to sources of information that will affect our future.” (Stahl and Nagy, 2006).

Many English language learners demonstrate difficulties in the acquisition and the use of vocabulary (Widyasari, 2010). Sometimes learners don’t understand what the teacher says and they also have difficulties to communicate in English. Widaningsih (2009) mentions that one of the possible causes is that the teachers still employ the conventional method in teaching and learning process. Thus, vocabulary learning strategies that facilitate learners in the acquisition of vocabulary should be addressed. For example, literature on second language

acquisition suggests that the teaching of vocabulary should be completed through exposure of learners to various vocabulary enhancing activities (Coady and Huckin, 1997). The use of pictures in teaching new vocabularies is one of the strategies that can be employed by the teacher.

Picture is one of the strategies that make learners enjoy in learning English vocabulary. The learners learn new vocabulary and play game as well. Pictures can give valuable hints for learners. The learners can make prediction from the pictures about the content information. This can be said that from pictures, learners may get prior knowledge or information. This is to be believed as an instrumental way to make easier the learning vocabulary. The purpose of this study was to identify the application of the pictures as an instructional strategy of the teaching of vocabulary in the elementary students.

Method

The present study uses descriptive qualitative method. Data collection technique used were in the form of observation and documentation. Observation was conducted in three weeks in one of state elementary school (SDN) located in Jemurwonosari Surabaya. In the school the writer chosen two classes namely class 3 A and 3 B. The participants were 1 English teacher and the students. Class 3 A consist of 35 students and class 3 B 33 students. The writer acts as teacher assistance in the observation period. The classroom activity was documented. Besides, the writer also uses field note as additional data. The result of observation was identified and analyzed descriptively to observe the classroom activities and students ability to learn new vocabulary.

Findings and Discussion

Findings

The classes to be observed were 3A and 3B at one of state elementary school (SDN) in Surabaya. At the beginning of the teaching and learning process (in 3A class), the teacher initiated the activities by explaining the topic. Then, she showed the students some pictures related to topic to activate students' prior knowledge. After that, she asked them to guess the pictures. The students mentioned the things based on the pictures. In this activity commonly many students raised hand and tried to reply the teacher. Directly, they mentioned those pictures in Bahasa Indonesia. The teacher reminded them to say in English, then some students was trying to say in English. On the other hand, there were also some students who keep silent, and some others were busy with their own activities. Based on the writer observation and note, some students mispronounced the words. Then the teacher wrote the words on the board and asked

them to repeat after her many times. After that, the teacher explained the words meaning both in Bahasa Indonesia and English. She also provided some examples the use of those vocabularies into simple sentences on the board.

Next, the class are divided into 4 groups and they had to do some activities based on teacher's instruction. The teacher gave students 20 minutes for each session. So, totally students have an hour to finish their works. Firstly, the students matched ten (10) the pictures with vocabularies provided. The picture theme is about hobby, these are: *dancing, cycling, cooking, singing, fishing, reading, drawing, swimming, gardening, and shopping*. Students should be able to fit the pictures with the vocabularies. In this part, the role of teacher was to facilitate the students when they found difficulties in understanding the pictures. In doing this, the teacher used Bahasa Indonesia, Javanese and English to assist the students understand the pictures. This first activity is considered to be the preliminary activity as the teacher still participated in undertaking the students' task.

Secondly, the students still work with the same pictures, but with incomplete vocabularies. The students should fill in the incomplete words under the pictures with proper letter. This action is a form of recalling of the previous one. In this session, the writer found many students are able to fill the incomplete vocabularies of the pictures. However, some of them had incorrect answer. For example in the first theme - hobbies: the word *dancing*, was written by students: *densing, dencing, dansing, dencyng*. The word *running*, was written by the students: *raaning, ranning, reaning, riining, ruuning*. The word *surfing* was written by the students: *saifing, seefing, serfing, sarfing, suufing, sorfing, selfing, sirfing*.

After finishing the second task, the teacher then discussed the second task in front of the class. She showed the students the correct answer. Next, students were asked to write those vocabularies into simple sentences. In this part, many students are able to write the vocabularies. This can be seen in their answer such as: *My bobby is dancing, I like swimming, Bagas likes drawing* etc. Besides, the writer found some incorrect sentences, for example: *She hobby is drawing, My hobby _ dancing, Aida hobby is reading*. There were also some students who got confused with the teacher instructions. Although the teacher had given instructions clearly, some students did not understand what they should do. Those who were still uncertain with the teacher instructions, however they did not ask their teachers, rather they discuss with their peer group. Unconsciously, these students helped each other work in group activities. In this case, teachers had initiated them in cooperative learning.

In classroom interaction, teacher both in 3A and 3B classes use Bahasa Indonesia, Javanese, and sometimes English. This occurs because mostly the students come from Javanese

and the school is located in East Java. From the writer observation, the use of Javanese mixed with Bahasa Indonesia aims to facilitate the students in learning English. This means when the teacher it is difficult to make the students understand the material, she usually code switch and code mix into Bahasa Indonesia and Javanese. In addition, this also to limit the gap between teachers and students. This to make easier communication between students and teacher.

During the observation, the writer found that teacher had tried to help students with limited ability to read and to write in English. Especially, those who still very low in pronounce the vocabularies (mispronounce the words), the teacher called and asked them to repeat after her many times. This is done in the teaching and learning process. However, since the action was done in very short time and only drilling the students' to pronounce the words and memorized the meaning or it focused on the cognitive ability of the students, then it was considered unsuccessful.

Discussion

The finding of the study shows that the use of pictures in teaching of English vocabulary is valuable. By using pictures, the learners are able to match with the correct vocabularies. This finding indicates that the use of pictures may contributed to the improvement of students' vocabulary mastery.

In addition, the finding of the study reveal the advantages of pictures as an alternative strategies of vocabulary instruction. In this way, learners can enjoy learning process as pictures provides meaningful clues of the vocabularies being intended. This means that the students can get significant hint through the pictures. By observing the pictures, they have information about, then they make prediction and transform those guessing into English. Also, pictures help learners' motivation to learn English vocabulary and decrease boredom. Through pictures, learners' may perceive English as an attractive subject instead of a difficult one (Wahyuningsih, 2009).

Next, pictures offers a challenge for students as these motivate them to fill out the incomplete words of the pictures. The students practice how to write the vocabulary correctly. Although, it was still found that there were some students who performed mistakes in writing the vocabularies, for example the word 'shopping' some students write; '*sooping*', '*sohping*', '*sohpinng*'. Another example the word 'surfing' is written by students: '*serfing*', '*selfing*', '*sirfing*'.

In the application of the vocabularies into simple sentences, some students are able to construct simple sentence correctly. For example: 'My hobby is fishing', 'Aira likes drawing',

‘Bagas likes swimming’. These sentences show that students are able to produce simple sentences correctly. It seems that they have understood the sentence pattern and use it appropriately. However, the writer has identified that their sentences were unvaried. Mostly, they used the same sentence pattern or repetitive sentence pattern and the same words. This can be admitted since they are still beginners in creating simple sentences.

However, the writer also found some mistakes, such as: ‘he like dancing’ (lack of s letter in the word *like*, this sentence should be: *he likes dancing*) ‘she hobby is cooking’ (incorrect use of *she*, it should be *her hobby is cooking*) ‘Salsa hobby is reading’ (lack of apostrophe in the word *Salsa*, it should be *Salsa’s hobby is reading*). In the aspect of vocabulary, all of the words in the sentences are correct. However, analyzing the errors performed by students, those are in the form of sentence structure. While, this actually is not the focus of the writer’s research.

Conclusion

The findings of the study revealed that the use of pictures as an alternative strategy in teaching vocabulary for elementary students is beneficial in building up students’ vocabulary mastery. Despite the fact that the use of pictures required the teacher’s time to prepare and the class management, the advantage added from the strategy is profound. This calls for language teachers to consider this as one of teaching vocabulary strategies. This will create a good learning atmosphere for learners and in turn this will assist them in the improvement of learners’ performance in English.

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