

IMPROVING STUDENTS' VOCABULARY MASTERY USING PICTURE DICTIONARY

Alentri Kurniawati, Gunarso Susilohadi, Hefy Sulistyawati

English Education Department
Education and Teacher Training Faculty
Sebelas Maret University of Surakarta

Email: alentrikurniawati@gmail.com

Abstract: This research aims at identifying the effective teaching strategy of using picture dictionary to improve students' vocabulary mastery. The method used in this research is classroom action research. In gathering the data, the researcher used tests, photographs, observation, collection of students' work, and interview. The result shows that Picture Dictionary can be effectively used to improve students' vocabulary mastery if the following requirements are fulfilled: 1) using various activities in every meeting; (2) using various tasks and worksheets in every meeting; (3) considering the students' opinion about the next teaching learning activity; (4) giving reward and punishment system to the students; and (5) implementing group discussion in the teaching learning process. The effective teaching strategy was indicated by the improvement of students' vocabulary mastery as seen by their mean score in pre-test (70.7), post-test 1 (79.6), and post-test 2 (88). It was also indicated by the improvement of students' classroom behaviors: (1) students' participation increased; and (2) the number of the students asked for doing non-academic activities became less.

Keywords: *vocabulary mastery, teaching young learners, picture dictionary*

INTRODUCTION

This research was conducted to solve some of the problem faced while teaching the English extracurricular class. The problems faced were the students' low achievement in vocabulary and the unfavorable students' behavior.

The students were hard to control so that most of the teaching time was consumed just for making the students ready to be taught. This did not make the teaching-learning process run effectively. The students did not like the regular teaching and activity. From the observation, they wanted to learn when they had coloring activity.

Another reason why students were hard to control was that the teacher was not their regular teacher, so most of them thought it was okay for them to act whatever

they wanted since it was only an extracurricular class. This happened in most of the classes, not only in the researcher's class.

The students took for granted when they were being drilled. They seemed to understand, and knew how to pronounce certain word, but during the test, they could not pronounce certain words properly.

The students usually wrote words based on what they heard, not what should be. Meaning was not a big problem for the students. The teacher mostly used picture as the media. The students were encouraged to draw their picture of a thing, and sometimes to color the picture. The students loved to draw and color a picture, and the researcher found that using these activities, the students wanted to sit down properly and do the task.

Based on the problems faced, it was necessary to find an effective media in teaching the students, so the teaching-learning process would be effective and the students could master more vocabulary each day. The idea of making a DIY picture dictionary then came up.

Teaching vocabulary using picture dictionary could improve the students' vocabulary mastery especially their understanding in spelling and meaning. Basically, picture dictionary focused on picture, and it was good to teach the students about spelling and meaning using picture, it could give them a quick attention to the form and meaning of a new word (Nation, 2005, p. 4). This theory was also stated by Harmer (1991, p. 90), using picture was really effective to teach vocabulary to the students.

Considering the students' opinion while making the picture also made them proud because they got attention from the teacher, that leads to the increasing participation and motivation in learning (Murshidi, 2014, p. 31). The teacher could ask the students' opinions about what to colour or what to draw in their picture dictionary book.

Children love to learn while playing and without any unnecessary pressure, using this method, it will create a happy and fun learning (Linse, 2005, p. 14). Children nowadays are already pushed to be the best, and sometimes parents forget about their creativity needs, here those creativity needs can be improve while they are learning English.

Students will learn faster and better if they learn using picture dictionary. Picture dictionary also will organize the material being learnt, this will help the students learn faster and better (Schmitt and Schmitt, 1995). The materials are sort based on the theme they learn, this also help the students to

learn better and faster, since it is easier for children to learn a word if it is based on specific theme.

This research considered the following research question:

What is the effective teaching strategy to improve the student's vocabulary mastery through picture dictionary?

LITERATURE REVIEW

Some literature reviews related to this research are presented as follows:

Vocabulary Mastery

In mastering and becoming fluent in language, first of all people must master vocabulary used in the language. Based on Wilkins (Thornbury, 2002, p. 13) "Without grammar very little can be conveyed, without vocabulary nothing can be conveyed". Penny Ur (1996, p. 60) stated that vocabulary is the words that teachers teach in foreign language. In line what Ur said, Linse (2005, p. 121) said that vocabulary is a collection of words that an individual knows. Nation (2005) said that part of effective vocabulary teaching involves working out what needs to be taught about a word. So, it is necessary for the students to enrich vocabulary continually.

From those experts, it can be concluded that vocabulary is a list of words that a person, in this case a third graders, knows in a certain language, these words are about their surrounding environment. This collection of words is important for the people in order to communicate and to express the idea clearly.

In knowing a word, people must be able to understand the form of the language and also the meaning of the word. If a person only knows the form, or the meaning only, however it cannot be concluded as knowing a word. After knowing the form and the meaning, then he must be able to use

it in a sentence. After passing these phases then you can be called as knowing a word.

Teaching English to Young Learners

The term “ young learners’ refer to children age 0-18. In this study, the subject of research lays between 8 until 9 years old. 8 years old children already understand about rules, they can use logical reasoning, but they still love to play (Scott&Yteberg, 2005, p. 1-4).

With these facts, this research took the third graders of elementary school as the subject of the research. It is important as the teacher to know the characteristic of children, this knowledge will lead to the adjusting of a method of teaching (Linse, 2005, p. 13).

Harmer (1991, p. 38) gave several characteristics of young learners, namely:

- a. They respond to meaning even if they do not understand individual words
- b. They often learn indirectly rather than directly
- c. Their understanding comes not just from explanation, but also from what they hear, see and crucially, have a chance to touch and interact with
- d. They generally have a big enthusiasm in learning the world around them
- e. They need approval and attention from their teacher
- f. They are very egocentric
- g. They have a limited attention span

Slattery (Bakhsh, 2016, p. 120) highlighted some characteristics young learners have. They are learners who are curious, imaginative, and playful. They develop as individuals very quickly and enjoy routines and repetitions. They learn by listening, imitating, watching, and doing things. Due to their short attention span, they need variety of activities. Also, they talk about what they did and understand in their mother tongue

which helps them to learn.

Picture Dictionary

The researcher came up with the idea of making picture dictionary after reading the journal written by Norbert Schmitt and Diane Schmitt in 1995 entitled *Vocabulary notebooks: theoretical underpinnings and practical suggestions*. From the article, the researcher found an interesting fact of learning vocabulary as follows, “In terms of vocabulary learning. One way of achieving this is to have them keep vocabulary notebooks. These do not replace other forms of vocabulary learning, such as extensive reading. Learning implicitly through task work, or explicit classroom vocabulary exercises (Schmitt and Schmitt, 1995).

According to Waring (Deni, Zainal, Mohamed, 2007), in order for vocabulary learning to be successful, students have to be made independent word learners and they learn best by making sense of their own vocabulary and internalizing it. Fowle stated each set of vocabulary notebooks—whether a notebook, a loose leaf binder, notecards in a box, etcetera—are kept by each student to store certain ‘useful’ items for learning (Lara, 2014).

Based on several literature reviews, vocabulary notebook can be concluded as a notebook that containing a set of vocabulary that an individual learns in a certain language. These words can be different from one person to another, since they may have different understanding about a certain material while learning a language.

In this research the researcher proposed the idea of making picture dictionary as the development of vocabulary notebook. The picture dictionary was a little bit different from the form in the journal. Here, the notebook was focused more on the picture of the things, and then the students

would write the English name of that things, and something that related to it, for example, if the material is animal, take an example of horse. Than the students would stick the picture of horse, then write the word “horse” and add some more information like, *it eats grass; it lives in the farm*; then name and show some of body parts of a horse, like head, body, legs, tail. The students could also colour the horse, the picture of the horse would have number and each number represent particular colour.

RESEARCH METHOD

This research used Classroom Action Research as the method of research. This research used Kemmis and McTaggart’s steps of AR, those four steps are: (1) Planning, (2) Acting, (3) Observing, and (4) Reflecting. The Subject of this research was the third graders in the academic year 2017/2018. The class consisted of 29 students with 15 boys and 14 girls .The data used in this study were collected from observation, photographs, students’ works, interviews, and score of post tests. For the preliminary research, the researcher collected the data from observation, students’ work, photographs. This research use three steps in analyzing the data, they are: (1) Gathering data, (2) Coding the data, (3) Comparing the data, (4) Building interpretations, and (5) Reporting outcomes (Burns 1999: 156-160 and McNiff and Whitehead 2006: 138-147).

RESEARCH FINDINGS AND DISCUSSION

Before conducting this research, the researcher did pre-observation, pre-teaching, and pre-test to measure the ability and the problems faced by the students in learning English. Based on the pre-observation and pre-test the researcher found some problem both in students’ classroom behavior and

students’ low achievement in their vocabulary mastery. Therefore, the researcher implemented picture dictionary to solve the problem. This research consisted of two cycles with three meetings for each cycle.

In cycle one, after knowing the problems faced by the students from pre-observation and pre-test stage, the researcher moved on to the next stage, which was planning the action. In this stage, the researcher made the lesson plans for the whole first cycle, and the worksheets and the tasks that would be used in the first cycle. The lesson plans created by the researcher consisted with four activities, warm-up, presentation; practice and production. The researcher searched the materials, worksheets, and tasks from various source, including the workbook. The topic implemented during this cycle was “*Things at Home*”. The media used were picture and picture dictionary.

After implementing the picture dictionary completed with various activities and various tasks and worksheets, the researcher could say that the teaching learning process was effective. There was a positive improvement in students’ participation in classroom activities. There was a positive improvement from the students’ score too. The students’ mean score in the pre-test was 70.7, this score improved to 79.6. There was a positive improvement in students’ behavior. After considering the students’ request about what kind of teaching activities they liked, the students showed a positive improvement, they became more actively participated in the teaching learning activity.

However, the researcher still found some aspects that needed to be improved. In every meeting, there were always 3 up to 5 students who forgot to do homework or bring their notebook or workbook. In

gaming sessions, some students always fought. After fighting, some of them cried. There was one boy who always made the class noisy however; his grade was not so good. The students' score in meaning was not too good.

Considering the reflection of this first cycle, it is clear that the researcher had to have the second cycle. The reflection of this cycle would be the base for making the lesson plans and worksheets for the second cycle.

In conclusion, the researcher would still use the teaching activities that effectively improved the students' score and the students' classroom behavior. Those factors that made the teaching learning process to become effective were using various teaching activities, using various tasks and worksheets, and considering the students' request about learning activity. To overcome the problem faced by the researcher in this cycle, the researcher would change the usage of game became group discussion, implement reward and punishment system, and limit the number of vocabularies taught.

After reflecting and evaluating what happened in the first cycle, the researcher made new lesson plans for the meeting in the second cycle. In this cycle, the researcher would give reward and punishment system to discipline the students. The students wanted to have movie time in each meeting, so the researcher

planned to give them educational movie, about the material in this cycle, so that the students would be more motivated in joining the English class. The students asked to have game session too, so the researcher still made game session but in this cycle, the game would be more cooperative game than a competitive game, to minimize the number of tantrum students. In this cycle, there were two meetings and one meeting for post-test 2, just like what happened in cycle 1. In this meeting the material taught was "*Public Places and Direction*".

The number of students' fighting and crying in the classroom while having game became zero. None of the students fought and cried while having game, the researcher's idea not to make the game session into noncompetitive game and more on group discussion was successful to eliminate this.

After implementing the strategies as described above using picture dictionary, it resulted in the improvements of the students' vocabulary mastery score. The students' mean score increased from 79.6 became 88.0. It could be concluded that using picture dictionary with effective teaching strategy could improve the students' vocabulary mastery. This improvement could be seen from table 1 below

Table 1 the score improvement

Vocabulary aspects	score		
	Pre-test	Post-test 1	Post-test 2
Mean score of spelling	6.7	8.1	8.6
Mean score of meaning	7.3	7.3	9.2
Mean score of pronunciation	7.0	8.4	8.6
Total mean score	70.7	79.6	88

The effective teaching strategy could also improve the students' behavior in the

classroom. In this cycle, the boy who always disturbed his friends became more calm and wanted to join and actively participated in

the teaching learning process. The number of students asking permission to go to the bathroom and the students forgot to do homework or brought book were going lesser.

Seeing these good improvements, the researcher decided to stop the research in this cycle. The students' improvements were well enough, and the students' behavior in the classroom was already appropriate and suitable to have a teaching learning process.

In cycle 1, the researcher conducted activities in teaching and learning process by using picture dictionary combined with effective teaching strategies there was improvement dealing with the students' vocabulary mastery. In pre-test the students mean score was 70.7, then this mean score was improved became 79.6 in the post-test 1, and finally the students' mean score reached 88.0 in post-test 2. On each test, the students' mean score got higher and higher. The improvement happened in the students' classroom behavior too, the students became more active and their participation and motivation increased.

First in teaching vocabulary using picture dictionary to young learner the teacher has to vary the teaching activities. Using the various teaching activities is good for teaching vocabulary to children.

Second in teaching vocabulary using picture dictionary to young learner the teacher has to give the students various tasks and worksheets. As stated by Linse (2005, p. 3) tasks are seen as the environment or ecosystem in which the growth of skills in the foreign language takes place. Since children are active learners, giving them a lecture is not appropriate to make them understand about foreign language, therefore

the existence of tasks and worksheets are important to make the students aware that they need the materials taught by the teacher therefore they will learn better and faster.

Third in teaching vocabulary using picture dictionary to young learner the teacher has to consider the students' opinion. While asking the students' opinions and considering them, teacher already implements students-centered learning. Student-centred approach assists students to develop a "can-do" behaviour, which motivates the students to do their tasks and enjoy their time (Murshidi, 2014).

Fourth in teaching vocabulary using picture dictionary to young learner the teacher can give reward and punishment system. Giving reward and punishment system can improve the students' motivation and participation too. In this research, the researcher gave reward and punishment to the students.

And the last, in teaching vocabulary using picture dictionary to young learner the teacher can have a group discussion session with the students. Instead of giving them competitive activities, children work better in cooperative activities, such as group discussion because they will feel belong to something, which is good for their psychology (Scott & Ytreberg, 1990, p. 6).

Based on the explanation above, the researcher concluded that using picture dictionary can create effective teaching when these condition are fulfilled, (1) using various activities in every meeting; (2) using various tasks and worksheets in every meeting; (3) considering the students' opinion about the next teaching learning activity; (4) giving reward and punishment system to the students; and (5) implementing group discussion in teaching learning process could improve students' vocabulary mastery and the students' behavior in the classroom.

CONCLUSION AND SUGGESTIONS

Based on the conclusion of data above, using picture dictionary to improve vocabulary mastery is true. This improvement can be seen from the improvement of the pre-test 1 until posttest 2. There is a significant improvement from the students' vocabulary mastery before and after being taught using picture dictionary.

This success was not because of picture dictionary only, but from the teaching method, the teaching learning activities, and the materials presented in the class.

This research is evidence that using picture dictionary with effective teaching strategy, can improve students' vocabulary mastery and behavior well. It is good for the teachers to start using picture dictionary in order to improve their students' vocabulary mastery.

Based on the experiences that the researches gained while conducting this research, the researcher could give some suggestion for the teachers, students, and also other researches about improving

students' vocabulary mastery, as follows: (1) For teachers, they should select and choose appropriate teaching materials, introduce and familiarize how to use a teaching media well, observe the students' participation in teaching learning process, manage the class well, so the class will be conducive enough to have teaching learning process. (2) For the students, it is suggested for the students to try to familiarize themselves with English, it can be done by watching movie, singing a song, or even playing game, develop vocabulary mastery through their surroundings, not only in the classroom while having teaching learning process. (3) For other researches, it is best for other researches to adopt and adapt this research, but not completely adopt, it can be modified by changing the aspects of vocabulary being studied, or use picture dictionary in other way more sophisticated than this research. (4) For the school, it is suggested for the school or institution to support the teachers with adequate facilities or motivation to create an effective teaching learning process, give the teachers freedom to teach their class, as long as it is still on track of the law.

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